

**Timothy R. Heath, Ph.D.**

**Career summary:** Nationally recognized expert on Chinese leadership, politics, strategy, and military.

**Work experience:**

Employer: The RAND Corporation

Dates: 2014- present

- *Senior international defense researcher.* I initiate and carry out research on defense related topics related to China.

Employer: US Pacific Command (USPACOM)

Dates: 2010-2014.

- *Senior China Analyst:* I was the senior China analyst in the USPACOM China Strategic Focus Group. I was responsible for research and analysis on topics related to China's strategy and defense.

Employer: DNI Open Source Center

Dates: 2004-2009

*Analyst:* I was a senior analyst for Chinese military topics. I carried out research and analysis on Chinese military capabilities and operations.

Employer: Office of Naval Intelligence

Dates: 2000-2004

*PLA Navy analyst.* I carried out research and analysis on the PLA Navy's operations and capabilities. I spent the year 2003-2004 deployed as a US Army National Guard activated reservist on homeland defense (Operation Noble Eagle).

Employer: CLCI, INC

Dates: 1999-2000

*Project manager:* I managed translation projects and ensured quality control.

Employer: US Army

Dates: 1996-1999

*Squad leader.* I trained and led a squad of combat engineers. During this time, I served a 10 month tour in Bosnia.

**Education:**

*George Mason University, Fairfax VA*

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science      Date: 05/2021

*George Washington University, Washington DC*

Degree: Master of Arts in Asian Studies      Date: 05/2005

*College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA*

Degree: Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy      Date: 05/ 1994

**Language skills:**

Chinese Mandarin      Highly proficient

French      Proficient

German      Working proficiency

**Non-RAND publications and commentary:**

Books

*The Autocrat's Predicament: The Political Peril of Economic Upgrade in Single Party, Authoritarian Regimes*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2023.

*China's New "Governing Party" Paradigm: Political Renewal and the Pursuit of National Rejuvenation*. London, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2014.

Book chapters

"Post Industrial Inter-state Rivalry and the Future of U.S.-China Competition," in *New Asian Disorder*, Lowell Dittmer (ed.), 2021.

"An Overview of China's National Military Strategy," in *China's Evolving Military Strategy*, Joe McReynolds (ed.), 2016.

"Towards Strategic Leadership: Chinese Communist Party-People's Liberation Army Relations in the Hu Jintao Era," in *Assessing the PLA in the Hu Jintao Era*, R. Kamphausen (ed.), 2014.

Congressional Testimony

"Is China Prepared for War? Indications and Warning of a Potential Chinese Conflict with the United States," U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, June 13, 2024.

"The Consolidation of Political Power in China Under Xi Jinping: Implications for the PLA and Domestic Security Forces," U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, February 7, 2019.

“Chinese Political and Military Thinking Regarding Taiwan and the East and South China Seas,” U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, April 13, 2017.

“Developments in China’s Military Force Projection and Expeditionary Capabilities,” U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, January 21, 2016.

#### RAND Research

*Economic Deterrence in a China Contingency*, with Howard J. Shatz, Marco Hafner, Naoko Aoki, Peter Dortmans, and Fiona Quimbire, November, 2025.

*China’s Water Future: Key Decisions, Challenges, and Trade-Offs*, with Rebecca Tisherman, Sara Stullken, Sara Hughes, Amanda Kerrigan, Emily Hoch, Cindy Zheng, and Abigail Kessler, September, 2025.

*U.S.-China Economic Competition: Gains and Risks in a Complex Economic and Geopolitical Relationship*, with Nadia Almasalkhi, Aaron B. Frank, C. Ben Gibson, Khrystyna Holynska, King Mallory, Steven W. Popper, Alexandra Stark, Tobias Sytsma, and Noosha Uddin.

*The Chinese Military’s Doubtful Combat Readiness: The People’s Liberation Army Remains Focused on Upholding Chinese Communist Party Rule, Not Preparing for War*, January 2025.

*Political Legitimacy and the People’s Liberation Army*, with Howard Wang and Cindy Zheng, January, 2025.

*The Effectiveness of U.S. Economic Policies Regarding China Pursued from 2017 to 2024*, with Keith Crane, Alexandra Stark, and Cindy Zheng, October 2024.

*Is China Prepared for War? Indications and Warning of a Potential Chinese Conflict with the United States*, June 2024.

*The Societal Basis for National Competitiveness: Chinese and Russian Perspectives*, with Clint Reach and Michael J. Mazarr, March, 2024.

*Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution in Comparative Organizations*, with Megan McKernan, Stephanie Young, Dara Massicot, Andrew Dowse, Devon Hill, James Black, Ryan Consaul, Michael Simpson, Sarah W. Denton, January, 2024.

*Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution in Comparative Organizations: Volume 1, Case Studies of China and Russia* with Megan McKernan, Stephanie Young, Dara Massicot, Mark Stalczynski, Ivana Ke, Raphael S. Cohen, John P. Godges, Heidi Peters, Lauren Skrabala, January 2024.

