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MASTER THESIS

AYŞEGÜL ÜZER

T.C.

ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TRANSFORMATION OF CHINA'S NATONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY: A QUEST FOR HEGEMONY?

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Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Merve Seren Yeşiltaş

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ONAY SAYFASI

Ayşegül Üzer tarafından hazırlanan "Transformation of China's National Defense Strategy: A Quest for Hegemony? "adlı tez çalışması aşağıdaki jüri tarafından oy birliği ile Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı'nda Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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STATEMENT

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis has been obtained and presented following academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work, otherwise I accept all legal responsibility. (21.12.2022)

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ABSTRACT

Transformation of China's National Defense Strategy: A Quest for Hegemony?

This thesis focuses on China's defense strategy, as it has been striding in confidence with its significant economic progress, especially under the Deng administration and thus on how China stands as a new superpower candidate with its increasing power in the economic and military context. Apart from the United States (US)'s growing into a superpower with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China has been shown as a new superpower candidate in the world over the years with its progress in many areas such as military, economic, and political. But the most important factor is its international recognition. This study aims to focus on China's military power and, in this context, its defense strategy, and to examine the transformation of China's defense strategy during the last three terms by the heads of state, namely, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. For this purpose, the thesis attempts to present the subject transformation based on the guidance of the defense documents published by the Chinese government with academic studies and developments.

Keywords: China, Defense, Transformation, Threat Perception, White papers.

ÖZET

Çin’in Ulusal Savunma Stratejisinin Dönüşümü: Hegemonya Arayışı mı?

Bu tez, Çin'in özellikle Deng yönetimi altında kaydettiği önemli ekonomik ilerleme ile güven içinde ilerleyen savunma stratejisine ve böylece Çin'in ekonomik ve askeri bağlamda artan gücüyle yeni bir süper güç adayı olarak nasıl durduğuna odaklanmaktadır. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin (ABD) Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasıyla bir süper güç haline gelmesi dışında, Çin, yıllar içinde askeri, ekonomik, siyasi gibi birçok alanda kaydettiği ilerleme ile dünyada yeni bir süper güç adayı olarak gösteriliyor. Ancak en önemli faktör uluslararası tanınırlığıdır. Bu çalışma, Çin'in askeri gücüne ve bu bağlamda savunma stratejisine odaklanmayı ve Çin'in savunma stratejisinin son üç dönemdeki devlet başkanları Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao ve Xi Jinping tarafından nasıl dönüştürüldüğünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla tez, Çin hükümeti tarafından yayınlanan savunma belgelerinin rehberliğinde konu dönüşümü akademik çalışmalar ve gelişmelerle ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Savunma, Dönüşüm, Tehdit Algısı, Savunma Strateji Belgeleri.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A2 - AD	Anti Access/ Area Denial
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
C4ISR	Command, Control, Combat, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CSCAP	Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia- Pacific
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DIC	Disciplinary Inspection Commission
DOC	Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
DOD	Department of Defense
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
FOCAC	Forum on China–Africa Cooperation
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy
JWG	Joint Working Group
LAC	Line of Actual Control
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NEACD	Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PLA	People's Liberation Army of China
PLAA	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PLASAF	People's Liberation Second Artillery Force
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
ROC	Republic of China (between 1912 and 1949)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SFA	Striving for achievement
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
TRA	Taiwan Relations Act
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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1. INTRODUCTION

"*To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.*[1]

Sun Tzu, The Art of War Ch. III.

With the Post-Cold War era unfolding at the end of 20th century, and thus, in line with the subsequent end of the bipolar system, the world was urged to explore new systems to replace the previous one. Emergence of unipolar era under the leadership of the US at first phase of the post-cold era, could not last long indeed, as it became clear soon enough that a unipolar order would not be sustainable especially when the international order evolves into a system where progress through competition would result in multipolarity only . China also found its stance amid the sharp increase in the international multipolar competition with its economic reform process accelerated under Deng's administration as of 1992, and its annual real Gross domestic product (GDP) was measured as 9.5% on average between 1979 and 2018. (Morrison, 2014, pp. 5–6). China's economy, on average, was seen to be able to double its size in real terms every eight years. With this economic growth, China has become a significant actor in the international system, playing an important role in the balance to be established, amid the competition among countries in search of a new world order.

Although China's economic growth first initiated cooperation among countries, in direct proportion to this, competition never seized to re-surface and gained further acceleration. In face of the 'Chinese threat' rhetoric, which may slow down its accelerated progress, The State Council Information Office of China started to publish defense documents regularly as of 1995 to declare that China would not be a threat and would always be ready to participate in peace-related processes.

Following its establishment in 1949, the People's Republic of China embarked on a socialism-oriented reform process, which aimed to solidify the ideological system. In the post-Cold War era, the focus on economic development has increased in every

[1] For the first English translation in 1910 of The Art of War, known as the oldest military treatise in the world, please see; https://web.archive.org/web/20040813070137/http://www.chinapage.com/sunzi-e.html

period, and with Xi Jinping coming to power in 2012, the ideological priorities of the Chinese Communist Party have been further emphasized. Aiming to create a new order with the highest autocracy possible, Xi demonstrated his new approach by means of launching the projects such as 'One Belt, One Road' and 'Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank' in the 21st-century world. It is clear that these projects are the reflections of three elements that can be listed as the "Chinese Dream", "Community of Common Destiny" and "Striving for Success" , on the basis of which Chinese idea of foreign policy is established.

Becoming the central point amid the ever-increasing tensions as a result of conflicting interests of the emerging economies over the years, China frequently found itself having to face the international scrutiny. For instance, although strictly defined as a domestic issue by Beijing, the Taiwan issue gradually grew into one, under the security-defense matter. Similarly, China's domestic policy towards the Uyghurs living in East Turkestan has been subject to the scrutiny of international actors, and this domestic distress forces Beijing within the scope of non-traditional threats such as "extremism". Last but not least, America's presence in Asia-Pacific has further fueled up Xi's ambition to become a superpower in this intense international environment, and thus brought afore the Chinese defense policy as a prominent component.

With its rapid economic growth in this intense period of competition, and especially with Xi's obvious autocratic steps to raise the state's power, China soon proved to deserve all the international attention and to be reviewed in all aspects. In addition to whether China would be pursuing to become a hegemon, China's modality of self-defense and threat perception in this rising period has also been a matter of curiosity. In this regard, this thesis aims to examine China's national defense and security process, by means of utilizing the defense documents, namely the White Papers, regularly published by The State Council Information Office of China at regular intervals starting as of 1995.

Being crucial to the Chinese government with its multi-function value, the White Papers are seen to serve a number of purposes, such as increasing the transparency of China's military processes, increasing the global cohesion of the armed forces, and Beijing's publicizing security concerns by explaining the threat perception, and finally, reinforcing and teaching the Chinese people's sense of unity and solidarity in national defense.(Zhenqiang, 2005)

This introduction section will include how the topic of this thesis has been addressed in general terms in literature and will explain the methodology applied. In the section titled Historical Background, the concept of security in international relations will be briefly explained, including China's approach to this concept, and then developments in post-Soviet China will be discussed until the first defense document is published. Starting with the third chapter/section??, the technical defense documents published by the Chinese government will be introduced. This review is divided into two main lines; the technical documents of the Jiang Zemin period dating back to 2002 will be examined together with the developments in the scope of defense-security during that period, then the technical documents and developments published during the administrations of Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping as of 2004 and later will be examined.

Year	Name	Doctrine
1956	Defending the homeland	Defense
1960	Resist in the North, Open in the South	Defense
1964	Luring the Enemy in Deep	Defense
1977	Active Defense-Luring the Enemy in Deep	Defense
1980	People's War under Modern Conditions/Active Defense	Defense
1988	Dealing with Local Wars and Military Conflict	Defense
1993	Winning Local Wars under High-Technology Conditions	Offense
2004	Winning Local Wars under Informationized Conditions	Offense
2014	Winning Informationized Local Wars	Offense

Source: The table is adopted from Ilhan, Bekir. "China's Evolving Military Doctrine After the Cold War." SETA Analysis 59 (2020): 13.

Table 1. 1 China's Military Doctrines (1956-2014)

This thesis addresses Chinese military doctrines and their due transformation in such direct proportion to the presidential term changes, in terms of defense and security concepts. China's perspective on national defense has been undergoing changes as of Jiang Zemin's term in office. Coming at a time when the threat points against China increased after the events of the Hu period, Xi revealed a clear transformation by revealing his own strategy with high targets. China, led by Xi, has been adopting a more proactive approach in terms of national defense and security. The most important

contribution of this study is that it was prepared primarily by blending different approaches to China, so that the intersection sets of different approaches can be estimated.

The processes in which China displayed sharp changes in defense and security have been directly proportional to the change of presidents. For instance, the first post-Cold War doctrine that was introduced with the Jiang Zemin presidency in 1993, was 'Winning Local Wars in High-Tech Conditions'. Then, during Hu Jintao presidency, the "information" approach was included in the concept of defense and security, and the 2004 doctrine emphasized the coordinated flow of information between services carrying out joint operations. The concept of RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs) came with it. China's last doctrine, called "Winning Knowledge-Based Local Wars", came with the Xi administration in 2014. Although the focus is on the development of previous doctrines, this doctrine adopts an active defense-centered understanding of Xi's different approach to security.

China's defense strategy alterations, as military doctrines have always undergone changes since 1949. For instance, The doctrines until 1993 were based on the concept of "People's War" and on the approach of advancing and gaining time, based on manpower. One of the main principles of the People's War doctrine as listed by Yunzhu in 1995 is "People's War must be fought with a triadic force composed of the main forces, the local forces, and the guerrilla forces". The 1980 doctrine, called people's war/active defense under modern conditions, covers the protection of border security with more layered combat.

The fact that Deng, the term prime minister, announced in 1980 during the Cold War era that they would adopt active defense against the Soviet threat (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2019, p. 139) meant a shift in China's military strategy after a long time. The third and most significant strategic change since the end of the Second World War was materialized in 1993 (M. Taylor Fravel, 2002, p. 87). This strategy was created with the motivation to ensure sovereignty and territorial integrity, to create a strong state of trust that will be realized through modernization and renewal. The most fundamental events in determining this new change, the Gulf War in 1990 and afterward, and also the Tiananmen uprising in China were effective (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2019, pp. 186–187).

It is in accordance with the level of threat perception that military strategies, security policies and total defense strategy are drafted and are revised in the light of changing conditions. Due to China's geographical location, its border with many countries brings along the inevitability of tension, and a variety of threats. For instance, as per the international relations with nearby countries, Japan's presence as an important power in the region with economic relations, and India with constant border problems China certainly was not in the most idealistic location. Especially with the addition of Taiwan's inclusion in the mainland followed by regional land disputes re-surfacing, the issues for China have to resolve were at its highest, after the Soviet collapse (Nathan, Andrew J., 2015, pp. 65–191; J. Yuan, 1998, pp. 61–62) . With its internal political order being also complicated, China inherently has a lot on its plate to deal with in terms of national security. The end of the Cold War and system change caused the threat factors to be recalculated. Bush's "new world order" statements brought about the idea of US hegemony, and this was the primary issue, which Beijing perceived as the danger (Shambaug, 1992, p. 92).

The sources of the thesis mostly consist of academic studies in English and in Turkish in the literature within the scope of its subject. Technical documents will be examined by content analysis;. It is designed to observe the transformation of China's national defense and security through data collected from articles, books, reports, and news sources This thesis aims to explore the presence of harmony or possible contradiction if there is any, between the discourses in the white papers and what is experienced in practice, throughout a series of different administrative processes of China at the point of national defense.

This thesis will attempt to show the details of the relations between China's understanding of national defense and its approach to the international world. The conclusion part will discuss whether or not there is a transformation in China's defense approach and the existence of a hegemonic effort with all this information.

1.1. Literature Review and Method of the Study

Security and defense-focused studies in literature have been diverse, not only in terms of the wide range of topics but also in vast variety of methods utilized. For the purpose of this thesis, in order to assess Chinese defense strategy on different levels, it would be appropriate to begin by referring to the concept itself, as defined in the

Quadrennial defense review in 2014: '…The strategy is to balance the available data' (Hagel, 2014). That each and every country holds their own unique security and defense strategies renders it difficult to determine the standard measurement criteria to enable comparisons. In this regard, one successful way to enable comparison would be to set the criterion on financial aspect, which is the defense budget allocated to achieve the goals set forth by the subject country. That is, specific goals of countries and the budget allocated to achieve this goal will demonstrate the risk-taking capacity, and this financial approach turns into a criterion for comparing countries in the field of defense (Young, 2018).

This study will examine Chinese defense strategy transformation and Chinese perspective on hegemonic concerns. While interpreting today's China, there is an intense reference to the ancient Chinese traditions and culture, the political moves of the decision-makers are explained through those codes by establishing similarities with the rulers of ancient times .The aim of this study and its different aspects according to the general literature is to examine the decision-makers related to the Chinese defense and security processes within their own periods, not through the codes of traditional administrators. Since the citations of the study will be mostly from academic articles in English, the emphasis on cultural codes will be interpreted and transferred in the context of the described period and event.

The focus of studying China's defense throughout the English literature is on the change in army's structure and strategy, and on the decision-making assessment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) as an actor.(Cheung, T. M, Mahnken, T. G, & Ross, 2011; Diakidis, 2009; Saunders, Phillip C., and Andrew Scobell, 2015; Shambaugh, 2002).

This study mainly aims to analyze China's threat perception by examining the defense technical reports published by the Chinese government. With the analysis of these documents, China's orientations in its defense strategy are identified and the study aims to reach the effect of the motivation to be hegemon as the driving force of these trends. Trying to avoid hot conflicts with the Deng administration and rising over time with economic development plans, China became a country that was shown as a superpower candidate with the dissolution of the Soviets. The country that will be the hegemon is expected to provide many elements such as technological, economic, and military and

prestige at a high level. This research studies the military-security part of China from these elements. In addition to the analysis of the documents, the examination of defense spending and the structure of the army also highlight the *de facto* steps taken by Chinese decision-makers and explains the impact on national defense transformation in the process.

The study tries to analyze China's defense strategy at the state level and system level, although the leadership level is in the main center. The reflections of the existing threat perceptions of the states according to the Periods of the Leaders are conveyed by emphasizing the international events.

Threat perception is the independent variable in the study, while defense strategy is the dependent variable. Since the focus of the study is defense documents, the temporal domain will be examined starting from the first document in 1995 after the Cold War, which created a significant change.

The main purpose of this research is to understand the transformation of Chinese defense strategy after the Cold War. The primary motivation in this transformation has been explored in connection with China's quest to achieve hegemonic status. The developments in the processes between white papers and documents published by the State Council Information Bureau of the People's Republic of China in 1995, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2019 are the primary source of the study. In this study, these documents are analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis is an objective research method that enables the researched subject to be defined and interpreted by examining verbal, visual or written data.

The study is primarily supported by the historical background from the end of the Cold War to the first defense document published, and academic studies are used at this stage. To support the next process, the first part also focuses on security conceptually and is supported by the teachings of theories. The arguments for this thesis are based on the qualitative content analysis of the defense technical report documents published by the State Council Information Bureau of the People's Republic of China (PRC State Council). The developments, academic studies, reports, and statements made by decision-makers within the relevant periods also support this study.

Qualitative research is a process of holistic examination of events and phenomena, based on observation and document analysis. Researchers interpret the phenomenon understudy in the context of the meaning given to it. Content analysis, which is frequently used in qualitative research, reveals the meaning desired to be conveyed in the essence of the document or data examined (Kohlbacher, 2006, pp. 11–13). This method of analysis was used to decode texts before 1940, but it was a very time-consuming method until technology advanced (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, pp. 1278–1279)s. The analysis of the document is carried out with certain steps followed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, pp. 110–111). After the document is identified, it is important to read in detail and analyze the systematic structure of the document. After the data that will guide the subject and bring results are arranged clearly, specific results are obtained, and these are interpreted. In addition to these documents, it is also important to examine verbal and visual data that will strengthen the analysis (Renz et al., 2018, pp. 1–3).

In this study, the examination of official defense documents together with additional documents reflecting the developments in the international system provides a multi-dimensional perspective on the subject.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this part, the concept of security in international relations will be outlined, and then China's security policy and approach in the Post-Cold War period will be detailed to serve as a basis for other parts of the study. Then, the situation and events in post-Soviet China will be mentioned and the elements perceived as threats for China in that period will be explained. The developments in the Chinese defense and military with the collapse of the Soviets will be given place.

Security, which is a broad concept, is an epistemological and ontological concept studied in many disciplines. The concept of security, which deepens with different definitions with the developments experienced by humanity, diversifies with perspectives. Considering this concept solely focusing on the military aspect and use of force narrows the concept. This general comment on security can be seen as a preview of the details to be given below.

Security has been the only factor that human beings have sought by nature. As the years progressed, there have been many changes in human life in the world and while this

change continues rapidly, this search continues. Security, which is an indispensable element for humanity, does not have a single explanation and is evaluated from quite different angles according to the conditions and ideological approaches. When Wolfers defines security, he basically talks about the motivation to protect the adopted values and increase these values, and the threat element becomes the main scope of the theme of 'national security' (Baldwin, 1997, p. 11). Walt, in his article 'The Renaissance of Security Studies' published in 1991, started by examining the literature and mentions that adding non-military elements that threaten the state to the concept of security will increase the content of the concept and make it difficult to clarify (Walt, 1991, p. 213). And in fact, the military threat potential and power are at the center of the definition of security, but in accordance with the changing times, non-military elements environmental, health, economic, and the like threats, have been included in the security concept.

The bipolar process of crisis and competition between the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) ended with the Soviet collapse and initiated a new process in international relations which is prone to sudden changes. Apart from the reflection of the mentioned change in the actions, it has also affected the scope of the concepts, it has expanded to the concept of security, which is the most basic, over time, and has gradually deepened with the 'human security' approach (Newman, 2010, p. 80). Barry Buzan pointed out that the escalation of tensions between traditional and new approaches to security was caused by the presence of threats in different areas, nuclear targets, which were evident in the period when the Cold War began to soften, and that a narrow approach is no longer satisfactory (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 2).

