Preface

The twenty-first century has already borne witness to new forms of insecurity including the instability caused by the Arab Spring and piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Tackling such ‘non-traditional’ security challenges is essential to the economic wellbeing of both the UK and China. Supplies of gas and oil to these countries pass through the Gulf of Aden and the UK and China are both committed to economic investment in these developing regions. The stability of such areas is an essential condition for their successful economic development.

Since the mid-2000s, China has adopted an active approach in dealing with such non-traditional security challenges. With China’s rising influence and increasing interest in many conflict-prone areas, it is now important for the UK to establish and maintain a high level of co-operation with China in tackling such threats. The British government is seeking to enhance bilateral security co-operation with China. However, given the rapid pace of change in the international strategic environment and the complexity of policy infrastructure in Beijing and London, it is a daunting task for Chinese and British policy-makers to gain the breadth and depth of understanding required to deal with such changes and their consequences. A better grasp of policy considerations and gaps in capacity of both countries with regard to the international strategic environment could help enhance future bilateral co-operation.

In September 2011, the University of Nottingham and the Royal United Services Institute invited participants from China, the UK and Europe to participate in a two-day roundtable examining opportunities and challenges for future UK-China military co-operation. The roundtable was designed to gather insights and experience from a wide range of Chinese, British and European academics and policy-makers, and from the British third and business sectors in order to suggest creative policy options for future UK-China bilateral non-traditional security co-operation programmes.
This report summarises the main findings of the roundtable. It offers some ideas for future programmes through which to build UK-China military co-operation. We hope that this report will be of use to policy-makers in both countries.

We would like to thank the China Policy Institute and the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the University of Nottingham, the Royal United Services Institute, and the Economic and Social Research Council for the generous financial support that made this roundtable possible. We also express our appreciation to all the participants in the roundtable for their helpful contributions to the discussion, and for their comments in drafting this report, especially Paul Armitage, Catherine Gegout, Douglas Guilfoyle, Weidong Liu, Bernardo Mariani, Guosheng Qu, Steve Tsang, Bo Wang, Thomas Wheeler, and Yongjin Zhang. We would also like to thank Nathan Fink for his excellent work in drafting this summary paper.

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The Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (IAPS) is a university-level research centre currently affiliated with the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham. The IAPS mission is to promote advanced research on the Asia-Pacific region in the humanities and social sciences, support and co-ordinate postgraduate teaching and enhance understanding of Asia-Pacific in the broader community.

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The China Policy Institute (CPI), part of the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Nottingham, was established to analyse critical policy challenges faced by China in its rapid development. Its goals are to help expand knowledge and understanding of contemporary China in Britain, Europe and worldwide, to help facilitate a more informed dialogue between China, the UK and Europe, and to contribute to government and business strategies.

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Executive Summary

Non-Traditional Security as an Opportunity for Better UK-China Relations

China’s rise is frequently understood as antithetical to the Western world order. Increase in China’s military capability is often viewed as a challenge to the West. Co-operation thus proves difficult as fundamental ideological differences seem omnipresent and insurmountable.

Bottom-up military co-operation between the UK and China on specific non-traditional security issues presents a clear way through the obstacles of ideological differences. Co-operation on non-traditional security challenges, such as peacekeeping, post-disaster assistance and anti-piracy avoids entrenchment in an ideological corner because:

- Such challenges (e.g. piracy in the Gulf of Aden, political instability in the resource-rich Arab world) are intrinsically global, and threaten global prosperity
- Effective solutions to non-traditional security problems require multilateral approaches and pooling of capabilities.

Key British and Chinese policy documents suggest real potential for an expansion of UK-China military co-operation:

- The UK’s Strategic Defence and Security Review emphasises the importance of strengthening co-operation with ‘emerging economic powers [such as] China’, and the need to address emerging non-traditional security threats
- In 2010, China’s Ministry of National Defence stressed the significance of successfully tackling non-traditional security issues and called on the PLA to increase joint military training and exercises with other countries.