*China’s Global Energy Interconnection: Exploring the Security Implications of a Power Grid Developed and Governed by China* with Fiona Quimbire, Ismael Arciniegas Rueda, Henri van Soest, Jon Schmid, Howard J. Shatz, Michal Meidan, Andrea Wullner, Paul Deane, James Glynn, December 2023.

*Disrupting the Chinese Military in Competition and Low-Intensity Conflict: An Analysis of People's Liberation Army Missions, Tasks, and Potential Vulnerabilities*, with Eric Robinson, Christian Curriden, Derek Grossman, Sale Lilly, Daniel Egel, Gabrielle Tarini, December, 2023.

*Strategic Disruption by Special Operations Forces: A Concept for Proactive Campaigning Short of Traditional War* with Eric Robinson, Christian Curriden, Derek Grossman, Sale Lilly, Daniel Egel, Gabrielle Tarini, December, 2023.

*Can Taiwan Resist a Large-Scale Military Attack by China? Assessing Strengths and Vulnerabilities in a Potential Conflict*, with Sale Lilly and Eugeniu Han, June, 2023.

*U.S.-China Rivalry in a Neomedieval World: Security in an Age of Weakening States*, with Weilong Kong and Alexis Dale-Huang, June, 2023.

*The Backbone of U.S. Joint Operations: Army Roles in the Indo-Pacific*, with Abby Doll, Yvonne K. Crane, Gian Gentile, D. Sean Barnett, John Gordon IV, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Mark Hvizda, Sale Lilly, Bradley Martin, May, 2023.

*Gaining Victory in Systems Warfare: China's Perspective on the U.S.-China Military Balance*, with Mark Cozad, Jeffrey Engstrom, Scott W. Harold, Timothy R. Heath, Sale Lilly, Edmund J. Burke, Julia Brackup, Derek Grossman, May, 2023.

*Managing the Escalation Risks of U.S. Military Activities in the Indo-Pacific*, with Bryan Frederick, Kristen Gunness, Bonny Lin, Cortez A. Cooper III, Bryan Rooney, James Benkowski, Nathan Chandler, Cristina L. Garafola, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Karl P. Mueller, January 2023.

*New Directions for Projecting Land Power in the Indo-Pacific: Contexts, Constraints, and Concepts*, with Jonathan Wong, Michael J. Mazarr, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, Michael Bohnert, Scott Boston, Christian Curriden, Derek Eaton, Gregory Weider Fauerbach, Joslyn Fleming, and Katherine Giglio, December, 2022.

*The People's Liberation Army's Search for Overseas Basing and Access: A Framework to Assess Potential Host Nations*, with Cristina Garafola, Christian Curriden, Meagen L. Smith, Derek Grossman, Nathan Chandler, and Stephen Watts, December, 2022.

*Managing Escalation While Competing Effectively in the Indo-Pacific*, with Bryan Frederick, Kristen Gunness, Bonny Lin, Cortez A. Cooper III, Bryan Rooney, James Benkowski, Nathan Chandler, Cristina L. Garafola, Jeffrey W. Hornung, and Karl P. Mueller, November, 2022.

*Anticipating Chinese Reactions to U.S. Posture Enhancements*, with Kristen Gunness, Bryan Frederick, Timothy R. Heath, Emily Ellinger, Christian Curriden, Nathan Chandler, Bonny Lin, James Benkowski, Bryan Rooney, Cortez A. Cooper III, October 2022.

*The Return of Great Power War: Scenarios of Systemic Conflict Between the United States and China*, with Kristen Gunness and Tristan Finazzo, August 2022.

*Disrupting Deterrence: Examining the Effects of Technologies on Strategic Deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, with Michael J. Mazarr, Ashley L. Rhoades, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, Alexis A. Blanc, Derek Eaton, Katie Feistel, Edward Geist, Timothy R. Heath, Christian Johnson, Krista Langeland, April 2022.

*Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition Through the Eyes of Others*, with Michael J. Mazarr, Jonah Blank, Samuel Charap, Benjamin N. Harris, Timothy R. Heath, Niklas Helwig, Jeffrey W. Hornung, Lyle J. Morris, Ashley L. Rhoades, Ariane M. Tabatabai, May, 2022.

*Stabilizing Great Power Rivalries*, with Michael Mazarr, Samuel Charap, Abigail Casey, Irina A. Chindea, Christian Curriden, Alyssa Demus, Bryan Frederick, Arthur Chan, John P. Godges, and Eugene Han, November 2021.

*Anticipating Adversary Military Interventions*, with Jennifer Kavanagh, Bryan Frederick, Nathan Chandler, Samuel Charap, Ariane M. Tabatabai, Edward Geist, Christian Curriden, September 2021.