Within the scope of international relations discipline, the power and threat duo play the leading roles in the concept of 'national security'. With the political emphasis on the concept in the US National Security Act in 1947,[2] studies on national security policy making and strategy intensified (Wolfers, 1952, pp. 483–484). This concept, which was perceived as US-centered with the national security act of 1947, was taken out of the US-oriented approach during the period of the Cold War, and national security gained an ideological form, but with the breakdown of the bipolar order in 1991, the concept of national security was tried to be redefined by organizations, academia, and other institutions.

[2] See National Security Act of 1947, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/299856

National security, which exists within the discipline of international relations, has become a unique concept with globalization, which manifests itself with the acceleration of the economy and the transparency of state borders, especially since the end of the Cold War. Joseph Romm, who examined national security definitions in his book in 1993, stated that the first exit norm in redefining the concept of national security would be possible by clarifying the new threats and that the decreasing competitiveness of the US and environmental problems other than military threats could be possible threats (Romm, 1993, pp. 84–87). In the security definition of the Copenhagen school, the definition is made over five different sectors; military security, economic security, social security, environmental security, and political security (Emmers, 2013, p. 132).

Understanding the intellectual foundations that examine the concept of security in national security and total international relations is important for progress in this field. Traditional security approaches have created an understanding of security that puts the state in the center with the reference to using military force (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 52). Along with the ongoing rivalry between states, military threats are at the center of traditional security understanding, and the perspective on national security is shaped by the idea of 'ensuring border security'. Therefore, these issues of physical use of force and threats, which come with a traditional approach, have been the idea that security studies reflect until new approaches manifest themselves (Walt, 1991, pp. 212–213). This threat to national security and the borders that need to be protected, according to the traditional approach, states that are not satisfied with the status quo and seek an expansionist target. Flanking states trying to maximize their interests are actors that pose the greatest threat (B. Miller, 2001, p. 17).

According to the traditional security approach, the military power capacities of other states underlie the threats. It should be evaluated carefully that the situation that is or is likely to occur will be evaluated well and will use defensive or aggressive opportunities. In the traditional security approach, offensive and defensive realism theories have an important place. Mearsheimer, one of the offensive advocates of realism, does not believe that inter-state cooperation will prevent conflicts and wars in the anarchic world order (Mearsheimer, 1994, pp. 47–50). Therefore, countries can adopt approaches that turn to aggression in order to ensure security. Offensive realism speaks of the fact that states can increase their security by reducing the power of the other state (Lobell, 2017, pp. 3–4).

Defensive realism has a more moderate approach to international relations than offensive realism. While states try to increase power in the search for security in quite different ways, they also weaken the power of other states, and a security dilemma arises. Defensive realism mentions that states should increase the security state of the system rather than increase their power in intense competition (Lobell, 2017, pp. 9–10). Decision-makers can sometimes be expansionist and therefore prone to attack, but defensive realism argues that the system balance can be settled through communicating by establishing moderate strategies with economic, diplomatic, and military policies in order to create security (Taliaferro, 2001, p. 129). In this approach envisaged by Jervis, when the emphasis is on defense, vulnerability will decrease. The states, which are the most important actors in the international system, will advance in other fields such as the economy and will be able to watch each other closely in order not to endanger their national defenses (Jervis, 1978).

Political thoughts that interpret security differently appear as theories in international relations. Idealism, with its approach that there is no conflict and that there will be a peaceful international system, is important in shaping other approaches, although it is not a theory that is mentioned with clear sources and names (Theis, 2002, pp. 152–153).

Idealism's approach to security can be simply explained as that the threat depends on human thought and that there will be an order in the international system with the regulations in the environment where the human lives. Despite the anarchic structure, the idea that an atmosphere of trust will come with a common authority to be established in cooperation has been subjected to 'utopian' interpretations of idealism. It has been criticized for the insufficiency of international organizations and the weakness of their influence after the 1st World War, and the approach failure with the later 2nd World War. The human being who is good by the idealists becomes prone to violence and selfishness due to the mistakes in the system, so the order to be formed with organizations will reduce or even eliminate the possibility of conflict (Serban, 2013, pp. 54–56).

The proponents of idealism have not actually named this approach. Named by those who adopt the Realism approach, which is at the center of the discipline of international relations. It has been interpreted as a utopian approach and named as idealism by Edward H. Carr, one of the prominent advocates of realism (Carr, Edward

Hallett; Cox, Michael & Cox, 1946, pp. 7–9). This idea of the idealists, who adopted the idea that security is directly proportional to democracy (Rosecrance, 2002, p. 142), was disproved by the aggressive attitude of the US during and after the Cold War. Therefore, there has been a lagging approach, especially in international relations, but the critical approaches that have come to the fore and that come afterward have referred to idealism.

The realist approach, which takes the states as the main actor, associates the provision of security with the use of force. Contrary to idealism, which believes that common interests can be achieved with the co-operation of people, the realist approach emphasizes the inevitability of conflict, as states are in a race for their interests (Donnelly, 2005, p. 32). It is important to properly analyze security and interest, which are the two pillars of problems that end up differently between states. While in the idealist approach there is a focus on common goals and therefore a society that adheres to the same regulations, in the realist approach, the interests of the nation are indispensable and the reason for the actions of decision-makers (Rosecrance, 2002, p. 138). Despite the idealists' approach that international organizations will prevent conflicts based on the idea of a common society, realists do not oppose the existence of organizations, but they argue that the balance of power in the system will be more efficient than organizations to be established without any institutional structure (Waltz, 1967).

For realists, while the domestic policy is hierarchical, foreign policy is anarchic, so considering the security concerns felt by states and its reflections on foreign policymaking, the effect of the legal order mentioned by idealists is weak (Çalış, Şaban; Özlük, 2007, p. 233). Except that there are no higher institutions in decision-making, due to the anarchic nature of the system, the security of the individual for realism is provided by state security and this is possible as much as the power of the state. In this respect, the Cold War period, which came after the world wars, was a long period in which the armament and military efforts of two great powers were intense, and the effect of the realism approach was seen. Aside from the threat perceptions pushing states to arm, the fact that there was no actual conflict during the Cold War and the detente period led theoretical approaches to develop and diversify their doctrine.

At the end of 1970, neo-realism, also known as structural realism, appeared as a different trend within the discipline of international relations. Contrary to realism, which interprets power as an aim of states, neo-realists accept power as a tool that shapes

international politics and makes explanations on the basis of the system being anarchic (Rahim, Nazim; Ali, 2020, p. 17). With the economy becoming the determining factor in international political relations over time, Neo-realists focus on the international system rather than the human. One of the advocates, Waltz, maintaining state security is a primary element in achieving other goals (Waltz, 1979, pp. 125–127).

Increased military power with a defense focus is a danger signal by other states and as a result, it is aimed to increase the power capacity by all actors. Besides, states are in competition at the economic level, and with this approach, neo-realism interprets national interests from the international level. Mearsheimer predicted that with the end of the Cold War, the balance brought by the bipolar system deteriorated and conflicts would increase when multipolarity was passed (Mearsheimer, 1990).

With the rapidly changing international system, new security approaches that are critical to theoretical approaches are emerging. They criticize the traditional approaches for their interpretation of the system with a focus on military threats. The article named "The Concept of Security: Should it be Redefined?" mentions that the state of insecurity, which has been experienced lately, is caused by intra-state problems and aggressive groupings (B. Miller, 2001, p. 19). In this article, Miller also emphasizes threats such as pandemics, hunger, smuggling, and the increase in weapons of mass destruction, which occur naturally outside of states on a global scale (B. Miller, 2001, p. 19). Critical approaches, which refer not only to the state but also to society by putting different data on the concept of security, do not accept linking everything to the anarchic structure of the system. Supporters of critical approach, who refer not only to the state but also to society by putting different data on the concept of security, do not accept to link everything to the anarchic structure of the system (Krause, 1998). Booth mentioned that *emancipation* is basically the most appropriate way to create an atmosphere of security, as it will free individuals from obstacles and provide a space to express themselves (Booth, 1991, pp. 319–322).

As the years progress, the developing technology, the rapidly increasing human mobility due to the increasing world population, and the invisibility of the borders create an inter-state interdependence, and the international political system is constantly changing shape. With this change, threats diversify and change, new security perceptions are formed, and national and international security problems are beginning to intertwine.

While states determine their security policies and strategies, they have to keep up with this change. With the theoretical approaches that have diversified over time, the main point that has been realized is that threats can come not only from the military side but also from the damage to human rights, health, and economic problems. The fact that the concept of security contains such wide variables will be meaningful when it is reflected in policymaking.

Foreign policy and making security policies within it vary depending on the political system of the states (Howlett, Michael & Tosun, 2019). In democratic states, where accuracy in the transfer of information on the subject is complete, it is the case for communities and institutions to evaluate policy and express their preferences and thus can influence the decision-making process. In states governed by an authoritarian system, the policy-making process is completely under the control of the leader and brings monopolization in security policymaking as it is in all matters.

Apart from the increasing number of social organizations and increasing international communication, the state continues to be the actor that holds the power and will make the final decision. Over time, it is important for institutions to bring different interpretations to the process with different perspectives, for policy determination and social adoption. However, it is still the state that determines the seriousness of a threat and gives it the shape it wants when presenting it to the public, deciding which threat to securitization and how to start the process, and determine the action to be taken after discussions.

A historical legacy and basic rules are dominant in the security policies and strategies of the states, but the changes experienced by the system cause switch in strategies over time, apart from that, policy-determining developments may occur. The bad experiences with its neighbor Japan, interstate problems, and the changing system have formed the cornerstones of China's both regional and international security strategy over time. Understanding Chinese security policy in the last period of the Cold War and afterward begins with asking and responding to some questions. It should be asked what are the factors that cause the change in China's national and international security policy and affect the policy formation stages. The next step is to understand how China will implement the policy that decision-makers have clarified and how to adapt it to the regional and international environment. At the core of these questions understands how

Chinese decision-makers understand and explain the concept of security. It is difficult to find the priorities of the leaders, the situations they can tolerate, the goals, and the roles they set for themselves, but the political view of the state becomes noticeably clear.

The most important motivation that determines security policies is threat perception. There are many details for China in the threat perception that may change depending on the system and current events (Craig, 2007, pp. 3–14). The US, which is accepted as a superpower, directs the system, the fate of regional competition between powerful states in Asia such as Japan, India, Russia, China's approach to Taiwan regarding national integrity, legal developments on the seas, and the issue of economic power. These are the main issues of threat perception that affect China's security and defense strategy.

To understand China's security policy, it is necessary to clarify how decision-makers interpret security under what conditions. Having primarily a military threat-oriented security approach, China has expanded its perspective with the changing system. The commercial competition in the world and the economy that progresses accordingly, the motivations such as becoming an important power in the region, ensuring the targeted territorial integrity have further expanded China's security concept.

The involvement of the strategic culture is important when examining more specifically the Chinese security perception, which can be interpreted as neo-realists' way of thinking. When the security policy is interpreted from the perspective of strategic culture, the geopolitical position of the state, its experiences, the elements of its political structure, no matter how much the policies change shape, essentially they are built on them (Lantis, 2009, pp. 16–19). China's strategic culture is fed by the teachings of ancient times and emphasizes defense and strategic moves rather than using force, but according to Johnston, Chinese decision-makers act with a *parabellum* understanding that includes a real political orientation and makes policies by adopting this culture (Johnston, 1998, pp. IX–X). In Beijing, problems outside the liberal dominant political system in the outside world, such as separatist movements formed by geographical and historical elements and ethnic diversity, affect the threat assessment and emerging security policies, which shows the relationship of the strategic culture to security (Roy, 1996, pp. 437–438).

It can be interpreted that in the new period that started with the dissolution of the Soviets, the variety of threats affecting Chinese national security policies increased. The

regional conflicts, which are likely to increase, the effort to ensure the national integrity of China in the changing system, and the expanding security concept by including economic competition have affected policy-making (Swaine, 1998, p. 9).

After the last periods of the Cold War, economic growth was perhaps the most important issue and one of the important steps for this was to grow the economy regionally. With the increasing interdependence, the relationship between Asian countries is getting stronger, but unresolved conflicts cause a slowdown. China increased its economic partnerships with ASEAN countries after the Soviet Union and took steps in this direction with different countries. The rhetoric of the Chinese threat originating from the West influenced the process and even though the Chinese decision-makers did not want it, military elements were tried to be included in relations (J. Yuan, 1998, p. 75).

Including the increased communication between the US and Taiwan, post-Cold War China looked more real to the security in the system. It is understood from being pro-realpolitik that the state is the main actor in a classical way, and it must make the necessary effort to maintain its national sovereignty within the anarchic system. Aside from the increasing intensification of economic relations and the increasing interdependence, the deterrent effect of the strong military has been important, and indeed, the effect of PLA on decision-making has been widely studied academically. With the uncertainty brought by the Post-Cold War environment, forward-looking investment in economic and military technology has been the main theme in policy-making (Swaine, 1998, pp. 8–9).

It can be interpreted that military development and modernization have progressed a little slower in China compared to the world countries. The idea of believing in a national capacity, which manifested itself in Maoist thought in the 1950s and the following years, prevented the acquisition of military technologies and requirements from other countries, which slowed down the modernization of the army (Swaine, M., & Tellis, 2000, pp. 105–106). When it came to the 1980s, leaders in the military realized that the military structure, which followed the past doctrines and was therefore close to development, would fail. This realization, which was described by Soviet academics as a Revolution in Military Affairs (Newmyer, 2010, p. 483), paved the way for modernization with the departure of traditional leaders who were not able to develop. All these

components created the motivation for the Chinese military structure to examine world technologies and, if possible, adapt them to their own systems.

To briefly describe the Revolution in Military Affairs, it includes not only technological advances but also different elements such as organizational capability and systematicity, and in fact, the Revolution in Military Affairs takes place with the harmony between them rather than the developments in these fields (Gill, B., & Henley, 1996, pp. 2–3).

With Deng's management, studies on the new strategy of PLA and what kind of transformations it will undergo have started, and the idea of the Chinese army to keep up with this change has become widespread in line with the increase in nuclear technology (J1, 1999, p. 345). Near the end of the Cold War, change within the PLA has been slow, but the RMA concept and its predictions attracted attention by China. In the culture-oriented interpretation of the reflection of the RMA concept on the PLA, which presents changes in the system and methods of warfare within the army, there is the idea that China will advance by preserving its characteristic codes in the army (Mowthorpe, 2005, p. 149).

RMA has been a concept that has had a significant impact on the Chinese defense strategy. Towards the end of the 1990s, Chinese military members were convinced that strengthening military technology and advanced tactics would create a solid security structure. Active defense, which was accepted in the Deng period, was developed in order to eliminate the Soviet threat. However, the changing world system and the diverse threat perception have made modernization necessary, especially in military technology, and China's military modernization steps are not only due to regional goals, the power struggle over the regional seas, but from a more international perspective (J1, 1999, p. 353).

In his 2004 article, Woondo Choi talked about the variable details of the strategic attack concept, from air force power to the priority of having knowledge, and stated that Chinese military technology should be developed and harmonized with the RMA (Choi, 2004, pp. 56–57). China's adoption of a defense-oriented military strategy for conflicts from other states will not be as effective in its military strategy planned to protect national sovereignty (J1, 1999, p. 355). RMA does not offer a narrow area in this sense; on the contrary, it is effective on the army's ability to prepare itself for large or small level

conflicts. In fact, it is aimed to modernize the PLA army according to different conflict possibilities in the long term.

China changes its defense strategy according to the threat it perceives and tries to provide a balance to the actor it sees as hegemon by taking regional powers into account. The PLA's Anti Access/ Area Denial (A2 / AD) system, which is frequently pointed out in the studies on defense, has been a strategy used to ensure its security and weaken the US influence (Moore, 2011, p. 23). Aim of this strategy is to prevent elements that are considered enemies from entering the area that is desired to be safe and to prevent enemy elements from working to improve their strength (Schmidt, 2018, pp. 249–250). The advocacy approach in the period until the collapse of the Soviet Union after 1985 focused on active defense, increasing the technological capacity, and strengthening the naval forces (Moore, 2011, p. 22). In the ground period, the local-limited war strategy is mentioned in the PLA with the increasing technology. The study of battlefield diversity, the focus on economic growth, and the expansion of the use of the A2 / AD concept are manifestations of the general transformation of the Chinese army during and after the Cold War.

By mentioning the developments in the last periods of the Cold War and afterwards, and especially China's threat perception, its political thought can be understood more concretely.

As an ideological partner for China aiming for a regional rise within the bipolar system, the Soviet Union was an important actor in the region and a threat to China. The focus was on the economy rather than conflict and its derivatives in the Deng period, so its image as a country was also positively affected (Shambaug, 1992, p. 91). With the effect of this progress, the scope of action also increased, but by the end of the 1980s, the bipolar system began to weaken, and with the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1991, China had to draw a road map for itself in the new system.

The Tiananmen protests, which took place due to dissatisfaction with the political and economic course of the country (Nathan, 2001, pp. 2–3), which is one of China's domestic affairs, and Beijing started to feel heavy burden on her shoulders with the sanctions from the western geography. The Gulf War provided a good place to stand out among international states, and the Middle East countries were important for China, which was mostly on the US side within the United Nations, and even before the Soviet

dissolution, it was a competition area for the two countries. Therefore, at the point where she felt that the process would lead to the use of military force, China abstained from the important vote held by the Security Council on behalf of the Gulf war and raised its stance within the organization to an even stronger actor (Griffo, 2016, p. 5).