Situational factors increase the incentive for both China and the UK to expand military co-operation:

- Facing budget cuts, the UK aims to make best possible use of its resources, in part through burden-sharing with rising powers such as China
- As its interests abroad expand and its military capabilities grow, China is beginning to take cautious steps towards a more active foreign policy. Yet, constrained by the need to present itself as a ‘responsible power’, Beijing requires international legitimisation of its actions. Furthermore, having been confined to its domestic borders for decades, the PLA does not have much experience in international operations. Both issues can be addressed by co-operation with the UK.
Potential Co-operation Programmes

Peacekeeping
- Establish a joint peacekeeping research centre at the PLA National Defense University, in order to institutionalise mid- to low-level military exchange
- Set up a regular dialogue on peacekeeping at international forums sanctioned at the highest political level, such as official UK-China Strategic Dialogue
- Encourage dialogue among civil society actors of the UK, China and conflict states, in order to promote a better understanding of conflicts, and to reconcile different perspectives on peacekeeping and peace-building
- Promote conflict sensitivity in peace-building and overseas assistance activities
- Engage in training programmes for Chinese peacekeeping troops
- Conduct research into how military co-operation can be broadened to include co-operation between paramilitary organisations of the two countries.

Post-Disaster Assistance
- Arrange joint familiarisation visits between relevant agencies of the two countries
- Build institutionalised communication channels and create regular platforms for information sharing
- Encourage UK policy-makers, practitioners and scholars to join the International Emergency Management Society (IEMS)
- Co-operate to train jointly post-disaster assistance personnel in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region
- Conduct a joint study on a conflict-sensitive approach to the delivery of humanitarian aid in complex emergencies.

Anti-Piracy Operations
- Share force-enabling capabilities
- Establish and/or improve technological interoperability between the different navies
- Institutionalise regular information-sharing meetings between the PLAN and Royal Navy
- Establish a common naval guideline on how to apprehend piracy suspects
- Address the root cause of the piracy problem by helping to stabilise Somalia.
Background Notes

The Time is Ripe for UK-China Co-operation

China’s rise is perhaps one of the most important geo-strategic developments of the twenty-first century. China has experienced double-digit growth for the last three decades and, if it continues to grow at a similar speed, it is expected to surpass the United States, to become the world’s largest economy in 2027. In military terms, China claims to have increased its military budget in 2011 by 12.7 per cent, to 601.1 billion yuan ($91.5bn; £56.2bn). It has begun to develop an ‘aircraft carrier killer’ missile and has constructed its own aircraft carrier.

As China’s global interests increase, so does its willingness to act internationally. Concurrently, continuously high levels of Chinese military spending will provide the PLA with long-distance force projection capability, giving China an opportunity to work side-by-side with other international actors.

At the same time, most Western countries are experiencing deficit budgets and high debt. In the UK, the implementation of austerity measures has led to cuts to defence spending of 8 per cent. This makes the UK less willing to ‘go it alone’ on the international stage. The West in general, and the UK in particular, will therefore benefit from a reliance on higher burden-sharing with developing nations such as China and India.

The UK’s National Security Strategy and its Security and Defence Security Review identify a wide range of diverse threats. Non-traditional security threats are prominent in these policy documents. The UK’s defence policy now is to encourage softer engagement with the PLA, through co-operation in areas of non-traditional security.

UK-China relations have a particular advantage. Despite repeated assurances about their respective peaceful intentions, there is continuing friction between China and the US over a variety of issues, ranging from Taiwan to the PLA’s military build-up, from North Korea to human rights, and from exchange rates to government debt. The UK-China relationship does not experience similar levels of friction. Military co-operation between China and the UK presents a clear way out of the cul-de-sac of Sino-US rivalry.

This paper summarises the findings of the roundtable, in relation to three issue areas: peacekeeping, post-disaster assistance and anti-piracy operations. In each issue area, the roundtable participants discussed: (1) current Chinese and UK policies and practices; (2) opportunities and challenges for UK-China
co-operation; and (3) potential co-operation programmes. All discussions converged on concrete and creative policy recommendations for the creation and development of future UK-China military co-operation programmes.

International Strategic Landscape 2011: Lessons from Libya

A consideration of UK-China military co-operation needs to be made in the context of the current international strategic landscape. In particular, the international politics of intervention in Libya throws up some of the key points in that landscape – particularly the different political positions taken by China and the UK in deploying armed forces overseas.

China and the UK have in common large and growing ‘footprints’ overseas. The need to protect their respective interests follows from this. Apart from their economic interests, there are also growing numbers of their citizens living abroad, who require protection and management in the event of crises.

Before the outbreak of Libya’s civil war, Libya resided very much on the periphery of China’s foreign-policy interests. However, the growth of China’s power, influence and relationships with developing regions carries unintended consequences. China must now look beyond the Asia-Pacific region and the state of Sino-US relations (traditional focuses in Chinese foreign policy), to consider engaging more widely in international politics. Concurrently, China needs to make a subtle and gradual but positive move from its ideological insistence on non-interference in internal affairs, to a more pragmatic approach to international humanitarian crises.

