

China's Deployment of UN Peacekeeping Operations- Overview: @PKO Now! No.7

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China's Deployment of Peacekeeping Forces

Recently, China sends peacekeeping troops worldwide. According to the ranking by the United Nations,¹ China deploys 1,930 personnel to various parts of the world as of the end of May, 2012. This is ranked as 15th, among 117 countries which is currently contributing to UN Peacekeeping Operations. (FYI: Japan is ranked 38th by sending 488 personnel as of the same date.) China sends the largest number of personnel to UN Peacekeeping Operations among so called "Permanent 5 (P5)", those permanent members of the Security Council.

China's History of Peacekeeping Operations

China is, however, rather a latecomer when it comes to participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations. It is debatable exactly when China began sending peacekeepers, for it sent civilians earlier than military personnel, but in any case, it has about 20 years of history.² Considering Japan commemorates its 20th anniversary of peacekeeping operations this year, there is not much difference between these two countries in their history of peacekeeping operations.³

Then, what has made China so proactive despite the initial cautious attitude? China has repeatedly insisted that peacekeeping operations should respect sovereignty and should be no interference to internal affairs in addition to so called UN principles (consent of the parties,

impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate.)⁴ In the 2000's, however, it is said that one of the reasons why China actively promotes peacekeeping operations is that China has become alarmed by the fact that multinational forces such as NATO may take over UN -leading Peacekeeping Operations as effective conflict solutions. Yet, China could have an influence over UN Peacekeeping Operations as a P5 member in the Security Council.⁵ China seems to intend to fortify its status in the international community by being responsible "Power" along with its remarkable economy growth.

Characteristics of China's Deployment

China's troops deployed for Peacekeeping Operations are mainly engineering troops as is the case in Japan. To New York, China also sends officials of People's Liberation Army as Japan does. In 2007, China led MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) by sending a general as force commander.⁶ All these movements give us an impression that China is taking a step-by-step approach to being an important actor in UN Peacekeeping Operations.

In China's deployment, it is apparent that it focuses on Africa. China's high-ranking officials, including Ambassador to the UN, have repeatedly emphasized the importance of involvement in Africa. Currently, 16 Peacekeeping Operations are underway, among which 7 operations take place on African soils. China sends military personnel to 12 operations, among which 6 operations are held in African countries. At the same time, China is working together closely with African regional organizations; in Darfur, Sudan, China took a leading role in establishing UNMID,⁷ a hybrid operation with African Union and the UN.⁸

Many civilians are also a part of UN Peacekeeping Missions. Civilian police force is indispensable for the Missions, such as in the area of security sector reform. In 2000, China started sending civilian police force to UN Peacekeeping Operations, starting from East Timor.⁹ On top of that, currently, China is sending the police force to the Missions such as UNMISS (South Sudan), UNMIL (Liberia) and MINUSTAH (Haiti). By April 2011, it has sent 1,666 Civilian Police members to 7 Missions altogether.¹⁰ In 2000, ahead of its military

counterpart, China's civilian police established a peacekeeping operations center for civilians in Langfang City, Hebei Province, on the outskirts of Beijing City for training candidates chosen from all over China.

End Notes

- ¹ United Nations. "Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations. Month of Report: 31-May-12." United Nations. (http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2012/may12_2.pdf, (accessed 2012-06-28).)
- ² Jiefangjun (Liberation Army) "Zhongguo Canjia de Lianheguo Weichiheping Xingdong" (UN Peacekeeping Operations China participates) Jiefangjunbaoshe (Liberation Army Press). (<http://www.chinamil.com.cn/item/peace/txt/17.htm>, (accessed 12-03-09).)
- ³ Masayuki Masuda "Chugokuno Kokuren PKO Seisaku to Heiin Butaihaken wo Meguru Bunmyaku Hensen-Kokusaikouken Sekininron no Houga to Seisaku Tenkai" (The Change of Political Context of China's UN PKO Policy and Deployment of military personnel and troops- Birth of International Contribution and Responsibility and Policy Development) Bouei Kenkyuusho Kiyou (NIDS Security Studies). 2011, Vol.13(2), p.1-24. p.1.
- ⁴ Jiefangjun (Liberation Army) "Zhongguo Guanyu Weihe Xingdong de Yuanze" (Principles of Peacekeeping Operations China) Jiefangjun Baoshe (Liberation Army Press) (<http://www.chinamil.com.cn/item/peace/txt/28.htm>, (accessed 2012-03-09).)
- ⁵ Masuda p.7-8.
- ⁶ Huang, Chin-Hao. Principles and Praxis of China's Peacekeeping. International Peacekeeping. 2011, vol.18(3), p.257-270. p. 263.
- ⁷ Jiefangjun (Liberation Army) "Zhongguo Guanyu Weihe Xingdong de Yuanze" (Principles of Peacekeeping Operations China) Jiefangjun Baoshe (Liberation Army Press) (<http://www.chinamil.com.cn/item/peace/txt/28.htm>, (accessed 2012-03-09).)
- ⁸ Masuda p.21.
- ⁹ Gong An Bu (Ministry of Public Security). "Wei Shejie Heping Gongxian'Zhongguo Liliang'Zhuongguo Jingcha Weihe Shenian Ji" (Contribution to the World Peace-China's Capability-Ten years memorials for Peacekeeping Operations by China's Police) 2010-02-07. (<http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n983040/n1372264/n1372546/2330980.html>, (accessed 2012-03-09).)
- ¹⁰ Zheng, Xin. "Gong An Bu Yi Xiang Lianheguo Paiqian Weihe Jingcha 1666 Renci" (Ministry of Security has already sent 1,666 personnel to Peacekeeping Police) Zhongguo Weihe Jingcha (China Peacekeeping Police.) 2011-04-22. (<http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n983040/n1372264/n1372421/2760264.html>, (accessed 2012-03-09).)