When the Cold War ended, the advent of the new world order discourse by America, the remaining party, and the other superpower, instilled the idea of a US-led and controlled system, but China had the motivation to maintain a multipolar order. China's idea for the new system mentioned by the US was to comply with the United Nations Charter, and also proposed to create a structure based on the Five Principles of Coexistence with Peace, which was made between China and India in 1954 and used in many texts (ChinaDaily, 2015). In the system seen from the perspective of China, there is a conflict between political decisions and the implementation of the principles that are desired to be applied, and Jing-dong Yuan, in his article written in 1998, mentioned that there is a motivation to resolve the conflict, but it is inadequate (J. Yuan, 1998, pp. 59–60). The lack of international influence and the complexity of national politics may explain this inadequacy. Yet while China touched on all these legal principles, it was realistically aware of its powerful countries and their spheres of influence. The unipolar system poses a serious threat and Beijing has focused on developing its defense and military structure while defending the multipolarity on which the principles it has adopted are based on.

When one of the two poles collapsed, China's place in the strategic triangle, which it began to settle in a certain system, automatically lost its effectiveness. For China, the detection of threats was important because the state of non-threatening after the disappearance of the Soviet threat was a situation that should not have been for China as the old traditions have mentioned (J. Yuan, 1998, pp. 61–62) . China has started to highlight the security plugs in the Chinese region as a result of the weakening process of Moscow. The sovereignty China wants in the territorial waters, the Taiwan issue that China wants to be included in the mainland of China, Japan as an assertive Asian power whose side should be understood, some problems about the borders and the disputes with India that have reflected until today, the US is the power that continues its effectiveness in the region (J. D. Yuan, 2000, pp. 40–41).

The US relationship with China, which focused on economic growth during the equilibrium period, was more positive. After 1989, China began to be disturbed by the US presence in the region, with the problems China faced in domestic politics and the collapse of the Soviet bloc. The state of relations with the US was important to sustain the accelerating economy, but the disappearance of the issues they had in common agreed upon increased the tension between the two countries.

The Taiwan issue, which is overly sensitive for Beijing, did not create a serious problem between the two countries at first. However, in the autumn of 1992, Bush's announcement (US-China Institute, 1992) of the sale of fighter jets to Taiwan was an attitude contrary to China's goals and a political step that made it clear that the US wanted an order that suppresses China. While objections were raised by Beijing that the agreements were violated, the US front stated that there was a proportional approach to the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) (Ling, 2015, p. 278), which was approved in 1979. In the following period, the visit of the US trade representative to Taipei (Harding, 1997, p. 12) was a development that strained the relationship between China and the US. However, China did not react harshly as expected, apart from leaving the talks under the control of armaments, and the most important factor that caused this was the economy. He did not take a sudden attitude in the face of these events in order not to harm the process of making China an economic giant, not to lose the US market, and not to damage its commercial ties with Taiwan (Hao, 1998, p. 32).

The Clinton era began in the US in 1993, and the new president had low motivation to ease tensions between the two countries. Clinton wanted him to overcome his human rights shortcomings in order to renew his most favored nation registration (MFN) trade agreement with China (Hao, 1998, p. 32) . In 1994, the human rights condition required for the renewal of the MFN trade status was abolished even though this was done in order not to damage communication with Beijing, pressure was constantly put on China through the human rights channel, even in 1995 (Jialin Zhang, 1995, p. 51) . Until 1993, America's military trade with Taipei followed a low course, while maintaining a balance without severing relations with Taiwan. In 1994, Clinton made attempts to increase trade, and with the great impact of the congress, after the arrangements made within the TRA, the President of the Republic of China, Lee Teng-hui, paid a visit to the US and it was a development that shook the Beijing-Washington relationship and changed the plans (Kang, 1995) . Beijing postponed many meetings,

some were canceled, and China's US ambassador was called in to meet. From Beijing's window, the US has become a threat, trying to become an active actor in the region by following a different policy through Taiwan and ultimately trying to penetrate all areas.

The fact that Japan is an actor that poses a threat from the eyes of China can be examined from different dimensions. The post-Soviet threat gap is mentioned as an explanation of China's threat perceptions, but this was not highly effective for Japan. It was understood that the escalation of concern towards Japan in the 1980s and afterward was not due to the softening of Sino-Soviet relations, but by the fact that concerns against Japan did not rise significantly when the Soviets disappeared (Sasaki, 2010, pp. 569–572). At that time, the increase in Japanese military investments was a concrete situation that posed a threat to China.

For China, the US presence in the region seemed beneficial for Japan's control before the Soviet collapse, but the change in Tokyo's relations with Washington in 1991 was disconcerting. Japan's involvement in the process of the Gulf War, the United Nations' pursuit of a foreign policy to take place in the security wing, and the fact that it will make military changes accordingly, were the developments that triggered China to perceive it as a threat (J. Yuan, 1998, p. 66).

One of the controversial issues between China and Japan after and after the end of the Cold War is the disputes over the Chinese sea and the Diaoyutai (Senkaku) Islands (Smith, 2009, p. 233). China's claims of sovereignty in the region and its confrontation with Japan on this issue increased the tension between the two countries. Determined for Taiwan's inclusion in the mainland, Beijing expected that Japan would not stand by the US in any tension in the region over this issue.

The Korean peninsula is geographically a corridor as it shares the boundaries of the main powers and became the most striking region after the collapse of the Soviet Union (X. Zhang, 1998, p. 260). The stability of this region will positively affect China as in all countries, so the unification of the two Koreas in order to ensure prosperity is always considered as an output. The unification of the two Koreas in this region, which is also important economically for China, should be by mutual desire, not by any coercion. In this region, which will significantly affect Beijing's national security, the most important issue for China is that it is not controlled by any other main power (X. Zhang, 2001, p. 492). The presence of US military forces in the peninsula during the Cold War

continued after the Cold War and was a factor of uneasiness for Beijing (X. Zhang, 1998, p. 269). The post-Cold War relationship between China and South Korea normalized in 1992 with increased trade ties. The two countries are economically very important to each other, and by 1995 there was trade at a level of over $ 16 billion and the increase continued over the years (X. Zhang, 2001, p. 493).

Another issue that made its actors nervous in the region was North Korea's orientation towards nuclear weapons (X. Zhang, 2001, p. 495). In 1991, Bush's statement on the withdrawal of nuclear weapons was followed by the signing of two agreements between the two Koreas for the removal of nuclear weapons (Chung, 2006, p. 87). Pyongyang, which signed a security agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), refused to inspect some of the agency's facilities and then wanted to leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (Kibaroğlu, 2004, pp. 160–161). This situation was delayed with the introduction of the US and at the end of 1994; North Korea agreed to inspect its facilities.

The things that China cares about in the post-Cold war period and in the aftermath of the Korean peninsula are the stability of the two countries, their state of unification, and the military influence of the US here. At that time, it was the desire of big countries, especially China that this peninsula would not destabilize.

The central issue in relations between China and India has often been land disputes. The McMahon Line, which dates to 1914 and is considered to connect Tibet and India, despite China's disapproval, is an issue that puts the two countries in conflict. In addition to this, another border dispute continued with the border conflicts in 1959 and was experienced on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) used by the Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai (Mishra, 2004, pp. 14–15). During the visit to China by Indian Prime Minister Gandhi in 1988, the establishment of the Joint Working Group (JWG), which will examine the border issues of the two countries, was envisaged, which was an important step in the relations of the two countries in terms of defense, and the LAC issue was advanced with the JWG talks in 1993 (Das, 2011). The Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Control in the border regions was achieved in 1993 with the third visit of the Indian Prime Ministers to China (Ministry Of External Affairs Government of India, 1993). This agreement basically stipulated that the military capacity at the border should be kept at a minimum level, thus increasing the security between the

two countries after the Cold War, creating stability in the region, and establishing good relations (Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, 1993).

1993 was a year of intense communication between the two countries. From the Chinese side, in November and December, two important figures such as Li Ruihuan, the chairman of the People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC),[3] and Xu Hauzi, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army, paid a visit to India for bilateral political developments (Sidhu, Waheguru Pal Singh and Yuan, 2001, p. 355). 1994 was the 40th year of the mutual signing of the above-mentioned Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (1954) and the year of mutual visits. The two countries' communications and their impressions of each other increased. Visits took place in 1995 and it was important to keep relations with India, which is actually a threat. Apart from the territorial issues between Beijing and New Delhi, the other discussed issue is China-Pakistan relations. Even though China favors mutual negotiations in the Kashmir issue of India and Pakistan in the Post-Cold War period, it is clear that it has become closer to the Pakistani wing over the years, and it can be said that the reason for this is not to contradict their wishes in Taiwan.

Another issue that seems important to Beijing to defend itself is territorial disputes. The issue of Taiwan's inclusion in the mainland, the status of the islands in the South China Sea, and the provision of maritime security, which is strongly advocated for the establishment of Chinese unity, can be mentioned within the scope of regional disputes. In the article he wrote in 2018, Bill Hayton talked about Winichakul's 'geo-body' rhetoric while examining China's territorial thoughts on the South Sea (Hayton, 2019, pp. 3–4). The inclusion of the offshore islands in this concept began with dynamics such as the process of becoming a nation-state by the Chinese authorities and aggravating the feeling of nationalism (Hayton, 2019, p. 38). The Paracel, Spratly, and Senkaku islands in the South and the East China Sea are commercially and strategically important lands for China and other countries in the region. The increasing need for energy has made the control and defense of regions more vital. China maintains its claim of

[3] Xinhua News Agency defines this institution as an organization that is active in advising decision-makers in government legislative and judicial processes. See for details, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/03/c_136098744.htm

sovereignty in these regions and aims to provide security there against the dangers that may come from foreign powers. On the offshore, Beijing went to use its military force for Paracel in 1974, Spratly in 1988, and Mischief Reef in 1994, respectively (Yahuda, 2013, p. 450).

The inclusion of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan in territorial disputes has been an important issue for China. These disputes, which are seen as internal issues, are of irreversible importance for Beijing and issues that need to be resolved in order to achieve the desired national unity, especially in Taiwan. Hong Kong and Macao were included in the mainland without using military force (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2008, p. 220). For Hong Kong, the British government did not provide sufficient defense and the Chinese military could easily take the region, but Beijing was in favor of not being hasty in this regard, and for Macao, it was moving forward by delaying the process (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2008, p. 223). Negotiations with the United Kingdom, which started in 1982 for Hong Kong, lasted until 1984 and ended with giving the territory to China in 1997. On the Macao issue, Portugal and the Chinese administration held talks about the region in 1986-87, and in 1999 the territory came under Chinese rule (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2005, pp. 56–59).

Taiwan's accession to the mainland is a priority because with its inclusion, Chinese national unity would feel largely complete. The subject of Taiwan is quite deep and detailed, but since the Post-Cold War period is examined in this study, the Taiwan conflict, which is only superficially based on the pre-Cold War period, will be mentioned chronologically. The Nationalist Republic of China on the island of Taiwan, jointly governed by Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang, was recognized as China by the US and it was declared by theUS that it would not interfere with disputes (Suisheng Zhao, 1999, p. 22). US forces were directed to the region in order to control the tension between the ROC and the PRC at the end of the Korean war (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2008, pp. 234–236). China has chosen to use force with the discourse of liberating Taiwan. Although the US nuclear response tendency escalated the process, in 1955 the PRC approached to negotiate (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2008, p. 240). Three years later, the second crisis occurred and the People's Liberation Army of China (PLA) took action (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2007, pp. 60–61). The aim was again the liberation of Taiwan and the removal of US forces from the region. The fighting here was intense, after a while Mao did not go too far and backed out. Its purpose here is interpreted as both seeing the defense of the US as solid and not wanting to wear Taiwan down.

In 1962, there was a step by Taiwan to intervene in mainland China, which clarified Beijing's acceptance of Taipei as a threat (Whiting, 2001, pp. 111–112). The crisis did not escalate when the US prevented Taiwan on this issue. In the crisis that took place in the region in 1995, the visit made by Lee Teng-hui, the then president of Taiwan, to the US caused Beijing, as well as senior generals of the PLA, to conduct military exercises in the Taiwan Strait (Li, 2012, p. 445). Scobell stated in his study published in 2000 that Chinese decision-makers were the 'hawk leader' in the Taiwan Strait crisis of the 1995-96 period, that is, they tended to reach their desired goal by force the other side with some military tools (Scobell, 2000, p. 228). Military exercises that started in August 1995 were expected to affect the election process in Taiwan next year in favor of Beijing and to be able to implement coercive diplomacy (Whiting, 2001, p. 122). PLA carried out military trials in the Taiwan Strait until the end of March 1996, the Clinton administration sent extra ships to the region (Russell, 2000, p. 5). China, which made its third military shot set just before the elections, started to accelerate the process due to the presence of US aircraft carriers that will force the PLA in the next stage (Whiting, 2001, p. 122). After Lee's victory in the elections, there was an effort to reach a compromise between the two administrations, but the Beijing side emphasized that it will always react in an independence movement (M. Taylor. Fravel, 2008, pp. 261–262). It seems that the Taiwan dispute is the most sensitive point in China's national security.

Providing regional and international stability largely determines the state of security concerns by states. Maintaining the economic order is perhaps at the key point regarding the continuity of relations between countries. In the historical process, while China was on its way to becoming an economic giant, foreign investments and regional economic developments have been the subjects that have been studied in detail. Economic growth and national security were used as separate concepts in China in the pre-financial crisis period in Asia in 1997 (Zhengyi, 2004, pp. 23–24). National security was the shaping element of Beijing's foreign policy and was not linked to foreign trade or investments. Economic relations played a major role in the increasing transparency of the borders of the country, and as the dependence between the world economy and the Chinese economy grew stronger, the security threat began to cover the economic field. By the year 1994, when China exported oil at a high rate, the smooth flow of import-export and all processes of this brought the focus on eliminating the insecurity in the economy (Leifer, 1995, p. 651). Here, it is a priority for China to maintain order and

maintain the economy in a safe environment, especially on the South China Sea, which has a high commercial density.

3. A NEW ERA IN CHINESE DEFENSE: 1993-2003

In this part of the study, the defense white papers published by the PRC government will be examined and the developments related to Chinese national security in those periods will be explained.[4] The defense document published in 1995 under the name "Arms Control and Disarmament" was accepted in most academic articles as the general opinion statement of China against nuclear armament after the Cold War rather than being the first defense document. In this study, the document published in 1998 will be taken as the basis as the first defense document, but to interpret China's approach to disarmament more appropriately, the study will be started to examination from the document published in 1995.

With the military doctrine of 1993, China's approach to the concept of defense and security differs from the previous concept of "People's Wars". It was seen that the understanding of focusing on power and not prolonging the process to steal the fast end was untenable. It is seen that the importance of air and naval forces has increased with the joint operation approach that came with this doctrine.

Jiang Zemin, who was the country's president at that time, declared that the PLA "must base the preparations for military combat on winning local wars in modern, especially high-tech conditions that may occur." (Memri, 2022) This explanation reflects an evaluation that technological tools and methods will be used in a possible conflict. Although no new strategy is presented directly, it is clear that the Taiwan Independence issue on the agenda of the Chinese security process is also considered in the background.

It is seen that the idea of change in this defense system has started to be implemented in practice by focusing on targeting short and stable mobile operations in military operations and being prepared for large-scale wars. In 1997, it was aimed to

[4] English versions of all white papers can be found here. http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/

reduce the number of soldiers in the army, and in 1999 it was reduced to 500 000 00 people. This process continued over time and this figure reached 700 000 00 in 2003. (China Daily, 2003) On the other hand, it is seen that the training programs in the army have been increased and the modernization process of the military personnel has been tried to be provided in every sense. The first strategic change in the defense of China after the Cold War started with the Jiang Zemin period.

3.1. Jiang Zemin Period: High-Tech in Defense

The People's Republic of China has remained mysterious about its military capacity throughout history, and the credibility of the information has remained pending. A country cannot be expected to give its military capabilities in full transparency, but when it comes to China, a long-standing communist state with a deep-rooted culture, the accuracy of the information shared is also questioned.

After the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989, Jiang Zemin, who was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). General Secretary and later the Chairman of the CCP Central Military Commission, was elected president of China in 1993. The election of Zemin as chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) at the beginning of 1998 was a development that increased his influence in the army. It is important in the policy-making process that the leadership is strong over all units. The communication and leadership quality of Zemin with the PLA, one of the most important elements of China, is an important infrastructure in the decision-making processes. (Chopan, 2002, pp. 281–282) During the Jiang Zemin period, studies were carried out with certain experts, especially on foreign policymaking and evaluations, and in 1998, Zemin formed a working group consisting of former ambassadors under the name of "wise men". Foreign policy processes and events were evaluated and opinions were conveyed to him.(Ed.Lampton, 2001, pp. 6–7)

Under Zemin's administration, 4 defense documents were published. The first white paper containing data on country defense in 1995 (Bhaskar, 2001, p. 113). The main theme of the first document published was arms control and disarmament, which underscored China's signing of The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreement in 1992 and China's growing tendency to gain a foothold in international organizations after the Cold War.

Although the first White Paper issued by the Chinese State Council in 1995 is interpreted as a Chinese defense document, it is not that comprehensive. The document focuses on China's approach to "arms control and disarmament" and the policy-making process. Threat perception is not clearly stated in the document, it is expected that the factors that constitute the insecurity situation are written in the defense documents. In general, it is seen that the document serves the purpose of contradicting the idea of the 'Chinese threat' globally, especially regionally. The defense of China was defined as "China's national defense policy is defensive in nature" (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 2) and the defense here includes the elements of ensuring national unity, protecting interests on land, air, and sea, protecting national security, and ensuring national defense.