China’s vote in favour of UNSCR 1970 in relation to Libya is significant because it is the first time that China has voted for sanctions against a sovereign government. It indicates that China is taking a less doctrinal, more pragmatic and flexible foreign policy approach, although this does not mean that sanctions have become the norm in China’s foreign policy. The Gaddafi regime was unique in the sense that it alienated all international players, and afforded China an opportunity to vote for punitive action.

However, China’s vote in favour of UNSCR 1970 is also based on a broader shift in China’s foreign policy in the 2000s. Of particular concern here is China’s endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle in 2005 and the reaffirmation of its position in 2006 through a vote for UNSCR 1674. China not only acknowledged the R2P principle, but also stated that in some cases the use of force might be necessary when applying it. However, China maintained that host states’ consent to accept foreign intervention, and UN authorisation, are necessary conditions to apply the R2P principle.

The Libyan case has also ignited an increasingly diverse debate within China about its proper role in humanitarian intervention. Should China
prioritise sovereign rights or human rights? Which takes precedence, and on what condition? Over the past decade, domestic public opinion in China has shown a greater tendency toward support for human rights than for sovereign rights.

However, China has been very critical of NATO military intervention in Libya, arguing that the NATO intervention went well beyond the intention of UNSCR 1973, which authorised UN member states to enforce a no-fly zone over Libya. Rather than simply protecting civilians in Libya, NATO forces intervened in the civil war with the aim of changing the Gaddafi regime. This goes well beyond China’s conception of ‘humanitarian intervention’.

On the other hand, the UK argued that its motivation to intervene in Libya was ‘genuinely humanitarian’. NATO was the only organisation that had the military capability to intervene in Libya. If one has the capability, then one has the responsibility to use it. The humanitarian emergency and the existence of military capability gave NATO member states a sense of political and moral pressure to protect civilians.

In the short- to mid-term, two fundamental differences between the UK and China will remain: firstly China is more conservative than the UK about humanitarian intervention vis-à-vis the principle of non-interference; and secondly China maintains that all forms of intervention must be carried out without the aim of changing the status quo in the host country, while the UK takes a more flexible approach to intervention.

Such differences have led to a lack of trust and confidence between the people of the two countries, which, in turn, will hamper deepening military co-operation.

Need for a Bottom-up Approach

Fundamental differences over the proper prerequisites for humanitarian intervention will remain for the foreseeable future. In order to improve UK-China military relations and build military confidence, ‘top-down co-operation’ that seeks similar understanding of principles in international relations is not an effective option.

Instead, the UK and China should take a bottom-up, issues-based approach, in which the military forces of the two countries will be able to accumulate shared experience and enhance military confidence, without letting the fundamental differences overtake Sino-UK relations.

Small joint activities based on specific non-traditional security issues could serve as an entry point, on which broader co-operation can be built in the future. Such activities present an opportunity to address the fundamental
differences from on-the-ground practitioners’ perspectives, which may be less political.

**Summary**

Non-traditional security issues, such as post-conflict instability, humanitarian crises, piracy, and natural and man-made disasters, are inherently global problems threatening multiple national interests. Both China and the UK officially recognise these problems, and government documents of both countries call for greater international co-operation on non-traditional security.

‘Top-down co-operation’ that seeks similar understanding of principles in international relations has often been ineffective, as fundamental differences have proven insurmountable. The key, therefore, is to take a ‘bottom-up’ approach and devise substantial, practical and feasible co-operation programmes that all parties can agree to.

Greater UK-China military co-operation on non-traditional security issues can build trust and confidence between the two countries, and present a clear way through the difference in political responses to international security issues.
Peacekeeping

Current Chinese and UK Policies and Practices

The changing nature of peacekeeping – away from simply monitoring a ceasefire between warring factions towards a proactive holistic mission of peace building – requires the application of greater numbers and amounts of resources by the international community.

China’s position on international peacekeeping is changing. It has ceased its strict ideological insistence on general non-intervention and now pursues a more flexible and pragmatic approach.

China has increased its contribution to UN peacekeeping. Since 1988, China has contributed more than 10,000 personnel to over twenty UN peacekeeping missions. Over the last ten years, China’s peacekeeping troop contribution has increased twenty-fold. However, China has yet to contribute any combat troops – its current forces are exclusively ‘force enablers’, such as engineering, medical, and transportation companies.