The phrase "…retaining the precondition that the nation maintain necessary defense capabilities" on disarmament, which also constitutes the main concept of the first white paper, clearly describes the pursuit and priority of national defense. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 1) In a joint study by Garrett and Glaser, in which they examined China's approach to nuclear armament in 1995, they state the high aspirations of the Chinese leaders and the academic community for China's military self-development. (Glaser & Garrett, 1995, p. 75)

The statement of the chairman of the term, Zemin, in 1995, to protect China's national defense, to develop and work on national military capabilities and weapons is also considerable. This explanation made by Zemin can be interpreted as a normal point of view in a state's approach to defense. The People's War approach, which existed before the ideas of modernization, has been adopted by China as an ideological infrastructure and a basic idea, which clearly emphasizes that it does not pursue world and regional hegemony and does not pose a threat. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 3) China considers Taiwan and the islands in the south of the China Sea to be its territory. Military activities in these areas explain China's view of these places as part of the mainland, and the importance of the defenses of these islands is associated with the territorial integrity of all of China.

China's approach to the inclusion of modern thinking and technological developments in the defense concept can be understood from the expressions stated in the white paper as reducing the military personnel, dismantling and combining the military

units, and reducing the number of weapons and military vehicles. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 5) All of these aside, China's emphasis on "actual regional circumstances" in the white paper refers to the territorial integrity that cannot be achieved, and at this point, the step of reducing military vehicles is not a very serious step. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 2,3,13) The modernization of the defense channel in the form of decreasing or increasing the military means is shaped according to the perceived threat; the potential threat for China is the US at this point. This document was prepared with the thought of any danger to China's country's borders and integrity. The document, not only mentions China's involvement in reducing arms and steps in this direction but also often refers to the fact that it will continue this approach until it does not see any threat to its own integrity. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, pp. 2-4-7–16)

The infrastructure of what China calls "regional conditions" can be read as it will continue its own development on defense at a certain level and if it feels its own security and sovereignty is threatened it will attempt to increase the power of its defense wing. Considering the region, it is in, China will not accept not having nuclear power, which is a great immunity. In the document, regarding the disarmament part, there is an approach that China will participate in processes that include all nations, but it does not approach concepts with a western-oriented theoretical background (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 12).

Regarding defense expenditures, there is no reference in the document on how reasonable the reduction in expenditures is, but the statement "a complete administrative and regulatory system tightly geared to the principles of strict control, strict management, and strict supervision has been established" means that a planned and controlled economic order will be established in defense expenditures. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 6) With regard to defense expenditures, after the declaration that "China has a fairly low level of defense spending compared with that announced by other countries", it is important to compare the defense expenditures of countries such as the US, England, and Japan in terms of basing their claims on a more concrete basis. (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 7) However, a comparison with the countries of the region, up to the quality of life of military personnel, would be valuable in terms of China's sincerity in explaining its defense motivation.

In its 1995 white paper, China touched upon the inclusion of all nations in solutions to the disarmament problem (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 4). This approach can be interpreted as a constructive statement at the first stage, but when looked at from the aspect of meddling in the internal affairs of the states, it can also be interpreted as an intervention in the decision-making mechanisms of small states by using a sensitive point such as humanitarian matters, which in practice is likely to become an intervention in their internal affairs. Nevertheless, as mentioned at the end of the document, China also underlined that it gave security guarantees to two weak countries, Ukraine[6] and Kazakhstan, in line with its wishes, which can be interpreted as trying to show that there are intersections with the smaller countries in the security approach (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 17).

One of the remarkable factors is that there are quite a lot of explanations about PLA in the white paper. In the section titled "Peaceful Uses for Military Industrial Technologies" in Chapter 4, the PLA's work on civilian activities, the "civil applications of the military technology liaison group" established within the military forces was mentioned, (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 7) and it went beyond the context of disarmament and defense. These can be read as they were written to create a discourse emphasizing the positive aspects of the PLA, even though the PLA was associated with corruption at that time[7].

The closing sentence of the white paper clearly reflects the general view "Armed conflicts and local wars break out continuously and hegemonism and power politics are still lingering on". (Information Office of the State Council, 1995, p. 17) The issue of national defense is important, and all the statements put on paper will only make sense if they can be applied in practice. Power is an important factor and China also emphasizes that it is in this struggle. The fact that China frequently expresses its reaction in a situation that will disrupt its territorial integrity can be interpreted as a signal that he is ready against

6 The Budapest Memorandum is an agreement arranged by Russia, the US and the UK to provide security guarantees. China and France provided security guarantees through different documents. For details Vasylenko, V. (2009). On Assurances Without Guarantees in a 'Shelved Document.'. Den. Accessed September, 15. & https://web.archive.org/web/20140317182201/http://www.cfr.org/arms-control-disarmament-and-nonproliferation/budapest-memorandums-security-assurances-1994/p32484

7 See China's Crackdown on Military Corruption, https://sites.tufts.edu/corruptarmsdeals/chinas-crackdown-on-military-corruption/ , "A Profit-making Military". Perlo-Freeman, S. (2017,5 May).

the forces of the world. The most important criterion for China's lack of hegemony motivation may be related to how much the countries in the region believe in it.

The Cold War has had the effect of increasing the motivations of societies to examine the internal and external issues of their own nations more closely and to adhere to all processes by examining the planned policies. In this context, a country's national security is linked to its social reaction, and the process of a state's defense and security concept also reflects that state's view of the world. Since China is an actor that aims to attribute an important role to itself among the states of the world, its national security and view of the global world are of course important at this point. With the defense documents it publishes, it tries to reflect the defense and national security from its own perspective.

As mentioned before, the 1998 Defense Document, which was accepted as the first in many studies[8], is not far from the message of the 1995 white paper, which was prepared with a focus on disarmament, in terms of its functioning, but it is important to consider the document in the ever-changing and developing world system. The main approach of this defense document, which was wider in scope than the 1995 document, emphasized its relations with other great powers, as well as its association with organizations established in the Asia-Pacific geography, where China has economic, political, and security interests.

Concerning economic security, this white paper mentions the 1997/98 Asian Financial Crisis and emphasizes the expanding scope of security and importance of coordinated work with the phrase "The financial crisis in Asia has made the issue of economic security more prominent..." (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 3)

The Asian financial crisis of 1997/8 was a period in which the countries of the region experienced serious economic difficulties, but China, thanks to its comprehensive capital controls, survived the crisis with less damage than other countries. (Sohn, 2008, pp. 133–134) The Asian financial crisis has prompted decision-makers in the CMC and other parts of the PLA to focus on what could be a different threat that could affect the country's national security. The PLA, especially in the decisions it took during the crisis, acted by considering its impact on the country's economy. For example, before the

[8] See Defence White Paper,"July 27,1998, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/5/index.htm

election to be held in Taiwan, they changed their minds considering the economic problems that China's military exercises would create. This is one of the indicators of the evolution of priorities in Beijing's threat perception approach. (Ed.Lampton, 2001, p. 79) The place of this great financial crisis in the region within the scope of China's economic security has been an important issue. And this has been mentioned in all white papers of the Jiang period. This is one of the indicators of the evolution of priorities in Beijing's threat perception approach.

The prevailing approach throughout the document is about China's readiness for "cooperation" to ensure security around the world. At this point, the apparent meaning rather than promises makes sense, and the important name of Chinese history Sun Tzu's "All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable of attacking, feign incapacity; when active in moving troops, feign inactivity. When near the enemy, make it seem that you are far away; when far away, make it seem that you are near." (Rappai, 2008, p. 71) approach, calls into question China's approach, which at first seemed sincerely hopeful.

The document reiterates the five principles of peaceful coexistence (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 4). Afterward, the emphasis on cooperation between countries in the economic sense and the elimination of serious economic differences were emphasized. The statement "Security is mutual...", explains that China is in favor of establishing a dialogue between countries. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 4) In this regard, in its 1998 white paper, China mentions its communication with world countries such as US, France, Russia with a focus on security and defense (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 20) and its communication with important regional communities such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) that will have an impact on its economic and security interests. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 21)

Starting from the modernization, China's defense policy is announced as "defensive in nature" (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 5) and "Defending the motherland, resisting aggression, safeguarding the unity and opposing split is the starting point and underpinning of China's defense policy". (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 6) At this stage, it details the management of the process with military elements in order to disarm, protect the country and ensure security.

Again in the document, “Hegemonism and power politics..” (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 6) is shown as the primary reason for the security vulnerabilities that will occur, and therefore, China attributes the importance of its defense capability to this. China is aware that his work on the modernization and training of military elements will continue without going beyond the scope of the legit defense. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 8)

This white paper also mentions the country’s political order, emphasizing that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has studied every aspect of the country’s military structure and emphasized its “absolute leadership” in the army. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 8) In this document, as in the previous one, in defense expenditures, a comparison was made with the expenditures of powerful states such as the US, France and Japan, and the low level of China’s expenditures was stated. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 13) The decline in defense expenditures over the years has been shown and it is shared that it was 9.80 billion US dollars in 1997. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 13) The accuracy and reliability of these figures is open to debate. In one of his studies, Wang explained in detail that the Chinese military expenditure is 1.7 times more than the official announcement by China, around $20 to 140 billion. (S. Wang, 1999, p. 1,13) Wang mentions here that the reason for the unreliable analysis is related to the secret military appropriations and emphasizes that China is reluctant to even declare inaccurate figures (S. Wang, 1999, pp. 1–2). Wang suggested that important information can be obtained by scanning sources such as professional newspapers, government statistics books, etc. in order to find the right data. (S. Wang, 1999, p. 1)

In 1997, the transfer of Hong Kong to China by the British was included in the white paper and the importance of the PLA’s deployment in the region as an indicator of China’s sovereignty in the region was mentioned. The importance of this situation within the scope of national security was emphasized with the statement “an important guarantee for the preservation of state sovereignty and security and the maintenance of the Region’s long-term prosperity and stability”. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, pp. 16–17)

One of the highlights in this white paper is that China has explained its global understanding. It emphasized that besides being an important regional actor, China

provided the necessary support for peace as a permanent member of the UN Security Council (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 21). China stated that it followed an "independent foreign policy of peace" and stayed away from grouping with other world powers (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 5). There is also the promise of "Even when China becomes strong and powerful in the future, it will by no means take to the road of foreign aggression and expansion", (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 6) and although it signals the goal of becoming a strong actor as a state, it states that it will not have an aggressive attitude.

In the first chapter, titled "The International Security Situation", it can be said that China examines the global political situation and tries to understand that it adopts a multi-polar approach in which no single power is dominant. In addition to maintaining the importance of geographical and military elements, China reported that the importance of the "Economic security" factor, although felt intensely in the Asia-Pacific countries, has increased throughout the world, and this indicates that China's importance to economic progress is focused on developing itself more in this direction. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, pp. 2–3) In the subtext of this, it can be read that China aims to develop technologically and economically and contains the message that it is not a threat.

Although China does not clearly state in this white paper that it sees the US as a threat, "Hegemonism and power politics remain the main source of threats to world peace and stability…" (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 3) also "...a few military powers continue to stick to their Cold War mentality and nuclear deterrence policy, strenuously developing highly advanced and sophisticated weapons, especially advanced missile defense systems". (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 23) Looking at the sentences, it can be interpreted that the dominant subject of 'Hegemon' in the white paper is directed towards the US and is in fact a well-written reference to NATO and also to agreements on mutual security and cooperation between Japan and US. (Corning, 1989, pp. 269–280)

In the white paper, the issue of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is covered at length. China states that it is against nuclear armament and argues that countries with nuclear power should accept the condition of "…not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and in any circumstances…" (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 24)

China interprets the 1998 nuclear tests of India and Pakistan as a development that triggers global and regional armament and increases the security threat. (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 23) On the other hand, in the document, the agreement made to prevent threatening activities on the borders[9] of the two countries (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 20) regarding cooperation between China and India was explained in detail and in positive language. Regarding the Sino-Indian cooperation in the Asian geography, it is emphasized that the motivation of the two countries is common at the point of disarmament and supporter of multipolarity. These thoughts of the Chinese experts who created the white paper, which came to different conclusions, can be interpreted as showing a dual approach in order to maintain its presence in the international arena and stay in the game.

China has two different approaches to nuclear power. In addition to the classic positive and promising "the final goal of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons worldwide" (Information Office of the State Council, 1998, p. 24) rhetoric, it seems that establishing relations with India at this point, as it cannot stop being strong and cautious in the international system, is considering including India as a wild card in the process.

The year 1997 is one of the important years in terms of the bilateral relations of Zemin with the countries. In this year's visit to Russia and the Moscow summit, "anti-hegemony" was again emphasized and it was emphasized that there should be a multipolar world order. (Gordon, 1997) At this point, it is clear that what is indicated in the hegemon expression is the existence of the US and NATO, but direct expressions are avoided. This summit is important in that it reflects the foreign policy understanding of Zemin after Deng's death and opened up space for him at this point. In 1997, a promise was made to 'build toward a constructive strategic partnership' between Beijing and Washington. At this stage, China emphasized the importance it attaches to the Taiwan issue, while the US reiterated that it was dependent on the 'One China' policy. (Feng & Huang, 2000, p. 12)

Taiwan issue has been one of the most important issues of Chinese foreign policy and the approach of decision-makers to this issue offers a different perspective in

[9] Das, R. N. (2010). India-China Defence Cooperation and Military Engagement. *Journal of Defense Studies*, (4), p. 111.

evaluating them. The general opinion in the literature about Jiang is that he maintained his position of 'first among equals'[10] in the post-Deng period in all decision-making processes, including Taiwan policy, and adopted extensive studies by involving more experts in the policy-making process. (Ed.Lampton, 2001, p. 30)

In the 15th congress, Zemin stated that his focus in foreign policymaking will be on the interests of China and other countries. H. Lyman Miller and Liu Xiaohong assess the gradual formation of this idea. Beginning with China's entry into the UN, international relations, which gradually separated from the traditional understanding and gained a modern discourse, were the factors that shaped Jiang's political approach over time, the influence of the ASEAN formation.(Ed.Lampton, 2001, pp. 148–150)

One of Zemin's key achievements as a leader was his relationship with the armed forces. Although it is thought that Zemin would be weak at this point due to the lack of a military infrastructure or relationship in many studies, his high communication with the PLA made him one of the important figures in China. In his work, You Ji attributes PLA's strong communication with Jiang, the fact that he followed the post-Deng transition process and the relations between the military and society well, that he used his authority well at this point and that he had personal skills in internal relations, so PLA had faith in Zemin.(Ji, 2001, pp. 131–132)

PLA is explained in detail in the 1995 document and the first two white papers afterward. Apart from linking this to the fact that it is just a defense document, it can be interpreted as a reference to the allegations of corruption in the Chinese army. One of the factors that strengthen the PLA's allegations of corruption is that it has albeit limited power over the economy.(Mulvenon, 1998, pp. 12–13) In 1998, the Jiang government made an approach to the separation of the PLA from commercial ventures, but still, no complete separation was possible,(Perlo Freeman, 2018) and, in his article, Ji stated that as he witnessed, Zemin had previously stated that the process would be very difficult to deal if the PLA's corruption cases were brought to the agenda. (Ji, 2001, p. 135)

[10] Mohanty, D. R. (1998). Power struggle in China: The post-Deng scenario and Jiang Zemin as the "first among equals". *Strategic Analysis*, *22*(2), 249-261.

China's white paper issued in 2000 consists of 6 sections focusing on issues such as national defense policy, international security cooperation, arms control. The highlight of this white paper is that it underlines serious security situation (Yang et al., 2018a, p. 588) and opened the document with a general assessment of the international security situation as "today's world, factors that may cause instability and uncertainty have markedly increased. The world is far from peaceful. There is a serious disequilibrium in the relative strength of countries". (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 2)

One of the main actors mentioned in the document was America, and in this document, its negative aspects were highlighted, and its unreliable steps were emphasized. China emphasizes that it is uncomfortable with the ongoing Japanese-American cooperation with the statement "The US is further strengthening its military presence and bilateral military alliances in this region..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 3) regarding regional security concerns. Regarding Taiwan, which is very important for China and which it considers its own territory, "The US has never stopped selling advanced weapons to Taiwan... some are even attempting to incorporate Taiwan into the US TMD system..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 3) states that there are elements that will harm China's sovereignty and Asia-Pacific peace and order.

There may be mistrust that the details given in the white paper reflect reality, but it is important in that it ultimately demonstrates China's intention to explain its political approach to defense. The document states that "...economic globalization is gaining momentum and the international security situation, in general, continues to trend toward relaxation." (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 1) this is a statement summarizing how Beijing saw the world of that period from its own perspective. On the other hand, in the investigations of the strategists who prepared the white paper on the world security situation in the first part, it was first commented that "Relations among big powers are complicated, with many interwoven contradictions and frictions" (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 2), but it was later stated that the possibility of a new world war is far from, and then "the world is far from peaceful" (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 2) is mentioned. This picture makes one feel that China will determine its own defense approach, accordingly, considering that there is an international situation to be alerted to.

White paper shares this detail “Certain big powers are pursuing “neo-interventionism,“ “neo-gunboat policy“ and neo-economic colonialism, which are seriously damaging the sovereignty, independence, and developmental interests of many countries, and threatening world peace and security.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 2) Which raises China’s concerns, with the intention of a warning. The main subject mentioned in these statements is the US.

In this document, Beijing interprets the situation regarding the Taiwan Strait as “grim“ and strongly describes its approach to Taiwan, emphasizing the PLA’s commitment to state sovereignty and integrity. (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 3) At this point, China’s attitude towards nuclear armament given below is the expression that China limits itself to the provision of international security.

“Taiwan independence“ is a trigger for Beijing, but despite the feeling of insecurity this expression will create, “China possesses a small number of nuclear weapons entirely for self-defense...and undertakes not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 6)

Regarding Taiwan, “The Taiwan issue and realization of the complete reunification of China embodies the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 6) states that the issue belongs to the internal affairs of China and should not be interfered with. Here, too, there is a reference to the US arms sale to Taiwan. Regarding Taiwan, three ‘Ifs’ were listed in the white paper on Beijing’s use of force.