Although the UK provides the third-largest (8.15 per cent) financial contribution to UN peacekeeping, its troop contribution to UN peacekeeping has been minimal to date, because of its operations in Afghanistan. In view of the UK’s plan to withdraw from Afghanistan by 2014, it is necessary to reconsider how the country might contribute to future UN peacekeeping.

Analysis

As China’s global economic involvement increases, so too does its interest in stability in faraway countries. Participation in UN peacekeeping is also a means of fostering its self-portrait as a ‘peace-loving’ and ‘responsible’ power, as well as improving relations with the US in particular and the West in general. Consequently, China is in the process of revising its approach to UN peacekeeping. There is a relatively open and contentious debate in China about how to strike the right balance between sovereignty and human rights. Surveys have found that a portion of the Chinese intellectual community has gradually shifted away from the Chinese government’s traditional principles, tending towards a more human-rights oriented approach.

The Chinese participants in the roundtable hoped for greater Western appreciation of the complexity, scope and pace of their expectations.
for Chinese military policy change in relation to UN peacekeeping – especially in the historical light of China’s strict non-intervention policy.

From the Chinese perspective, there are a number of concerns regarding operational readiness in complex operations. The PLA lacks both experience in international operations and English language proficiency. Further concerns include uncertainty about the rules of engagement in UN peacekeeping operations, a potential lack of interoperability in international operations, and inadequate intelligence.

A contribution of PLA infantry forces (often called ‘combat troops’) to UN peacekeeping is mutually beneficial to China and the UK. From China’s point of view, once again, the contribution helps to project an image as a responsible power. Furthermore, the PLA can gain valuable in-theatre experience. Real-world combat will have the welcome side-effect of pacifying the more aggressive wings of the PLA. From the UK’s point of view, China’s contribution of infantry forces amounts to greater burden sharing at a time of scarce resources. Moreover, military co-operation can build confidence between the two military forces.

**Opportunities and Challenges for UK-China Co-operation**

China and the UK are both keen to see an increase in China’s contribution to UN peacekeeping, for the reasons stated above. They have already cooperated through a peacekeeping English training programme (2007–09), on which new co-operation programmes can be built in the future.

However, challenges for UK-China co-operation derive first from the different understanding each country has of ‘peacekeeping’. The two terms, ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peace enforcement’, give states the impression that peace operations occur in a two-tier system, in which ‘peacekeeping’ is traditional and peacekeepers merely observe ceasefires, while ‘peace enforcement’ is coercive. Based on this impression, states have an incentive to be inactive in coercive actions. However, today most peacekeeping operations are undertaken under the mandates of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Peace agreements are often fragile, and peacekeepers need to be able to apply proportional force when necessary. In other words, peacekeeping is inherently coercive and robust.

The implication of this new environment for all troop contributors is that they face new challenges, one of the greatest being the protection of civilians. There is a more urgent need to understand the political and operating environment, and partners and civilians, in order to operate effectively.
Challenges facing China relate to several factors that affect its willingness and capacity to conduct robust peacekeeping. China needs to resolve the following questions:

- What does impartiality mean in today’s peacekeeping context? China’s government-oriented approaches to foreign policy and ‘robust peacekeeping’ are not necessarily compatible, and a more nuanced understanding of ‘impartiality’ is necessary.
- How would China respond if it had to accept casualties as a result of deploying its infantry (combat) forces?
- Does China have the capacity to decentralise command in a way that would enable its forces to react to the situation on the ground, independently of the centre? This takes a lot of time and education to achieve.
- Can the PLA overcome the structural problem that makes it difficult for senior officers with experience in UN operations, and capable of commanding in English, to be promoted within the current Chinese system?

Another challenge for UK-China co-operation is resistance by African states themselves. African states are not content to allow the major powers to act with little or no consultation. UK-China co-operation should aim towards trilateral co-operation. However, one needs to be aware of the reality that states, including China and the UK, are self-interested.

**Peacekeeping: Potential Co-operation Programmes**

Establish a joint peacekeeping research centre at the PLA National Defence University, in order to institutionalise mid- to low-level military exchange. The risk-averse nature of the PLA bureaucracy and personnel makes ad hoc issue-based meeting opportunities hard to come by and ineffectual as PLA officers are unwilling to risk their career by overstepping their authority. The UK’s complex bureaucratic process does not necessarily encourage new initiatives. To address these issues, there is need to establish regular, institutionalised meetings in which recent developments and current issues can be discussed. That way, meetings become bureaucratic requirements, and we can expect more opportunities to discuss new initiatives. A possible means to institutionalise a regular dialogue on peacekeeping would be the establishment of a joint research centre at the PLA National Defence University.