“ if a grave turn of events occurs leading to the separation of Taiwan from China in any name, or if Taiwan is invaded and occupied by foreign countries, or if the Taiwan authorities refuse, sine die, the peaceful settlement of cross-Straits reunification through negotiations, then the Chinese government will have no choice but to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force, to safeguard China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and achieve the great cause of reunification“. (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 6)

In the third part of the white paper, the structure and operation of PLA are explained. One of the parts of the paper that should be underlined may be the importance attributed to defensive training. Beijing, “The state has made national defense education

part of the education of the whole people, gradually bringing it into a socialized, diversified, regularized, and institutionalized pattern“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 10) and included this in the white paper, with an approach that supports his determination to disseminate the adopted national defense approach.

In this document, defense expenditures were compared with some countries and China reported that 1.31% of its Gross National Product (GNP) was spent on defense, compared to India and other countries, it is seen quite low. (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 12)

(100 million yuan)

Year	Total Expenditure	Economic Construction	National Defense
1995	6823.72	2855.78	636.72
1996	7937.55	3233.78	720.06
1997	9233.56	3647.33	812.57
1998	10798.18	4179.51	934.70
1999	13187.67	5061.76	1076.40
2000	15886.50	5748.36	1207.54

Table 3. 1 Budgetary Expenditure by Function (1995-2000) (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2003)

The acceleration of defense expenditures between 1995 and 2000 can be seen from the Chinese statistical data published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China. Between these years, there has been an increase of over 50% in Chinese defense expenditures. According to Beijing’s 1995, 1998, and 2000 defense white papers, the official defense budget is nearly evenly distributed among personnel, operations, and maintenance (O&M). Beijing argues that the increase in defense spending is mainly due to improved soldiers’ salaries and living conditions, but does not provide detailed information on how China’s official defense budget is distributed, let alone aggregated spending data for, for example, personnel, and O&M. Details of the budget allocated to

the army, air force or navy, what is spent on which R&D and purchasing projects; Many details such as the quantities of weapons are not disclosed in detail by the country.

The white paper emphasized the importance of The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty[11] (CTBT) and described the nuclear tests between India and Pakistan and the rejection of the CTBT by the US as "negative developments in the last two years". (Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 30) Although there is no direct Chinese support for India, it can be interpreted as an infrastructure that will form the basis of Beijing's approaches in the future.

The time of the Jiang government is an important transitional period. As the economic and commercial rise is increasingly the main target for the states, the effort to ensure regional stability has begun to increase. Conflicts in the Asia-Pacific and border disputes would slow China's pace, and cooperation-oriented moves were needed. Shanghai Five, formed in 1996 and transformed into Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001, was established by the meeting of the heads of state of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The increasing energy dependence for China, and the relations established as a result of this organization, has made many agreements with Central Asian countries on energy lines.(Lanteigne, 2010, p. 101,110)

Although the Jiang government aimed to make a harmonious foreign policy away from conflict, it could not escape the effects of the developments in the international arena. With the 1999 Kosovo crisis, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia caused tension between the two countries.(Dedekoca, 2017, p. 155) The subsequent US-NATO apology to Beijing came to the fore, and the reality of the apology[12] and the 'accidental' shooting of the embassy were discussed.(Dumbaugh, 2000),(Tian, 2007, pp. 367–369) This event was briefly mentioned in the white paper of 2000 and it was stated that the progress was based on reconciliation.(Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 24)

The prominent theme of the last white paper of the Zemin period, published on December 9, 2002[13], is the continuation of progress on modernization. Listing the basic

[11] For the details please see https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/ctbt/
[12] U.S. Department of State, https://1997-2001.state.gov/policy_remarks/1999/990510_clinton_kosovo.html
[13] Please see; China's National Defense in 2002 http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20021209/index.htm

principles on which it bases its defense policy and explaining its military tactics are among the prominent features of the document (Yang et al., 2018b, p. 588). In the 7-part document, unlike the previous documents, China's police force and the sea, land, and other elements of the PLA were mentioned.

In the defense document of 2002, with the phrase "safeguarding state sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and security; upholding economic development as the central task and unremittingly enhancing the overall national strength; adhering to and improving the socialist system; maintaining and promoting social stability and harmony..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 4) openly declares its interests, which are the basis of national defense policy. In the document, which mentions some goals in order to ensure national interests, the emphasis on modernization draws attention, especially with the phrase "To accelerate national defense development and achieve national defense and military modernization." (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 5)

Although modernization and high technology are targeted throughout the document, in the statement "Taking Mao Zedong's military thinking and Deng Xiaoping's thinking on armed forces building in the new period as the guide to action and fully implementing the important thought of the Three Represents..."(Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 5) the mentioned, "three representations" are meant to ensure that "the development trend of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture, and the basic interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people" underlined at the 16th convention by the CCP. (Mohanty, 2003, p. 238) This shows that the political infrastructure of Chinese military power is dogmatic.

It was stated in the document that China adopted an "active defense strategy" as a defense strategy and defined it as "...self-defense and attack only after being attacked..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 6) In addition, the white paper states that Beijing has a guideline on active defense but is not detailed, raising the possibility that China may make changes in the application and conditions of the active defense it has adopted. (Ferguson, 2002, p. 2)

At the point of the strategy adopted by China, the focus of "deterrence of war" (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 6) was emphasized in the white paper.

Next, “creating new ways of fighting so as to give fuller play to the strength of a people’s war.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 7) description is included. This indicates that the influence of the people in wars is still an important factor by Chinese decision-makers.

As mentioned before, in this white paper, China is of the opinion that there is no possibility of a new world war. It is emphasized throughout the document that the focus of economic progress in the world has increased, and “Strengthening dialogue and cooperation, maintaining regional stability and promoting common development has become the mainstream policy of the Asian countries“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 2) expression can read as ensuring regional stability seems to be another important goal of China.

China, at the point of strengthening relations with international and regional organizations, has taken and will take important roles in the work of institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia- Pacific Region (CSCAP) and paints a responsible and trustworthy picture by declaring this on the white paper. (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 33)

A separate detail is given to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the document. The paper mentions the SCO summit held in June 2002 and states that the organization has created a “new security concept“. (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 33) It also emphasizes that the organization spreads the “Shanghai spirit“ with the principles of regional stability and mutual trust.(Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 34)

Regarding the threat of China, particularly in the region, the document states,

“...the PLA focuses on the studies and training of joint operations...In the spring and summer of 2001, both Nanjing and Guangzhou military area commands organized field exercises with joint landing operations as the backdrop, focusing on the coordination of joint and combined arms landing operations...the general headquarters/departments the general headquarters/departments organized...exercises of communications and command at the joint operational level, training of landing and mountain operations, and research on methods of joint penetration“. (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 25)

With the explanation, information about the training of PLA and its adaptation to field conditions is given. In the last white paper of the Zemin period, Beijing did not indicate the country where it saw direct threats and would fight but reported the geographical conditions in which its army was prepared.

Turning to the developments just before the last defense document and during the last days of the Jiang administration, just before the 2002 defense document, another event that escalated the tension between the US and China took place in 2001 with Hainan incident. An American 'spy' plane that entered Chinese airspace was shot down by a Chinese warplane. Zhu Bangzao, the Chinese foreign minister at the time, frequently expressed that he expected an explanation from the US. (J. Y. S. Cheng & Ngok, 2004, pp. 66–68) These processes continued with the publication of a letter by Joseph Prueher, the US ambassador in China, expressing his regret. (J. Y. S. Cheng & Ngok, 2004, p. 73) Considering that this event may pose a threat to China's borders, the fact that it was not mentioned in the 2002 white paper can be attributed to China's desire to maintain its conciliatory statement. It can be said that these events, which took place at close intervals, are the result of the strategic rivalry of the two powers.

During the crisis, the transfer of Hong Kong by Britain in 1997 and Macau by Portugal in 1999 to China within the scope of 'one country, two systems' significantly increased China's economic and geographical power.(Kwong & Wong, 2017, p. 113,116) The transfer of Hong Kong in the first defense document of 1998 and Macau in the second document in 2000 was mentioned as a development that enhances regional stability, as well as providing full defense throughout the country. The last white paper of the Jiang period gives details on the progress of the garrisons established by the PLA in these regions.(Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 10) The fact that the subject is followed consistently in the documents within the concept of national security can be interpreted as the signals of being a regional power at the point of stability.

The Falun Gong (法轮功) incident in the Jiang period is very important. It is a meditation practice based on the principles of 'truthfulness (真, Zhēn), compassion (善, Shàn), tolerance (忍, Rěn)', also called Falun Dafa. This practice, which started in China in 1992, began to spread over time with the involvement of many people. (Tong, 2002, pp. 639–640) The practice was banned in 1999 after the Chinese government described it as a sect causing problems in society. (Thomas, 2000, pp. 474–476) There are many

reports that people who practice Falun Gong are severely tortured, but only the Chinese government's publications on this subject are the government's propaganda.[14] This event was not mentioned in the white papers, as a general comment, it was mentioned that 'religious extremism' is a factor that negatively affects security.(Information Office of the State Council, 2000, p. 27)

The September 11 incident experienced by the US in 2001 affected China's actions and discourses on regional and global security. This event is considered by China as a non-traditional threat.(Craig, 2007, p. 101) The US's war on terrorism after September 11 enabled China to describe all the actions of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region as terrorism. (Ong, 2006, p. 429) In the published white papers, the subject of terrorism was mentioned. Especially in the document published in 2002, mentioning the September 11 incident and stating that it included the Islamic movements in East Turkestan on the terrorist list. (Information Office of the State Council, 2002, p. 35) China reflected the problem it experienced within its borders with the aspect that it would affect international security.

After the Cold War process, countries started to make their foreign policies on the international environment in which the US was a superpower. As it is often mentioned in the white papers published in the Jiang period, China has been a defender of a multipolar world order. It did not directly oppose the unipolarity of the US but pursued the formation of a changing international system. To ensure security at the point of the multipolar system, cooperation with the state and non-state organizations, regionally and globally, is frequently mentioned in the white papers.

The changing international system has influenced the approach of Chinese decision-makers to security and defense concepts. As mentioned above during the Jiang period, the Taiwan Strait Crisis, the Gulf War, the Yugoslav Intervention, NATO's expansionist attitude, the US's activities in the Asian region and the actions explained by the definition of the fight against terrorism after the September 11 incident, affecting China's national and transnational security doctrine. Being a permanent member of the

[14] Please see; https://organharvestinvestigation.net/ , https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ASA170112000ENGLISH.pdf

UN security council has been helpful in creating a positive image for China and has provided an area to make it an important actor in the international system.

4. POST-2004 PERIOD IN CHINESE DEFENCE: INFORMATIZATION

In the previous defense document, China's military strategy was strategic self-defense; it contained the basic principles of underlining not only nuclear war but the deterrence of war as a whole. With the 2004 defense document, it is seen that the terminology is more settled at this point, and the concept of "Revolution in Military Affairs" was found for the first time in the English version of the document on defense and modernization of the army. Aiming to win the war by creating an information-based power, the PLA accelerates its reform process and therefore makes the RMA the main motto of this change.

Also in 2004, China appears to be advancing its modernization process with a new military doctrine called "Winning Local Wars under Informed Conditions". The concept of information, which can be thought of as an updated version of the high-tech concept used in the previous approach, refers to the coordination of armed forces conducting joint operations. This new doctrine prioritizes the provision and upgrading of these factors, which can be interpreted as the nervous system of the military structure, increasing situational awareness and listed as Command, Control, Combat, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR). (McReynolds & Mulvenon, 2014, p. 220,237,240) In fact, this new doctrine is a guide for the army at the point of the war system that is aimed to be established with the advent of the RMA concept.

Under the presidency of Hu Jintao, who came to power in 2003, it is seen both conceptually and practically that the modernization process of the army accelerated. Hu Jintao strengthened the strategy set in his predecessor by restating it as "winning local wars under informed conditions". Defense documents published during his presidency contain references to the army modernization process, economic security, and

unconventional threats. Hu, unlike previous presidents, emphasized that it is necessary to work on increasing interests in the field of maritime and space.

The Army Campaign	Joint blockade , Landing, Anti–air raid.
The Navy Campaign	Destruction of enemy surface naval formations, İnterdiction of naval lines of communication, Offensives against coral islands and reefs, Protection of naval lines of communication, Defense of navy bases.
The Air Force Campaign	Air offensive, Airborne, Air defense

Table 4. 1 PLA Campaigns (Johnson, et al. 2009)

The 17 different PLA campaigns are shown in the list above adopted from the RAND Corporation, with the classification of local wars envisaged by the 2004 doctrine. The emphasis on the island as a field of operation can be interpreted as reflecting the existing threat perception regarding the Taiwan issue. In addition, it can be said that the idea of an island being the focus of an attack on Taiwan, primarily for China, increases its image of aggression in China's defense and security.

The most up-to-date military doctrine of "Winning Knowledge-Based Local Wars", which came during the Xi administration, was approved in 2014. This doctrine is an "active defense" doctrine. In its 2015 strategic guide, "adherence to the principles of defense, self-defense and post-attack; and 'We will not attack unless we are attacked, but we will definitely counterattack if we are attacked'. (Information Office of the State Council, 2015) It shows the existence of the attack process, which is likely to be done in the background during the defense process.

The essence of the doctrine begins with the focus on preventing war and its establishment on deterrence, and in any case, the coordination between the units and the adoption of collective work, as a result, are essential. It is important to establish a strategy and plan with high foresight to manage the crisis processes. The doctrine shows that the PLA conducts capacity-building activities and attaches great importance to the scope of

conducting operations in overseas areas, also called “military operations other than war (MOOTW).“ It is seen that China, which has increased its weapon systems, is also trying to get ahead in terms of having the latest technology and diversity in this field. According to the US Department of Defense (DOD) data “PLAN is numerically the largest navy in the world and has a combined combat force of approximately 340 ships and submarines, including approximately 125 major surface combatants.“(Office Of The Secretary Of Defense, 2020, p. 50)

4.1.1. Hu Jintao Period: Winning Under Informatized Conditions

During the Jiang Zemin period, Hu worked very actively in the programs conducted by the state and was a person who developed his environment, so he was expected to come to power after Zemin. After Hu came to power, studies on the low level of welfare, which is one of the most important domestic issues, started, and the improvements made to the agricultural sector were among the remarkable factors. During Hu term, new threats were added to the old threats of China. One of the first factors to be mentioned for the Hu period is economic security. Beijing’s rapid economic growth during and after he came to power draws attention, and it has risen to the top of the world rankings every year, becoming the second-largest economy after the US in 2010. It has been important both for Beijing to control such a rapid rise and to ensure its security for this rise, which has not escaped the notice of the countries of the world.

The white paper, published in 2004, is the first defense document of the Hu period and provides important data in terms of reflecting the new administration’s way of thinking. The 2004 white paper reflected Beijing’s view on security in a more descriptive and orderly manner, dealt with security in every aspect, and at the same time made one feel uncomfortable at the point of current problems. At the beginning of the document it emphasizes that “Peace and development remain the dominating themes of the times“. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 2) In terms of China’s national security, the phrase “China’s national security environment in this pluralistic, diversified and interdependent world has on the whole improved...“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) has been used, but the statement “...factors of uncertainty, instability and insecurity are on the increase“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 2) shows that China is aware of the problems to be experienced both regionally and globally.

The document mentions the main threats that negatively affect China's national security. The first of these, as mentioned in previous white papers, is "Taiwan independence" and it is clearly stated with "The separatist activities of the "Taiwan independence" forces have increasingly become the biggest immediate threat to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity...". (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) Another threat is stated at the beginning of the document as the technological gap created by the change of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) which is mentioned as a rapidly increasing factor worldwide. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 3) The third threat was stated as "...challenges caused by the development of the trends toward economic globalization" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) and lastly, the long-term unipolar continuation of the international order was mentioned.

China generally looked at the elements that it described as threats, not as a definite judgment, but as a possibility, but Taiwan's independence was clearly defined as "the biggest immediate threat..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) among them. Throughout the white paper, there are explanations about modernization in the military field, often mentioning the RMA. It can be interpreted that the Hu administration sees it as a current problem and is worried that it will grow in the future.

It was also repeated in this white paper that he followed a "defensive policy" in terms of national security policy. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) The purpose of defense policies is stated as follows: "The main tasks...modernization of its national defense and its armed forces, to safeguard national security and unity, and ensure the smooth process of building a moderately prosperous society..."(Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 5) One of the notable elements was the emphasis on the importance of "economic development" for military modernization and the building of national security in general. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 6) It has been stated that these elements are also interconnected, and therefore, the issue of modernization in the military field and ensuring national security should be taken into consideration together with economic development. (Jian Zhang, 2012, p. 894)

In the white paper of 2004, the development of the army and the plans to be implemented in this regard were reported in detail. It is an effort to convey the desired turn in the armed forces in such an exciting and detailed way, to show that there is

transparency in the defense document, and to get support for this change from within the PLA.

The white paper explained China's military modernization aims in the white paper as "The PLA, aiming at building an informationalized force and winning an informationalized war, deepens its reform, dedicates itself to innovation, improves its quality, and actively pushes forward the RMA with Chinese characteristics with informationalization at the core". (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 9) The steps that are planned to be conducted gradually for modernization are reported in the white paper. Accordingly, the first step is to "Take the road of composite and leapfrog development" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 7) and the white paper informs that the transition of PLA to knowledge will take place step by step through the process. The second step was stated as "Building a strong army through science and technology" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 7) and it was stated that the main goal was to achieve the best result at a low cost. "deepen the reform of the armed forces" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 8) is given as the third directive. It has been reported that "step up preparations for military struggle" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 8) is another step to develop strategy and precipitate the development of weapons while preserving the basis of the Chinese doctrine, and finally "Military exchange and cooperation" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 8) has been reported, it has also been mentioned that the PLA is working on this.

China takes military modernization very seriously and has set this as an important goal, and it has been reported in detail in the white paper. The first of these is reduced of the army troops. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 9) As stated in the first white papers published, China declares that it aims to reduce the number of excess people in the army and to create a more minimal but a quality army. [15] At this stage, it was mentioned that there are studies to strengthen the army, which has decreased in number, such as arranging the hierarchy within the PLA and providing training on the subject to the relevant units. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 9)

One of the other points addressed in the white paper is to ensure the security of Chinese territorial waters and to be prepared for a naval war situation, "PLA gives priority

[15] Nemets, A. (2004). PLA 'Modernization Building'and RMA-based Reform in 2003/2004. *RUSI Chinese Military Update*, *2*, 3-5.

to the building of the Navy, Air Force, and Second Artillery Force...in order to strengthen the capabilities". (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 10) "The Air Force has gradually shifted from one of territorial air defense to one of both offensive and defensive operations" statement was given and it was underlined that the PLA received training at all stages in general. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 11)

Information on another military modernization process mentioned in the white paper "...the PLA strives to comprehensively push forward informationalization with military information systems and informationalized main battle weapon systems as the mainstay and with military informationalization infrastructure development supported and guaranteed." (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 12) is in the form. In the continuation of this, the subject of modernizing weapons and military equipment was mentioned, "By embedding advanced technology, developing new munitions, and integrating command and control systems, the PLA has restored or upgraded the tactical and technical performance of some current main battle weapons." (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 13)

It was stated in the white paper that the project named "Strategic Project for Talented People" was started to be implemented in 2003 by CMC, and that the main objective of the project would be to train qualified army personnel who would be prepared for the situation of war, and at this point, specialized units would be formed within the PLA. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 13) The white paper predicted that "By the end of 2010, there will be a remarkable improvement in the quality of military personnel, and a big increase in the number of well-educated personnel in combat units." (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 14)

The joint conduct of the trainings of the PLA and the development of the joint war capability were also considered important at the point of modernization. (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 14) The white paper announces that the logistics order in the military is one of the most important inputs in the modernization process, and that "Experimental reforms of joint logistics started in the Jinan Theater in July 2004". (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 16) Besides being an armed structure ready for war, the PLA is an important domestic actor involved in political processes. For its political aspect, it is effective in reflecting the CCP's approach to the public, and

"...system of the Party's absolute leadership over the armed forces puts ideological and political work first, innovates political work in its content, approaches, means as well as mechanism to give full play to the support and combat functions of political work". (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 17)

In the white paper, all these defensive works by Beijing is part of the big picture of the country's national security. In the document, the statement "China needs a peaceful international environment..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 1) points to the necessity of regional and international cooperation in the process of ensuring national security. In connection with this, the white paper states that China is involved in defense-oriented cooperation, and its efforts are "China pursues a foreign policy of building a good-neighbor relationship and partnership with its neighbors...and vigorously pushing forward the building of a security dialogue and cooperation mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region". (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 51) It states that China plays an active role in many regional organizations, including the establishment of the SCO, and China is in cooperation against non-traditional, primarily terrorism, threats.

It can be said that a concern about the security environment was felt throughout the 2004 white paper. It is clear that one of the most comprehensive issues besides "Taiwan independence", which is defined as a clear threat, is economic development. In terms of ensuring defense and security, it will be difficult to implement the strategies planned on paper in practice and to advance the economy and Taiwan issue in harmony. Defense spending was also reported to be "China's defense expenditure...lower than those of some major Western countries..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 20) but the dilemma of whether Beijing should invest in military personnel or weapons to meet its goals can be predicted to persist for a long time.[16]

On the other hand, although the phrase "China will never go for expansion, nor will it ever seek hegemony" (Information Office of the State Council, 2004, p. 1) is in the white paper and China emphasizes its desire for regional security, it will always be a question mark how the political approach of growing China will evolve from the perspective of the countries in the region. It is clear that there will be a disproportion between Beijing's development process and the regional order and a tension that must be

[16] Mintz, A., & Huang, C. (1991). Guns versus butter: The indirect link. American Journal of Political Science, 738-757.

dealt with. And finally, the impact of the US's regional influence and future developments on Beijing's defense plans will be one of the compelling factors for China's defense strategy.

In the 2006 document, this approach was continued more comprehensively, "China pursues a policy of coordinated development of national defense and economy. It keeps the modernization of China's national defense and armed forces as an integral part of its social and economic development". (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 8) Afterwards, after linking the development of China to the progress of these elements, he drew a positive approach with the statement "China will not engage in any arms race or pose a military threat to any other country", (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 2) but ultimately it can be said that the progress of the country is directly proportional to the development of military elements.

At the end of the security environment section, the sentence "Endeavors to enhance both development and security, both internal security and external security, and both traditional security and nontraditional security" (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 6) is included. Although this statement is not clear, it brings to mind the idea that Beijing has established a connection between these elements and can create new strategies for the new threats that come with it.

In the white paper, the section titled "National Defense Policy" declares China's intention to protect national security and create an "all-around prosperous society". (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 2) The paper mentions that a "three-step development strategy" (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 7) has been adopted for the plan to modernize the country's military units. These three steps generally include laying the foundation for the modernization of the armed forces by 2010 and taking it to step by step to have an army that has achieved the desired goal by the middle of the 21st century. (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 7) The fact that development and modernization is the main point in making defense policy can be interpreted that Beijing also attributes the dangers to the economy and development as an obstacle to national security. It is not clear whether the army will be involved in the economic-political processes at this point, and what tasks it will undertake within this concept, not only in the country but also outside of the country. The white paper also includes the main points of defense policy. Firstly,

"Upholding national security and unity, and ensuring the interests of national development...It improve its capabilities of countering various security threats, accomplishing diversified military tasks, and ensuring that it can effectively respond to crises, maintain peace, deter and win wars under complex circumstances." (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 7)

This expression begins with the main goal of preserving the classic country unity. In terms of country interests, its scope is quite wide, and it is an element that can vary. The threat of "Taiwan Independence" is one of the clearest points. A complex condition is an overly broad term, and the subsequent emphasis on adapting combat capability to these conditions clearly points to Beijing's modernization goal. In addition, the various scope of tasks mentioned may be an implicit reference to expanding the limits of control and intervention in the development process.

For the second element of national defense policymaking in the white paper,

"China pursues a policy of coordinated development of national defense and economy...China works in a comprehensive way to ensure that its armed forces are revolutionary in nature, modernized, and regularized. It strives to ensure coordination between the revolution in military affairs with Chinese features and preparations for military struggle, mechanization, and informationization, combat force building of services and arms, current and long-term development..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 8)

It is seen that Beijing focuses on the connection of developments of the armed forces with the economy. Units in the military are expected to work in a coordinated manner during and after the development phase, and it can be interpreted that this will affect the capabilities of the army.

The full text of Hu Jintao's speech on the PLA at the expanded meeting of the Central Military Commission in December 2004 was not published, but it was clarified that the CCP and PLA's new historical mission "Three Provides and One Role" was decided, and the main tasks of the PLA for the new period sorted. It provides an important guarantee of strength for the party, provides a strong security guarantee to preserve a period of important strategic opportunity for national development, provides strong strategic support to protect national interests, maintains world peace, and promotes common development.(Mulvenon, 2009, pp. 1–2) The PLA's mandate and approach to

the military are also reflected in future defense documents, starting with the 2008 defense document.

The subject of the second and third elements is the PLA, which makes the PLA an active actor in defense policymaking. The second element is generally summarized by the sentence “The PLA pursues a strategy of strengthening itself by means of science...“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 8) It has been mentioned that the PLA has made progress and increased its work in the field of information and innovation, which is gaining importance all over the world. In the third element, details about the mandate of the PLA are given, and with the expression “...work for close coordination between military struggle and political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and legal endeavors and takes the initiative to prevent and defuse crises and deter conflicts and wars.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 9) it is clearly seen that the PLA’s authority limits have expanded.

As the fifth element, China’s nuclear strategy is mentioned. Nuclear strategy is reported to be within the scope of not only state nuclear policy but also military strategy, and “Its fundamental goal is to deter other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 9) It is stated that as in the previous white papers, “the policy of no first use“ is still being adopted.

As the sixth and final element, the white paper explains that China continues its “the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence“ approach in its national defense policy understanding by mentioning China’s security-oriented cooperation in the international and regional arena and its work with the UN. (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 10)

Regarding the step of reducing the PLA army power in China, it was stated in the document that it decreased to 2.3 million as of 2005, and emphasizes that this is good progress towards the goal of modernization and gaining momentum. (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 17)

Preparing a separate chapter for economic development in the white paper and explaining that “To make economic mobilization a bridge between China’s economic development...to keep the national defense economy at a proper level in peacetime“

(Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 39) also, Beijing's linking of the defense concept and the economy is a clear reflection of his country's focus on becoming an economic giant in every sense.

Some information is given without giving much detail on the part titled international security cooperation, and the work done with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is mentioned. Beijing has stated that it is working on the implementation of the "Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty" (CTBT) on arms control and non-proliferation and stated that it has implemented the "amended Landmine Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons". "China is firmly opposed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery" (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 57) It can be said that China is trying to break the idea of the Chinese threat with his expression.

China also conducted military talks with more than 150 countries, and the defense officials of 90 countries also visited Beijing. (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 58) Paper stated that military-strategic talks with Russia have become a tradition and he referred to its communication with Europe as "high-level military contacts", but Chinese security and related objectives in different regions are also important. (Information Office of the State Council, 2006, p. 58)

In the 2006 White Paper, the security concept was explained in more detail and a wide window was presented. The main theme of this document is military modernization and embraced the relationship of the economy with defense. There is also a detailed explanation of defense expenditures. Aside from China's pursuit of peace and stability, it will be important how regional countries view this approach. Fearing China, the measures to be taken in the region begin to damage the piece situation.

The 2008 defense document, published in January 2009, begins with a foreword announcing the earthquake that China experienced in 2008, hosting the 29th Olympic Games, and marking the 30th anniversary of the reform policy. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 3) In this defense document, China asserts pretentiously its role in the international system, "The Chinese economy has become an important part of the world economy, China has become an important member of the international system...China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world

enjoy prosperity and stability without China.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 3) The 2008 World Olympics held in Beijing increased China’s economic prestige during the Hu period. (Pevehouse, Jon C. W. & Goldstein, 2017, pp. 398–399) Although there are different figures on the subject, China spent considerable money on these Olympics. Mentioning the Olympics at the opening of the 2008 white paper supports China’s effort to paint an effective country image.

The financial crisis that started in 2008 was an event that shook all countries. Compared to the 1997 Asian Crisis, China also began to be affected by the crisis in the summer of 2008 and due to the crisis, which had an impact on the export sector, factories started to close quickly, causing an increase in unemployment. (Bao et al., 2011, p. 6) The process of managing the economic crisis was important for Chinese decision-makers. China, which had already been carrying out economic contractionary policies due to rapid growth, also faced the problem of deflation during the crisis. (Wong, 2011, p. 4) Steps were taken to revive domestic spending, but due to unemployment, most people could not implement it. (Pevehouse, Jon C. W. & Goldstein, 2017, p. 399) China has shown economic growth compared to other countries during this crisis period. Economic progress gave a good image to Beijing, which was advancing under Hu’s leadership. The importance of energy resources, which was also on the agenda in the ground period, came to the fore more in the Hu period, investment negotiations were held especially in the Southern Hemisphere regarding underground and energy resources. (S. Miller, 2009) (Diallo, 2009)

When it comes to energy consumption, a detail that gained momentum during the Hu period was the increase in communication between China and Africa. At the FOCAC (Forum on China–Africa Cooperation) Beijing Summit held in 2006, Hu Jintao, the target of doubling the foreign economic aid to Africa by 2009 and many other incentive sentences, the importance of relations is understood. (J. Wang & Zou, 2014, p. 1125) China’s increasing energy consumption and dependence on oil since 1993 brought relations with Africa, the world’s 3rd largest oil-producing region.(Shelly Zhao, 2011) Looking at the Total Energy Consumption and Composition data, the total energy consumption of China in 2008 is over 2 million tons, of which 68.7% is coal and 18.7% is oil.(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009b) Energy commitment in the whole of relations with different inputs has increased China’s foreign direct investment in Africa. The investment rate, which was $157 431 in 2007, increased to $549 055 in

2008.(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009a) At this point, the most important factor that should be focused on regarding the presence of China in the country is the sale of weapons. Ghana, Namibia, and Malaysia are seen as China's main conventional weapons export countries in 2009.(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009c) All these relations are interpreted in different ways, such as China making an effect as the politically destabilizing element within Africa, and the expansion of China in the region is both for its energy needs and willingness to reduce commitment to the Middle East in regards to energy.

In this document, threats such as discrimination and extremism were mentioned. Apart from Xinjiang and Taiwan issues, which Beijing sees as classical internal security problems, and hegemony, which it defines as external threats, the white paper states that "terrorism, natural disasters, economic insecurity, and information insecurity are on the rise" (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 7) as non-traditional security problems. It was mentioned that the tendency of the world states to give military support to the relations of the countries with each other increased and it was mentioned that it made disarmament efforts more difficult. This sentence can also be interpreted as a preparation for an increase in armament from another perspective. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 5)

Beijing has always interpreted the developments in the Xinjiang region, located on its eastern border, as extremism and terrorism. The massacre that took place in the capital of Xinjiang in 2009, (Işık, 2021, p. 76) which was not mentioned in the white paper and faced many criticisms, was a significant distrust for China and made it a violation of many rights. The Beijing administration had to use military elements in order to keep its control and tried to fend off this threat, which it saw as "terrorism" in its own way. The most fundamental of these is again based on the "one China" policy. (Tanner, 2004, p. 73)

Although all these threats and security problems are listed, it is mentioned that regional stability is preserved. In the document, efforts made within organizations for regional stability were mentioned, and the effect of these efforts was indicated with the statement "...mechanisms for regional and sub-regional economic and security cooperation to maintain their development momentum, and it has become the policy orientation of all countries..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 5) "The

attempts of the separatist forces for “Taiwan independence“ to seek “de jure Taiwan independence(Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 6)“ have been thwarted, and the situation across the Taiwan Straits has taken a significantly positive turn“. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 6) This is one of the most important developments for Beijing. At the regional security point, the progress in Japanese-Chinese defense relations was mentioned. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 69)

In the defense document of 2008, China criticized the US presence in the region with the statement that “the U.S. has increased its strategic attention to and input in the Asia-Pacific region“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 6) it emphasized that the relations between the two countries regarding the issue of selling arms to Taiwan have been damaged and that the solution to the Taiwan problem has been difficult. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 7) In addition, the statement “The impact of the financial crisis triggered by the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis is snowballing“ pointed out the effect of the US on economic problems. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 4)

In addition to the crisis factor to ensure the security of the economy during the Hu period, the rapid opening of the Chinese domestic market to the outside world had an effect that jeopardized the economic independence, and it was a difficult and priority issue for decision makers to control, especially in the Hu period. Economic developments were mentioned in the 2004 document, and it was stated in the 2008 document that the crisis originated from the US. In the white papers of the Hu period, it was drawn that it was an important country in the world on the way to becoming an economic giant, but defense papers did not intensely emphasize the perceived economic insecurity. The reason for this can be interpreted as Beijing’s plan to resolve this perceived threat without reflecting it to the outside world.

For Beijing, the importance of the development of the economy and its relationship with security is one of the main factors in the policy-making process, and in the 2008 document “economic cooperation is in full swing, leading to increasing economic interdependence, interconnectivity, and interactivity among countries.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 4) mentioned with the expression. In addition, the white paper sees economic problems and instability as a threat to world

development with the statement "Economic risks are manifesting in a more interconnected, systematic, and global nature". (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 4) The PLA's involvement in the economic process has been stated as "PLA subordinates its development to the overall national construction, supports local economic and social development" (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 12) One of the notable details of the 2008 defense document is that it contains information about the Land, Naval, Air Force, and Second Artillery units. In addition, the above-mentioned MOOTW regarding the modernization of the army, the political studies, and the more detailed mention of the training set this document apart from the others.

Maritime security was one of the leading issues within the scope of Chinese national security. While what is meant by Chinese security and defense is mostly land defense, maritime security gained momentum after the Cold War. The tensions increased with border countries regarding the islands. The reason why this scope came to the fore during the Hu period, the increasing energy need with the growing fast economy, and the supply of exports by sea brought maritime security to an important point for China. (Pevehouse, Jon C. W. & Goldstein, 2017, p. 154) The tensions on the sea were not included in the white papers, but Beijing's increasing work on maritime security was mentioned, and cooperation with neighboring countries was emphasized. The conflict of threat and cooperation here, Beijing's refusal to show a direct target makes the robustness of the collaborations questioned.

On the protection of regional stability and communication by ASEAN members and China in the South China Sea, the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)[17] has been published, this declaration has not changed much over the years, but after discussions due to the non-implementation of the guidelines, such as protection of the marine environment, marine crimes, etc. committees were established. (Thayer, 2013, p. 77) China still wants to keep security at the highest level as the country that claims the most rights in the region, and despite its cooperation with ASEAN in this direction, it is seen as a threat in the eyes of other countries. (M. T. Fravel, 2011, p. 293)

Regarding national defense, the main point in China's strategy in the white paper is stated as "deterring crisis and wars". (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p.

[17] For further details please see, https://asean.org/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2/

11) The explanation of "the building of a lean and effective deterrent force and the flexible use of different means of deterrence" (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 11) can be interpreted as an indication that the army is in search of a precaution against the new threats it sees. Beijing points out the need for the Chinese army to improve itself with the statement that it "increases the country's capabilities to maintain maritime, space and electromagnetic space security" (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 12) and continues to defend the point of gaining information-based watches. One of the notable phrases in the document is MOOTW, (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 12) which refers to exercises that will take place in different regions and count missions such as "counterterrorism, stability maintenance, emergency rescue, and international peacekeeping"

China mentioned that there will be an increase in defense expenditures in proportion to economic growth and reported that defense expenditures are spent to meet personnel needs, increase welfare levels and balance inflation, (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, pp. 63–64) but the opposite is stated in the study by the US Department of Defense. They stated that the expenditures were higher than the stated figures and that they were spent on new types of weapons and military equipment. (Agnihotri, 2009, p. 111) It is seen that the information given in the Chinese white papers has increased and detailed over time, and this is important progress for Beijing's claim that it is not in search of hegemony, but unless the explanations are met in practice, China will continue to be a threat, especially for neighboring countries.