Set up regular dialogue on peacekeeping at international forums sanctioned at the highest political level. This can be achieved by establishing a sub-committee on peacekeeping and making joint statements on peacekeeping co-operation at such discussion forums as the official UK-China Strategic Dialogue. This will have significant impact on information exchange and co-operative actions between the two countries.
Encourage dialogue among a wider set of policy community actors in the UK and China in order to promote a better understanding of conflicts, and reconcile different perspectives on peacekeeping and peace-building. Such dialogue should be used as an opportunity to find some common understanding of peacekeeping and peace-building, which can be transmitted to policy-makers. These dialogues should aim to include voices and perspectives of policy communities from conflict-affected states themselves.

UK-China dialogue should also promote conflict sensitivity in peace-building and overseas assistance activities, including aid and development projects delivered by British and Chinese actors. These projects bring significant implications to the context in which peacekeepers work in conflict-prone regions.

Being ‘conflict sensitive’ means understanding the issues that divide actors or societies in which external actors work. The key to conflict sensitivity is an in-depth understanding of local environments and power relations that lead to division. Such understanding helps external actors target their assistance to promote peace.

Engage in training programmes for Chinese peacekeeping troops: renew the UK’s English language training programme, which ran from 2007 to 2009. Chinese participants in the roundtable suggested the symbolic importance of such programmes. Support China’s development of peacekeeping simulation models for Chinese military troops in English. Develop case-studies of UK robust peacekeeping operations, with the aim of encouraging China to contribute infantry forces eventually.

Conduct research into how military co-operation can be broadened to co-operation between the paramilitary organisations of the two countries. Co-operation between the UK’s Royal Military Police and China’s People’s Armed Police is one avenue to be considered, given that UN peacekeeping operations need a police contribution.
Post-Disaster Assistance

Current Chinese and UK Policies and Practices

In overseas disaster relief efforts, the PLA usually operates within China’s International Search and Rescue (CISAR) team. The CISAR team consists of three components: the PLA personnel assigned by the PLA Emergency Response Office, medical personnel, and earthquake specialists. Occasionally, the PLA also conducts operations independently of the CISAR team (e.g., airlift by PLA Air Force in Pakistan flooding in 2010).

The CISAR team passed the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) endorsed by UNOCHA in 2009. Teams with the required skills and equipment may be certified by the IEC. The CISAR team co-operates with a number of countries (e.g., Singapore, Japan, Germany and Netherlands) to conduct exercises and training in disaster emergency responses. The China National Earthquake Response Support Service (NERSS) has the biggest training base in Asia.

China’s international co-operation on disaster relief is increasing not only outside, but also within China. In the wake of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, China received funds and relief supplies from a total of 171 countries and regions and twenty international organisations. While the United Kingdom did not directly contribute personnel or technological support to the emergency response effort, it donated $2 million.

China co-operates with international disaster relief actors not only through governmental and inter-governmental channels, but also through The International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS), a non-governmental global forum for education and policy discussion. China established a TIEMS Beijing Chapter in 2010.

The UK also contributes to international search and rescue operations, taking a civilian-led approach. When an emergency happens, the government calls a meeting of Cabinet Office Briefing Room A (COBRA), a cross-government forum for crisis response. The UK MoD’s specialists and reservists with search-and-rescue expertise are called upon only at the request of the Department for International Development (DfID), which plays a leading role in funding post-disaster and humanitarian assistance (see ‘Humanitarian/Disaster Relief Operations, Joint Warfare Publication 3-52’).

In complex emergencies in conflict or post-conflict environments (e.g., Somalia, Sri Lanka and South Sudan), the UK has developed a conflict-sensitive approach to the delivery of humanitarian aid, in association with
the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (see p. 12 for a conflict-sensitive approach).

In complex emergencies in conflict or post-conflict environments, China delivers humanitarian aid according to the host government’s request. China does not pay much attention to the impact of its humanitarian assistance on conflicts or post-conflict complexity.

**Analysis**

Considering international and domestic disaster relief as one of the prioritised tasks for its national security apparatus, China is committed to contributing to international disaster relief efforts. Contributing to post-disaster assistance features prominently in China’s responsible power policy.

The institutions responsible for providing international post-disaster assistance are different in China and the UK. In China, the PLA has a prominent role in the provision of such assistance, whereas the UK takes a civilian-led approach, and military specialists and reservists are called upon only when the DfID considers their contribution as necessary.