Regarding neighboring countries, China's most populous neighboring country, India, did have not much space in the 2008 white paper. At the point of cooperation, it was reported that communication with India in the field of security increased and it was announced that joint studies were carried out within the scope of the fight against terrorism without detailing. (Information Office of the State Council, 2009, p. 69) In terms of nuclear weapons, China's not being the first to use them and the steps it will take in case of an attack were mentioned above. In addition to possessing nuclear weapons, India has not taken an attitude towards disarmament, so it is clear from Beijing's point of view that India draws a profile that destabilizes stability and security. Whether these collaborations are for control or other purposes is unclear, as the document lacks much detail for India.

The last defense document of the Hu period is from 2010 and was published by the PRC State Council Information Office in March 2011. The white paper, like the others, aims to talk about the progress made, from military modernization to defense policies and expenditures. As stated before, they are of the opinion that China is not sufficiently clear in these documents, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, in terms of its military capacity. However, from the point of view of the White Paper's official, Chen Zhou, this may be the sub-message of this document in particular, that the clear military conditions and capabilities, rather than the security objective and intent, increase the threat potential of that country. (D. Cheng, 2011, p. 3)

In the 2010 document, non-traditional threats, from terrorism to natural disasters and health problems, which were mentioned in previous documents, were listed and it was stated that there would be difficulties in ensuring security if internal and external threats and international security problems were intertwined. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 5) The results of these problems in China were not detailed and superficial inferences were made, which is a point where the transparency of this document is criticized. (Jian Zhang, 2012, p. 882)

Regarding regional security, "Asia-Pacific security is becoming more intricate and volatile." (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 6) information was given and as a supporting element, the uncertainty in Korea and Afghanistan and the continuity of political tensions were mentioned, conflicts of interest of the countries are shown as one of the sources of the problems, and the steps of the US to increase its presence in the region are also mentioned. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 6) Beijing sees this period as "important strategic opportunities for its development" (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 6) and reflected in the document that it is aware of the need to work in cooperation with developed and developing countries around the world, including neighboring countries, but it is clear that it is still not satisfied with the military presence of the US. In the continuation of the episode, "Separatist forces working for East Turkistan independence and Tibet independence have inflicted serious damage on national security and social stability" (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 7) this may suggest that re-emphasizing non-traditional threats and internal security problems are of primary concern, but the scope for comment is limited as the white paper authors did not elaborate on the processes.

One of the highlights of the 2010 white paper is the addition of “Cyberspace“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 5,10) to Beijing’s scope of security and national defense. Considering the long-term studies on the modernization of the armed forces and the PLA’s focus on joint operations, it is important for China to include space in the process. In the white paper, it is mentioned when there is a change within the scope of the information studies that are attributed as the main point of modernization and “The total length of the national defense optical fiber communication network has increased by a large margin, forming a new generation information transmission network with optical fiber communication as the mainstay and satellite and short-wave communications as assistance.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, pp. 19–20) announced the existence of space-oriented studies with the expression. Although it is not surprising that China is also working on extraterrestrial areas, the lack of information on the budget allocated and how much progress has been made on these issues in the document, reduces the transparency of the defense document.

The white paper reminds the basic doctrine and goal of the PLA’s modernization process and included the statement “the PLA gradually shifted its focus from quantity and scale to quality and efficiency, from manpower-intensive to a technology-intensive model“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 15) summarizing the desired transformation.

Regarding modernization, the document stated the planned and implemented updates in the areas within the PLA. With regard to artillery, information was given that “The artillery component has been working on new types of weapons, equipment, and ammunition with higher levels of informationization...and developing the capacity to carry out precision operations with integrated reconnaissance, control, strike, and assessment capabilities.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 16) then new defense systems in relation to air defense progress has been reported. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 16) In addition, within the scope of modernization, the continuity of new exercises and training for problems such as natural disasters and terrorism, which it sees as a threat to national security, is mentioned. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 28) This suffices to infer that Beijing is taking more action against non-traditional security threats than it has detailed.

In the white papers, Beijing has reported its defense policies and the steps it has taken to ensure international security, especially national security, and it has been discussed to what extent it reflects the reality. Although high technology investment is mentioned in the modernization process of the armed forces, the weapons and systems planned to be used are not detailed. In the 2010 document, it is stated that PLA studies have accelerated the development of weapons technology in order to complete the steps and works listed in order to provide a defense. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 27) Technological advances in helicopter, aircraft, and submarine systems and missile systems established for use in the air (PLAAF), land (PLAA), and sea (PLAN) fields are mentioned. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 28) On the other hand, within the scope of defense expenditures, the white paper reported that for 2010, there was an increase of 7.5 percent from the previous year's defense budget. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 62) It was stated that the main items of these were raising the living standard of the military personnel, and the military duties were the second, but the duties on natural disasters were mentioned in its content, and the third was stated as the purchase and maintenance of equipment within the scope of RMA. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 61) If the budget ratio is considered correct, it is clear that there is not enough explanation to distract from the idea that the majority of the spending is reserved for high-tech military munitions.

Following the defense expenditures, the document included China's cooperation in the field of defense and aggression. In the document, cooperation with many countries within the scope of the "Confidence-Building Measure" was referred to, and especially regionally, "...security cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries promotes military confidence-building, and endeavors to maintain regional peace and stability" was included. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 69)

The defense document of 2010 does not provide information that will differentiate it from other documents. It is clear from the document that Beijing is aware of the rapid growth of its economy and believes in the military modernization project planning. The fact that the white paper frequently emphasizes China's cooperation with the UN and other actors and frequently mentions the steps it has taken for global peace indicates Beijing's motivation to become a leading actor in the international arena. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 4,13) "Chinese armed forces carry on the glorious tradition of supporting the government and cherishing the people, strictly abiding by state

policies, laws, and regulations, and consolidating the unity between the military and the government and between the military and the people“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 48) the document states. Along with the statement, the strong connection of the government with the armed forces is one of the prominent details throughout the document. In the part of the document that mentions the legal system to which the military is subject, the intensity of the CCP's influence on legal regulations draws attention. “Troops participating in joint military exercises with foreign countries act within relevant bilateral or multilateral legal frameworks and settle any legal issues arising in the course of such exercises in accordance with the law“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2011, p. 50) statement is included, but there is no clear statement showing how Beijing will take decisions in case of conflict of laws.

4.1.2. Xi Jinping Period: Winning Informatized Local Wars

Xi Jinping took the post of general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CCP) and president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in March 2013. (MOOTW, 2013, p. 34) The national security approach that has changed with the Xi administration can be defined by the concept of **“**Comprehensive National Security **“**. (Drinhausen & Legarda, 2022, pp. 4–5) Internal security issues have always been at the forefront for Beijing, and it is often emphasized by the government that Taiwan and Xinjiang issues are internationalized, but according to the government that the issues are Chinese domestic issues. The fact that Xi took steps by considering every detail from potential threats, corruption, and modernization of the army to economic processes within the concept of security is one of the details that distinguish him from the old administrations. (Aijun, 2019, p. 3) Xi associates the communist party ideology and his own administrative power with national security, and not only physical defense but also the protection of the ideology is included in the concept. (Chestnut Greitens, 2021, p. 2) State ideology exists with many variants such as culture, technology and economy, and the concept of securitization will continue to come to the fore in various forms.

The slogan of the “Chinese Dream“, which Xi identified and grew with himself, can be interpreted as the main idea of his foreign policy goals. Xi, right after he came to power he talked about two goals with the Chinese dream; to double the Gross National Product in 2021 and to be a rich and powerful nation by 2049. (Allison, 2017) The idea of the Chinese dream includes the 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation', (China Daily,

2013) and with the Xi leadership, he has tried to dominate the mechanisms within the state and to take the necessary steps by directly dealing with many problems, especially corruption.

In terms of foreign policy, the "community of common destiny", was first used at Hu Jintao's 18th party congress and it is clear that Xi hopes to associate this concept with the Chinese Dream in order to promote a regional partnership based on shared values. (Chang-Liao, 2016, p. 84) In his 2013 article, Timothy Heath drew attention to Xi's approach of taking regional steps in many areas from economy to national security, and also presented China's leadership in moral values with Xi's rhetoric. (Heath, 2013)

"Striving for achievement (SFA)", which is based on the national rejuvenation ideal that comes with the Chinese dream, is one of the other new strategic steps of the Xi period, (Yan, 2014, pp. 153–155) and Ling Wei explained in his work from two different perspectives that are dominant in the literature; the first is to create a weight by acting with an economic development-oriented approach, and the other is the neighboring It is a strategy that will keep good relations in the region, especially with countries, which is in line with the emphasis on common destiny. (Wei, 2020, pp. 12–13) Considering the emphasis on relations with neighboring countries in Xi's speech in 2013, (People's Daily Online, 2013) it is clear that the second approach is more prominent, and thus China takes an active role in the region and will even rise to a decision-making point. Ling Wei emphasizes the fact that Beijing should be the regulator and provider of essentials, rather than the receiving party. (Wei, 2020, p. 13)

During the Xi era, China gained momentum in international competition such as the targeted Chinese dream, the globalization of the army, and economic gigantism, but it would not be wrong to interpret this progress as diversifying the threat perception and making it difficult to predict. All these growth targets of Xi, the geopolitical external threat that came with the uneasiness created in the region, especially in the neighboring countries, was included in China's primary threat perception. Corruption and unbalanced income distribution that came with the increasing economic rise was a danger for the Xi government (Poh & Li, 2017, p. 7) because the economic collapse could also lead to the collapse of the established regime, so the national security scope was written in the second article of The National Security Law of 2015 and that 'sustainable economic and social development' should not be under threat is also included. (Standing Committee of the

National People's Congress, 2015) In addition to reaching the title of the world's second largest economy, China is also at the top of social disorder, and perhaps social order has been an important element of national interest in the process of ensuring national security.

The increasing maritime security issue after the Cold War also increased with the Xi period, and the development and mission process of the PLA navy forces began to be developed. In this way, it is possible to interpret the "Near Seas Defense and Far Seas Protection" strategy, which was published by China in 2015 and included in the 2015 white paper in this manner,(Rice & Robb, 2021) as the perception of threat has widened and the possible dangers to be encountered in remote areas have increased.

Xi's view of security, which covers 16 security areas[18], was included in the CCP Constitution in 2017. From territorial security to the cyber security that Xi included, these areas are more than just a made-up list and show a more proactive stance. (Drinhausen & Legarda, 2022, p. 5) With the old and added new threat perceptions, China is shifting to a more proactive approach instead of instantaneously reacting.

Xi's main approach emphasizes the motivations of "bear the primary responsibility for the protection" and "prevent all possible trouble" (Creemers et al., 2018) rather than to produce temporary solutions by adapting to the processes and mentions that he will approach the definitive solutions to the problems with keeping the talent and competitive energy high. In all these, the goal is to realize the Chinese dream, to ensure the targeted economic development together with security, and to harmonize the international arena with the process.

When Xi came to power, he faced an exceedingly difficult China, and when his own goals were added to it, his perception and scope of threat grew. On the back of growing unrest at the borders of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang, US economic sanctions have been threats that have shaken China's balance. In another process, the steps taken due to human mobility. Scopes such as the opening of Chinese citizens to the world, the increase in the Chinese population in different countries, the protection of foreign citizens, the security of sea routes and energy corridors emerged. It is also seen

[18] Originally there were 11 security types, with Xi it has been expanded to 16. It is as follows; Political security, Territorial security, Military security, Economic security, Cultural security, Societal security, Tech security, Cybersecurity, Ecological security, Resource security, Biosecurity, Space security, Polar security, Deep-sea security, Security of overseas interests.

that these details are among the job descriptions underlined in the PLA's 2015 white paper. Another development experienced was the attack on the Chinese embassy in Kyrgyzstan, (BBC, 2016) which is the Southern line of the Belt-Road Project, in 2016. With Xi's intention to increase security measures within the scope of this project, a forum on the subject was held in Beijing in 2017. (Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, 2017)

Focusing on the army, during the Hu era, China's military strategy "winning local wars under the conditions of information" is being updated to "winning local wars based on knowledge". In fact, it is not a differentiation, but the development of the existing strategy. At this point, approaches to the army are important. Xi has established a Central National Security Commission (CNSC) under him, and it is clear that he wants to keep tight control on both internal and external security. (Hu, 2016, pp. 2, 11) In 2015, the first national defense strategy was adopted within the CCP. Although the details are not reflected in the media, it is clear that the national defense will be under the control of the CCP with all its channels. (Tiezzi, 2015) The fact that Xi followed the PLA modernization process closely after he came to power and intervened in the operation of the armed forces, when necessary, shows his sensitivity on this issue. In defense documents, the military structure has been mentioned so often that it can almost be called its main theme.

The first defense document of the Xi era, published with a different title in 2013, "The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces", unlike the previous white papers. Apart from its title, changes in the focus of the text have also started with this document. Major General Chen Zhou, the senior researcher at the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Academy of Military Sciences, stated that this white paper is a thematic white paper that focuses on the interior of the Chinese armed forces.(Chun, 2013, p. 1)

In the first part of the white paper, the increase in "hegemony, power politics and new interventionism" (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 3) was mentioned. In fact, the new interventionism was included for the first time in this defense document, and it was emphasized that the global peace process was deteriorating, thus the concern for both regional and national security. The document emphasizes the successful technological and social progress of China, and refers to the US intervention in the region as "the US is adjusting its Asia-Pacific security strategy..." (Information

Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 3) at this stage. “China enjoys general social stability and cross-Straits relations are sustaining the momentum of peaceful development.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 3) With this expression, it can be thought that the white paper shows the peace-oriented progress process is being hindered. Although China’s approach towards the US is a conventional content in white papers, it can be interpreted that it has a more level approach in this document compared to the previous ones.

It would not be wrong to say that this document, published in 2013, is mostly highlighted PLA. In the second part of the document, titled “Building and Development of China’s Armed Forces“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, pp. 7–12), the organizational structure of the PLA, including air (PLAAF), sea (PLAN), The PLA Second Artillery Force (PLASAF), is explained. PLA is an actor that has an important place in the Chinese government and policies and affects the decision-making processes, so it is possible to find statements reflecting the approaches of the CCP in the white paper. The phrase “to build strong national defense and powerful armed forces which are commensurate with China’s international standing and meet the needs of its security and development interests.“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 2) clearly demonstrates this.

The creation of this targeted military structure is especially important for China’s modernization, determination of its global status and reaching the planned level of development. One of the details included in the 2013 document, unlike the others, highlights the state of being prepared of PLA. The Information Office of the State Council emphasizes in the document that the importance of the army’s vigilance for missions or the ability to act in sudden situations, also “Based on different tasks, the troops assume different levels of readiness (Level III, Level II and Level I, from the lowest degree of alertness to the highest)“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 16) detail is included. However, the scope of these levels is not particularly emphasized. It can be deduced that another detail that draws attention in this document, especially for the PLA, is the reporting of the army power with numerical data.[19] (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, pp. 9–10)

[19] Mobile operational unites 850,000; The PLA Navy (PLAN) 235,000; The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) 398,000

The 2015 White Paper lists the strategic tasks undertaken by the Chinese armed forces. The phrase “To safeguard the security of China’s overseas interests“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 7) is important throughout the white paper, because an expression such as “The traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 13) shows us that China expects regional aggressions from the sea. The expression “...the PLA Navy (PLAN) will gradually shift its focus from ‘offshore waters defense’ to the combination of ‘offshore waters defense’ with ‘open seas protection’...“,(Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 12) indicates that the Chinese government aims to ensure that the navy forces are compatible with the region, as well as reaching a level that can be active on a global scale

In the 2015 document, it was mentioned that the realistic exercises planned to prepare the army to adapt to all global conditions were carried out in the past years.(Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 11) While emphasizing the PLA’s good progress during the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), details of slow progress were also noted. Reforms implemented in the administrative order of the PLA were examined under a separate part and stated “The reform in the leadership and command system is a significant measure in response to the call for a modern and specialized military capable of fighting...aiming to improve the operational effectiveness and development efficiency of the military“ (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 15) purpose is stated. The units under the control of the CMC were increased, it was especially emphasized that the Disciplinary Inspection Commission (DIC) was placed under the control of the CMC, (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, pp. 15–17) because DIC is a body that investigates disorder and corruption in the armed forces, and taking it under the control of the CMC gives the idea that the inspections will be carried out more carefully. (Lawrence & Lee, 2021, p. 16)

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waters defense' with 'open seas protection'...",(Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 12) indicates that the Chinese government aims to ensure that the navy forces are compatible with the region, as well as reaching a level that can be active on a global scale.

The issue of maritime security has been handled as a regional threat and the striking detail is that it points to Japan as directly responsible with the expression "Japan is making trouble over the issue of the Diaoyu Islands" (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 4) Again the white paper emphasized, non-traditional security threats such as "natural disasters, security accidents, and public health incidents" (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 4), which cause concern for regional peace.

At the maritime point, North Korea's nuclear exercises in the South China Sea in 2010 were one of the issues. (Pertiwi, 2018, pp. 4–6) This was followed by the US' statement that it would support Japan in a military situation after Japan seized a Chinese boat around the Senkaku Islands/Diaoyutai Qundao. Many details, such as Obama's statement of his desire for Trans-Pacific cooperation at the East Asia Summit, US's rebalancing policy in Asia, and the signing of a mutual defense agreement between the Philippines and the US in 2014, were reflected in China's 2015 defense document. (Broderick, 2015, p. 8) "On the issues concerning China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, some of its offshore neighbors take provocative actions and reinforce their military presence on China's reefs and islands that they have illegally occupied. Some external countries are also busy meddling in South China Sea affairs..." (Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 4) The Council of State's Information Office reflected the readers that it aimed to "...strike a balance between rights protection and stability maintenance" (Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 10) , but it seems that he did not elaborate on this part much. At this point, if the process is prolonged in the face of other problems that China claims, there may be the idea of minimizing the financial distress and supplying a flexible peace area.