China and the UK have different approaches to complex emergencies. The UK has recently developed a conflict-sensitive approach, whereas China’s aid is delivered according to the host government’s needs, rather than considering the impact of humanitarian aid on the overall conflict.

**Opportunities and Challenges for UK-China Co-operation**

If the UK is serious about engaging with the PLA and advancing UK-China military co-operation, it is important to address the PLA’s prioritised tasks in any co-operation agenda, in order to encourage the PLA to engage with the UK further. Given that one of the five priority areas for the PLA is post-disaster assistance, co-operation on this activity provides an opportunity to do so.

On-site co-operation among those who provide assistance side-by-side in the immediate aftermath of disasters is necessary for international post-disaster assistance. It is important to establish co-operation mechanisms during times of normality in order to raise the effectiveness of international disaster assistance responses at times of emergency. In particular, more information sharing (e.g., sharing of selected satellite images) is especially needed.
When considering co-operation between China and the UK on post-disaster assistance, it is essential to bear in mind the difference in bureaucratic structures and the ways the military forces are used in the two countries. Any co-operation needs to involve the CISAR team, including the PLA in China, and the DfID in the UK. Because of structural differences, China and the UK lack a point of contact to initiate such co-operation.

The difference in the Chinese and UK approaches to complex emergencies can present challenges when both countries attempt to work on the same area. China’s government-oriented approach may conflict with the UK’s conflict-sensitive approach on the ground. However, the difference may also present an opportunity for co-operation, as both approaches can be complementary if well co-ordinated. Both sides should study the benefits and shortfalls of the different approaches to aid.

**Post-Disaster Assistance: Potential Co-operation Programmes**

*Arrange joint familiarisation visits between relevant agencies of the two countries.* This will increase mutual awareness of UK and Chinese bureaucratic environments surrounding post-disaster assistance, and help practitioners to identify points of contact. This is more efficient than conducting joint training exercises, as the two military forces would not be joining in the disaster relief at the same point.

*Build institutionalised communication channels* among related disaster relief agencies, and *create regular platforms for information sharing* between the respective agencies. Specifically, China would benefit from a sharing of geographical satellite images.

*Encourage UK policy-makers, practitioners and scholars to join the TIEMS.* This will help to increase the number of points of contact with Chinese counterparts through such international non-governmental networks, and provide an opportunity to discuss ideas and options for further co-operation. The TIEMS Vice President is Deputy Director and Chief Engineer of the National Earthquake Response Support Service in China. Further informal discussion between China and the UK can be facilitated through **TIEMS conferences**.

*Co-operate to jointly train post-disaster assistance personnel in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region,* by sharing lessons learnt by international search and rescue teams.

*Conduct a joint study on a conflict-sensitive approach to the delivery of humanitarian aid in complex emergencies.* This should be aimed to enhance each other’s understanding of different approaches to post-disaster humanitarian aid, rather than necessarily to encourage China to alter its approach.
Anti-Piracy Operations

Current Chinese and UK Policies and Practices

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden is a threat to international shipping. The overall economic cost of Somali piracy is estimated to be around US$ 7–12 billion annually. The economic interest in keeping the Gulf of Aden open for commercial shipping is very high, given that 70 per cent of China’s and 30 per cent of Britain’s energy supplies are imported through it. The risk of being taken hostage is a serious security concern, and significantly raises the insurance costs to the shipping and energy industries.

National interests in relation to anti-piracy are not limited to economic issues. They also relate to the international responsibility that the UK and China wish to undertake (or at least wish to look as if they are undertaking).

In response, the UNSC has passed several resolutions aimed at deterring, preventing and repressing acts of piracy, including UNSCR 1814, 1816, 1838 and 1976. China voted in favour of these resolutions along with all other UNSC members.

Encouraged by Western countries and invited by Somalia, in 2008 China began sending fleets of three ships, 800 seamen and two helicopters to contribute to international anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden. To date, the Chinese navy has sent nine fleets, escorted over 4,000 ships from fifty countries, and rescued forty ships from potential attacks and eight ships kidnapped by pirates.

The international military response to piracy in the Gulf of Aden is carried out by Combined Task Force 150, Combined Task Force 151, EUNAVFOR (under Operation Atalanta), NATO, and various national missions (including those of China, Japan, Malaysia and India).

Co-operation between the forces occurs by means of various multilateral platforms, such as the monthly planning conference Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE), the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) HQ in Bahrain, the Maritime Security Centre (Horn of Africa), MSCHOA, and the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.