There were few references to the U.S. and Japan, this attitude continues here as well, and an explanation as "The US carries on its 'rebalancing' strategy and enhances its military presence and its military alliances in this region. Japan is sparing no effort to dodge the post-war mechanism, overhauling its military and security policies. " (Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 4) was included. Again, Japan's

approach has been criticized, and the increasing emphasis on the US presence can be interpreted as indirectly pointing out those who do not oppose this process. Nearing the end of the document, cooperation with the US on the point of military modernization and "to strengthen mutual trust" (Information Office of the State Council, 2015, p. 22) is mentioned. This reflects China's motivation to be involved in the US presence process.

In connection with the Chinese defense, India becomes a prominent country. Border problems with India have continued throughout history with varying tensions. Border problems with India, one of China's neighboring countries; have continued throughout history with varying tensions. Tensions escalated in 2017 and 2020, which began when China claimed Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan region. In response to the rise of China both in the region and globally, India has joined the US, Australia, and Japan in the Quadruple Security Dialogue (Quad) partnership. The tension increased with the increased communication of its neighbor with the US and the attitude towards China's presence in the Covid-19 process.(Bhatnagar & Ahmed, 2020) The military forces of the two countries faced each other in Doklam in 2017, but there was no escalation, but then re-emerged in 2020 as China claimed Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan region.(Edward, 2021, pp. 227–230) Chinese forces in the region began to take physical actions outside of their patrol duties. The process continued with Chinese and Indian military conflicts, with casualties on both sides. As a result of the negotiations, stability was achieved in the region.

In addition, China's increasing weight in the region with the Belt and Road Initiative does not satisfy India, which also thinks it has a strong influence in the region. However, there is no direct threat to India in the last defense document of 2019. Comment has been added that the joint commands within the Chinese military structure will reduce the tension on the India-China borderline. In general, China mentioned that the task of protecting its territorial sovereignty, maritime rights, and interests is difficult, and emphasized the duty of military units to prevent the threat that will arise in every field from airspace to space.(Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 11)

The US reference of China's last white paper called "China's National Defense in the New Era" is intense. These references reflect the references given in the US National

Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy documents[20], published one year apart under the leadership of the then US President Trump, that China is going 'against the US.'

In the white papers published by the Chinese government, the presence of the US in the Asian region has been interpreted in two main focuses as relations with Taiwan (especially arms sales). The US reference is seen at similar points in the 2019 document. First,

> "The US has adjusted its national security and defense strategies and adopted unilateral policies. It has provoked and intensified competition among major countries significantly increased its defense expenditure, pushed for additional capacity in nuclear, outer space, cyber, and missile defense, and undermined global strategic stability. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (ATO) has continued its enlargement, stepped up military deployment in Central and Eastern Europe, and conducted frequent military exercises." (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 2)

With this statement, China has positioned the US as disrupting the global order, not the national or regional order. Then," The US is strengthening its Asia-Pacific military alliances and reinforcing military deployment and intervention, adding complexity to regional security." (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 3) With the expression, the reason for seeing a regional and therefore a national threat is stated. The white paper criticizes the US for disrupting the balance in the process of the world's shift to the Asian axis with the economic rise of China. In addition, dissatisfaction with the US setting up a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)[21] system in South Korea is expressed. (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 3) China is uneasy about the US's military capacity increase and the expansion of the strategy area with this system.

One of the other references to the US is the comparison of military expenditures and it is shown that China lags behind. (Information Office of the State Council, 2019,

[20] United States. (2002). The National Security Strategy of The United States of America. President of the U.S. https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf & United States. (2018). Summary of the 2018 national defense strategy of the United States of america : sharpening the american military's competitive edge. Department of Defense, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf

[21] Terminal High Altitude Area Defense is an American missile system that shoots down ballistic missiles when the descent phase. For more details please visit, http://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/rngs/SOUTHKOREA-THAAD/0100403L07J/index.html

pp. 27–28) In addition, it was mentioned in the white paper that China made significant efforts in the processes of not conflicting and maintaining cooperation with the US, and the information that the US-Chinese military processes are stable is added.(Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 31)

The Taiwan issue, which is the most sensitive issue for China, has not received much reference in 2013 technical document. However, it was emphasized by taking the separatist movements in that region into the category of the biggest regional threat. (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 4) In the document published 2019, it is seen that there are references to the Chinese domestic policy (interpreting it as its own internal issue) and the most prominent issue of the defense approach, the desire to unite with Taiwan and this process. It is important to mention the Democratic Progressive Party DPP in the phrase "The Taiwan authorities led by the DPP, stubbornly stick to Taiwan independence", (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 4) it can be considered influential that the Taiwanese political party origin is the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang). In the chapter on security risks, "The 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces and their actions remain the gravest immediate threat to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the biggest barrier hindering the peaceful reunification of the country" (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 4) explained and "The PLA will resolutely defeat anyone attempting to separate Taiwan from China and safeguard national unity at all costs." (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 6) showed the determination of the Chinese government in this regard.

Although the agreements on arms sales between the two countries on the US and Taiwan issue are among the points that China is most uncomfortable with, this detail is not emphasized much in the defense documents, and even Taiwan and the straits problem are briefly mentioned. However, looking at these shortcomings, it would not be right to make a sharp comment as a change in China's perspective.

Beijing was planning to make deeper progress from economy to security in developing neighborly relations, and in 2013 it declared an East China Sea Air Defense Zone (BBC News, 2013) to control its eastern borders and his both strengthened China's hand in the region and was a step that served the US's goal of narrowing its area of existence. (Sarkar, 2021, p. 289) Another goal of Xi in the borders of the South China

Sea was to create an artificial island, and the claiming countries could not find a response to their demands. (Storey, 2021, pp. 238–239)

While China is progressing economically, the concept of economic security has also taken its place on the white paper agenda. The support given by the PLA to economic development was mentioned in the section titled "Supporting National Economic and Social Development"(Information Office of the State Council, 2013, pp. 20–30). It is clear that the PLA is at the center of inspection and control in many areas, from "building airports, highways, railways, and water conservation facilities" (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 21), to maintaining the ecological balance, to ensuring compliance and safety at sea. In the light of what is conveyed in these first four chapters of the document, it would not be wrong to interpret it as being prepared with an approach that appeals to Chinese citizens. In the section titled "Safeguarding World Peace and Regional Stability" (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, pp. 30–38) enables this interpretation, the PLA's attendance in "disaster relief operations" (Information Office of the State Council, 2013, p. 33) within the UN, its support, and attending the training in UN operations are mentioned.(Information Office of the State Council, 2013, pp. 33–34) This part of the document can be observed as China conveying that it is not a threat to the outside world.

Speaking of economic security, one of the ways Xi has increased his presence in international processes has been to spearhead new formations. Serious steps were taken at the economic point; Xi, who started the 'Belt and Road Initiative' and 'Maritime Silk Road' initiatives, also decided to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank[22] to support economic processes. (Jian Zhang, 2015, p. 15) The processes of China's participation in UN peace operations, which are often emphasized in white papers, were also intense during the Xi period. Supporting the peace and development fund, establishing a regular peace force with a capacity of 8000, taking part in the peacekeeping mission in Mali in 2013 and more, has been one of Xi's important approaches to foreign policy. (Poh & Li, 2017, p. 4)

[22] Smith D., Brics eye infrastructure funding through new development bank, 2013, The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/mar/28/brics-countries-infrastructure-spending-development-bank

Xi Jinping's speech at the World Economic Summit 5 years ago is also of great importance since it is the second economy of the world.[23] Emphasizing that globalization should not be used as an excuse against the increasing nationalism in the West, Xi emphasized the importance of seeking a "dynamic, innovation-oriented growth model" for the global economy to be formed, mentioning that "the lack of strong driving forces for global growth makes it difficult to maintain the stable growth of the global economy". (Mingjie, 2022)

The implementation of the new security concept and its reflection on China's behavior also vary. Xi tightened control over all processes, apart from concentrating on the PLA, organizational structure and legal innovations were also realized, resulting in a situation surrounding the Autonomous regions. Changes in defense processes and technological adaptation processes brought along serious expenses. Before the threat occurred, Beijing's early intervention approach accelerated with the Covid-19 pandemic process in social health, and the systems developed for data collection had the opportunity to be implemented during the quarantine process. (CGTN News, 2020) It is seen that the white papers give little place to the perception of a threat over health, but after Covid-19, the Chinese government published a document covering the actions taken by China and coping with the pandemic process. (China's State Council Information Office, 2020) Unlike the others, this document has been published as a timeline of the steps taken during the pandemic process, and it can be said that this process does not turn into a political tool and is shared transparently. The Covid process has been an event that supports Xi's vision of unifying internal and external security and increasing connectivity with neighboring countries.

Although there is no reference to Xinjiang throughout the 2019 document, the phrase "to crack down on proponents of separatist movements such as 'Tibet independence' and the creation of 'East Turkistan'" (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 6) is included in this section. Xi is engaged in the fight against corruption. Elements such as corruption and bribery have become an increasingly important threat, with the possibility of corrupting the state from within and making it vulnerable to external threats. (Blackwill & Campbell, 2016, pp. 8–9) Although there were periods to prevent corruption before Xi, the anti-corruption campaign came to the

[23] For the full text of the speech please visit, https://america.cgtn.com/2017/01/17/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum

fore with Xi's rhetoric, and it is important for the party's permanence with this campaign. (Chestnut Greitens, 2021, pp. 6–7) (Economy, 2018, p. 68)

In the Xi period, the most prominent and continuing issue, which was included in the scope of national security, is the practice towards the Muslim Uyghurs living in Xinjiang. (Demir, 2020, pp. 59–60) After the massacre in 2009, Beijing put forward "One Belt, One Road", Xi's project of consolidating China in the global economy, and with the inclusion of East Turkestan borders, the sensitivity to this region increased and the regional control process started heavily in 2014. (Purbrick, 2017, p. 238) The process here was conveyed within the scope of 'preventing terrorism and extremism' and as of 2017, the formation process of concentration camps accelerated. (Maizland, 2021) The continuous rejection of the Beijing government, but on the other hand, the persecution of the Uyghur people in the research on the region was mentioned in the media and in many academic studies. The main defense documents do not directly refer to these slips, but The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, led by Xi, also published a white paper titled "The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang" in 2019. (China's State Council Information Office, 2019) In the document, the term 'Education and training centers' was used for the concentration camps and it was explained in detail that it was the body working to control the people who showed a tendency towards terrorism and extremism. (Cabestan, 2022, pp. 76–77) This issue, which has been an important internal security issue for China, has been included in the research of the UN and many organizations.

Looking at the last published document The Chinese defense policy are listed, and the phrase "Never seeking hegemony, expansion...", (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 6) which was also included in other documents and became a slogan, was emphasized under a separate title. Also noteworthy in this document is the statement "China will never...seek any sphere of influence". (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 7) It has been stated that the Chinese armed forces are working in many areas, including reducing terrorism, maintaining cyber security, and involvement in UN peacekeeping operations to "build a community with a shared future for mankind." (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 9) While these details are not convincing to some actors or academics, it is important for China to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and this is covered in the white papers. (Information Office of the State Council, 2019, p. 30)

5. CONCLUSION

Founded in 1949, the People's Republic of China has attracted attention with its progress in social, economic, and political fields during its reform period, and has taken its place as an active and important actor in the international arena with its growing economy. With Xi coming to power in 2012, Beijing has gained substantially strong and dominant voice with its increasing control in homeland and international security spheres.

With the multipolarity trend on the rise, in the post- Cold War era, China has been attracting attention not only due to its rapid economic development in an increasingly competitive environment but also due to its threat perception and defense perspective. The hegemonic effort by China, as a country to gradually grow into a world giant especially in terms of economy and technology, has always been scrutinized. The economic and energy-oriented projects mentioned in this study, implemented in the Xi era, achieved debatable growth in the Chinese sphere of influence. Sharp increase in the in multi-façade competition in the world has led to questioning whether or not 'the Second Cold War', as the phrase in literature, was on the horizon as a wave. Perception among the countries and actors were that Bejing had the inclination towards practicing hegemony.

The study hypothesizes that " China, led by Xi, will take a more proactive approach in terms of national defense and security and will be less motivated to back down regarding politically- sensitive matters." With the heightened self-confidence built on rapid growth, China has continued to implement Xi's, a new security and defense approach, which manifested itself as boldly controlling practices both in domestic and at international level.

Post- Cold War leading to the transition from the bipolar system to multipolarity, has brought China to the fore as a leading actor, with its economic growth in the new mindset of competition. Studies on the shift of the world to the Asian axis have increased and it has been an important factor in the actions of other world countries. Based on the

World Bank data, China became the world's second-largest economy in 2010,[24] and its heightened political presence, especially with Xi, showed itself in areas where the US had regressed.

The Cold War has been an important breaking point in international relations, and in this case, regional organizations have also increased their areas of existence as well. With the collapse of the bipolar system, new security problems have emerged in the international arena, the problems that remained silent during the hegemonic conflict of the two superpowers have re-surfaced, and terrorist movements have reached international dimensions. It is seen that the US has shifted its focus to the East intensively during and after the September 11 attack. In this context, its presence in the Asia-Pacific region has been a disturbing factor for China, and the US has expressed its dissatisfaction with its presence in defense documents.

The last three presidential terms have been economically and politically challenging with the income distribution fluctuations and with the consequent security gaps, and difficulty in attaining control over autonomous regions and borders, especially in densely populated areas. For the last three leaders examined, especially Xi, public awareness and loyalty have been essential for the survival of the CCP regime, and the regime has tried to survive by preserving the internal unity with the projects planned around the world, especially the "Chinese Dream".

With his focus on preserving and strengthening CCP regime, Xi consciously avoided his former counterparts' approaches that would have otherwise endangered the regime again. For instance, when revolts in Taiwan and Hong Kong increased tension in the Xinjiang region, the resulting the international attention and the following US-imposed sanctions aiming to impede Chinese economic growth have certainly not been welcomed by Beijing. This is why, Xi, different than his predecessors, have prioritized to boost economy by means of encouraging Chinese citizens and investors to take bold business steps and opening up to the world, while ensuring their safety and security. The priority of Beijing's defense-security concept has been to create a security line by minimizing possible problems that may arise in the processes of energy flow to the country via the routes of large-scale projects such as the One Belt and One Road. With

[24] Please see;
https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/670402/?utm_source=showcase&utm_campaign=visualisation/670402

Xi, the focus on economy, energy and security is on the rise, as these are all reflections of the transformation that prioritizes economy and energy security within the scope of China's defense strategy.

Playing a central role in shaping China's security and defense policy and future, the "One Belt, One Road" project's significant part passes through the borders of East Turkestan, the security of which is important for Xi to attain. Addressed by the media and academia point out to a massacre, Beijing's suppressive methods to contain the region were defined by Chinese authorities as an education process and extremism. Defining the characteristics of Chinese national defense, a focus on the details of Xinjiang process, will inform further on Xi's approach. In addition to this and military developments mentioned earlier, yet another strictly disciplined policy by Xi shows itself with his navy navy strategy of 'combining near sea defense with far sea protection', indicating China's initiative to build its defense mechanism on its perception of threats stemming from remote regions. As a requisite of the growth of global economy and increase in world mobility, Xi's step to utilize his navy in the far sea is an indication of not only his initiative to establish good international relations but is also a sign of his well-informed determination to set a barrier and stand firm against the expansion of the U.S. presence in Asia-Pasific, as briefly mentioned in the White Papers.

That is , Xi proves to be much more assertive in his defense-security approaches than those of the two leaders, Zemin and Hu. While Hu Jintao is at the forefront of the peaceful and friendly approach of all three leaders, as the defense documents also would confirm. With his distant attitude and determination to gain and maintain control Xi remains cautious and evaluates all the details prior to taking any risk.

(NT $ 100 million)

Year	Total Expenditure	Economic Development	National Defense
2013	26652	3937	2926
2014	26457	3993	2914
2015	26452	3528	3046
2016	27453	3946	3148
2017	27784	3895	3046

Table 5. 1 Net Expenditures of Treasury (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2019)

Compared to that of previous leaders. Xi's term in the office, has begun with a further intensified threat factors, the mitigation of which, as Xi is aware, is critical to ensure stability, a crucial for China's rise in the current international conjecture. In contrast to keeping a low profile-policy by Deng, Zemin and Jintao, Xi's proactive stance is turning into a policy approach of predicting and acting prior to the materialization of incidents.

This study attempts to compare and check to see a weighed balance between to what extend the White Papers published periodically by the State Council Information Department have captured the core essence of the Chinese defense approach; to what extend the Chinese practices were reflected in these documents, and to what extend the content of these documents shaped the ongoing processes in practice.

This study concludes that the defense documents drafted by the Chinese government's Information office of state council have been more inclined to serve the government's interests, growing into political documents as to solidify Chinese ideology, especially under Xi's term in the office, at a time when ideological and political party security gained even further importance. With the rapid economic growth and the resulting confidence, Xi exercised more autocracy in the regions such as East Turkestan and named the protested massacre in the world media as 'trainings' and exercised a bold international policy.

The primary area served by the defense documents, which constitute the main material of the thesis, was actually to give a sense of integration among citizens. Xi's taking steps to ensure integrity by prioritizing regime security and the CNSC, which he founded in 2013, works as a party body that focuses on examining domestic and foreign issues together.

The content of these documents centered around economic growth, serving Chinese ideological and political interests, other than reflecting the actual developments and Chinese practices.

There is a change in national defense and foreign policy making, and Beijing emphasizes that it does not always pursue hegemonic goals. It can be said that Xi had a goal of providing stability rather than being hegemonic in the short term. However, the fact that it takes a clear stance on politically sensitive matters such as Taiwan and that it

will not take a step back when defense is required, makes us think that the world is moving toward the goal of China's hegemony in the long run. Therefore, the future of China is full of uncertainties and is a growing topic as it is explored.

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