The US Navy, together with EU and further NATO forces, patrol the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) – a 560 nautical-mile-long security corridor for international shipping. China has decided to deploy its navy on independent patrols for the safety of Chinese and international merchant ships.
Currently, at least two thirds of apprehended pirates are released by international forces. The international law of piracy gives states permission to prosecute piracy suspects (called ‘permissive jurisdiction’ rather than ‘mandatory jurisdiction’), but to do so requires an effective national law implemented within each state’s national legal system. Most major states have outdated or inadequate laws to address piracy (e.g., the US has not updated its piracy law since 1826; the UK needs to assemble various pieces of legislation to prosecute piracy suspects). Most pirates are not put on trial by the flag state of the capturing warship, but are transferred to a regional partner for trial. This is not always easy for a range of legal and practical reasons, but has proved effective in many individual instances. As a result, over 1,000 piracy suspects are on remand or on trial. So far, very few have been acquitted.

**Analysis**

China’s contribution to anti-piracy operations is strategically beneficial to China and the UK:

- As China sends its navy in response to an international request, the operation **improves China’s image as a responsible state**
- Real operations in the battlefield are vital for **the training of the PLA Navy’s personnel and the testing of the newest warships**. So far, around 6,000 Chinese sailors have served on operations in the Gulf of Aden
- There is a lack of ‘force enabling’ resources such as tankers and medical ships. The UK will **benefit from higher burden-sharing with China**.

Some analysts claim that China should join the US, EU and NATO forces in jointly patrolling the IRTC, because having highly decentralised and dispersed co-operation mechanisms, with a number of transit corridors, looks inefficient.

**Opportunities and Challenges for UK-China Co-operation**

Anti-Piracy operations can offer opportunities for UK-China co-operation in many ways. As piracy threatens trade routes important to both the UK and China, there is a clear unity of vision for the necessity of anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Both countries, and indeed the international community at large, seek stability in the Horn of Africa.

Because there is no international lobby for Somali pirates, anti-piracy operations provide an opportunity for the unprecedented level of co-operation among large international forces to secure the seas.
Within the framework of SHADE, the PLAN has proven to be open to information sharing. However, the PLAN is not willing to be commanded by another country, nor is it willing to command, i.e. take responsibility for international efforts. While the UK has accumulated experience on overseas operations over many years, UK policy-makers and analysts need to remember that China is new to them. Chinese policy-makers and military officers appear nervous and uncertain about how to conduct such operations.

Current mechanisms centring on the framework of SHADE should be maintained because:

- **Protection of ships has been achieved based on the current mechanisms**
- **Establishing a more highly centralised co-ordination mechanism would not be realistic.** Most states do not have continuous presence in the Gulf. Their presence depends on the level of domestic political support they enjoy, and on domestic public opinion in favour of the resourcing needed for mobilisation to conduct anti-piracy operations
- **Setting up a single command mechanism will take a great deal of time and resources**
- Prosecution of pirates is a key challenge for the international community. There is currently a lack of political will and logistical capability to transport piracy suspects to the country of the flag state of the warship that apprehends them
- **One of the root causes of piracy is instability in Somalia.** Somalia presents a good case in which alignment between China and the UK exists: both countries agree that there is a need to address instability; and the host country provides consent to intervention. This presents a good entry point on which to build confidence for humanitarian intervention elsewhere
- **China has consistently urged the UNSC to take action in Somalia to deploy a UN peacekeeping mission.** However, Western nations, including the UK, are reluctant to do so.

**Anti-Piracy Operations: Potential Co-operation Programmes**

*Share force-enabling capabilities*, such as tankers, medical ships, and bases. Unlike the UK, China does not have support facilities in the vicinity of the Gulf that would increase the potential for co-operation.

*Establish and/or improve technological interoperability between the different navies*, in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future international operations.

*Institutionalise regular information sharing meetings* between the PLAN and the Royal Navy, by building on links established under the framework of SHADE.
Establish a common naval guideline on how to apprehend piracy suspects. When there is no common legal system for prosecution, the international community should agree guidelines on how to apprehend piracy suspects, to avoid compromising subsequent prosecutions. This will increase the effectiveness of anti-piracy operations.

Address the root cause of the piracy problem by going beyond military responses and improving stability in Somalia in the long term. The UK and China, as P5 states, need to take the lead to focus the political will of the international community on seeking solutions to stabilise the Horn of Africa region.
Conclusion: Policy Recommendations on Future Co-operation Programmes

Recommendations: Basic Stances for UK-China Co-operation

To the UK and China:
Institutionalise co-operation. One frequent concern relates to the risk-averse nature of the PLA bureaucracy and personnel. With China emerging from a long history of international isolation, individual PLA officers, fearful of committing a political error, are not necessarily motivated to take up new ideas for co-operation. The UK’s complex bureaucratic process does not necessarily encourage new initiatives. To address these issues, we need to dispense with ad hoc, issue-based short-term meetings, and instead raise current issues under a framework of recurring institutionalised meetings. In this way, bureaucracy and risk-aversion will work in favour of co-operation.

To the UK:
Do not underestimate how intimidating the initiation of overseas operations can be for China if such operations are new to them. It is easy for the UK, with its years of experience in overseas operations, to underestimate the sense of intimidation. The PLA has been a closed, inward-looking institution, with very little exposure to the outside world, which makes it more sensitive to exposing weaknesses in its forces. It is imperative to recognise the sensitivity of the PLA to the challenges of open participation in overseas deployments, and to co-operate with it in a way that addresses the challenges.

To China:
Overcome the ‘victimhood mentality’ and take international leadership. Although we need to acknowledge that a sense of humiliation and a victimhood mentality still existing in China, it is important that China does not let these interfere with the aim of achieving international peace. When China has something positive to contribute to international peace, it should no longer ‘bide time and hide brightness’ (tao guang yang hui). Instead, it should bring its positive contribution to the fore of international politics.

Recommendations: Specific Co-operation Programmes

Peacekeeping
- Establish a joint peacekeeping research centre at the PLA National Defense University, in order to institutionalise mid- to low-level military exchange
- Set up regular dialogue on peacekeeping at international forums sanctioned at the highest political level, such as official UK-China Strategic Dialogue
• Encourage dialogue among civil society actors of the UK, China, and conflict states, in order to promote a better understanding of conflicts, and reconcile different perspectives on peacekeeping and peace-building
• Promote conflict sensitivity in peace-building and overseas assistance activities
• Engage in training programmes for Chinese peacekeeping troops
• Conduct research into how military co-operation can be broadened to include co-operation between paramilitary organisations of the two countries.

Post-Disaster Assistance
• Arrange joint familiarisation visits between relevant agencies of the two countries
• Build institutionalised communication channels and create regular platforms for information sharing
• Encourage UK policy-makers, practitioners and scholars to join the TIEMS
• Co-operate to jointly train post-disaster assistance personnel in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region
• Conduct a joint study on a conflict-sensitive approach to the delivery of humanitarian aid in complex emergencies.

Anti-Piracy Operations
• Share force-enabling capabilities
• Establish and/or improve technological interoperability between the different navies
• Institutionallise regular information sharing meetings between the PLAN and British Navy
• Establish a common naval guideline on how to apprehend piracy suspects
• Address the root cause of the piracy problem by helping to stabilise Somalia.

Further Security Issues in the Longer Term
Peacekeeping, post-disaster assistance and anti-piracy operations are some of the main challenges on which the UK and China can co-operate in the short- to mid-term. There are other non-traditional security challenges on which the UK and Chinese militaries might find it beneficial to co-operate in the future: for example, non-combatant evacuation operations, and countering the proliferation of conventional arms. It is important for policy-makers, scholars and civil society actors to build confidence and explore other areas in which military co-operation benefit the two countries.
Non-combatant evacuation operations: If another Libya-like situation were to occur elsewhere, the UK and China would have a duty to protect their citizens living and working in the country concerned. The UK and China will need to share information about where such threats might arise, and co-ordinate evacuation operations. Doing so will create several opportunities for co-operation. To facilitate on-the-ground co-ordination of any such operations in the future, we should aim to conclude a memorandum of understanding between the UK and China, while simultaneously co-operating on information sharing and joint exercises on an ad hoc basis.

Countering the proliferation of conventional arms: The two countries need to co-operate to combat effectively the excessive proliferation of conventional arms (especially small arms and light weapons) in regions of instability, where they fuel conflict, humanitarian disasters and insecurity, with global knock-on effects. China and the UK can do this through sharing experience on effective risk assessments in their export controls, jointly supporting other countries’ and regions’ initiatives and through focusing diplomatic attention on the UN Arms Trade Treaty to be negotiated in July 2012.

Involving paramilitary organisations and development agencies: The two countries have a common challenge in combating trans-border crimes such as human trafficking and drug trafficking. Co-operation on this area will need to be broadened to include a range of government agencies beyond the two military forces. These could include paramilitary organisations and development agencies.