*China's Military Interventions: Patterns, Drivers, and Signposts*, with Christian Curriden, Bryan Frederick, Nathan Chandler, and Jennifer Kavanagh, September 2021.

*China's Quest for Global Primacy: An Analysis of Chinese International and Defense Strategies to Outcompete the United States*, with Derek Grossman and Asha Clark, June, 2021.

*What Deters and Why: The State of Deterrence in Korea and the Taiwan Strait*, April 2021.

*Science-Based Scenario Design: A Proposed Methodology to Support Political-Strategic Analysis*, February 2019.

*China and the International Order*, with Mike Mazarr and Astrid Cevallos, May 2018.

*China's Pursuit of Overseas Security*, March 2018.

*The Chinese Air Force's First Steps Toward Becoming an Expeditionary Air Force*, with Cristina Garafola, November 2017.

*What Role Can Land-Based, Multi-Domain Anti-Access/Area Denial Forces Play in Deterring or Defeating Aggression?*, with Timothy Bothds, Joel Predd, Michael Chase, Michael Johnson, Michael Lostumbo, James Bonomo, Muharrem Mane, and Paul Steinberg, May 2017.

*The PLA and China's Rejuvenation: National Security and Military Strategies, Deterrence Concepts, and Combat Capabilities*, with Cortez Cooper and Kristin Gunness, December 2016.

*Assessing the Training and Operational Proficiency of China's Aerospace Forces: Selections from the Inaugural Conference of the China Aerospace Studies Institute (CASI)*, with Ed Burke, Astrid Cevallos, and Mark Cozad, October 2016.

*China Inside and Out: A Collection of Essays on Foreign and Domestic Policy in the Xi Jinping Era*, with Michael Chase, Cortez Cooper, Keith Crane, Liisa Ecola, Scott Harold, Bonny Lin, Lyle Morris, and Andrew Scobell, October 2015.

### Peer reviewed journals

“Winning Friends and Influencing People: Naval Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics,” *CMSI China Maritime Reports*, No. 8, 2020.

“Dispute Control: China Recalibrates Use of Military Force to Support Security Policy’s Expanding Focus,” *Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1-2, Spring 2018, pp. 33-77.

“Avoiding U.S.-China Competition is Futile: Why the Best Option is to Manage Strategic Rivalry,” *Asia Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 2, April 2018, pp. 91-120.

“China’s Evolving Approach to Economic Diplomacy,” *Asia Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 2, July 25, 2016, pp 157-191.

“The Brutal Politics of China’s Economic Overhaul: What Xi Can Learn from FDR,” *The Washington Quarterly*, June 15, 2017.

“Is China Pursuing Counter-Intervention?,” *The Washington Quarterly*, November 6, 2015.

“What Does China Want? Discerning the PRC’s National Strategy,” *Asian Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2012, pp. 54-72.

“China’s First War in the Global Era: Leadership Signaling in the Sino-Vietnam War,” *American Intelligence Journal*, January 2011

“Why PLA Watchers Keep Missing Changes to China’s Military Strategy,” *American Intelligence Journal*, January 2010

### Commentary and articles

“The Chinese Military is Built for Politics, Not Fighting Wars,” *Lawfare*, January 15, 2026.

“China’s National Security: The People’s Liberation Army’s Shrinking Role in Protecting the Nation’s Core Interests,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 86, December 2025.

“Book Review: *Confronting China*, Edited by James H. Anderson and Daniel R. Green,” *E-International Relations*, March 1, 2025.

“Could Artificial General Intelligence Adoption Start a Civil War in America?,” *Small Wars Journal*, February 27, 2025.

“China’s People’s Armed Forces Departments: Developments Under Xi Jinping,” *China Brief*, Vol. 24, No. 9, May 1, 2024.

“Conflict in the Age of Fractured Publics,” *National Interest*, March 3, 2024.

“The End of China’s Period of Strategic Opportunity: Limited Opportunities, More Dangers,” *National Bureau of Asian Research*, February, 2024.

“Weakened States Pose Problems for War Scenarios,” *The National Interest*, August 21, 2023.

“Xi’s Cautious Inching Towards the China Dream,” *Lawfare*, August 11, 2023.

“Taiwan’s Will to Fight May be Stronger Than You Think,” *The Diplomat*, June 27, 2023.

“U.S.-China Rivalry in an Era of Weakening States,” *1945*, June 6, 2023.

“Why is China Strengthening its Military? It’s Not All About War,” *Defense News*, March 24, 2023.

“Could Beijing Risk a Diversionary War Against Taiwan?,” *Lawfare*, January 13, 2023.

“Not so Great Powers: U.S.-China Rivalry in the Neomedieval Age,” *The National Interest*, June 7, 2023.

“Wargames Can’t Tell Us How to Deter a Chinese Attack on Taiwan- But Different Games Might,” *Lawfare*, January 5, 2023.

“Is China Planning to Attack Taiwan? A Careful Consideration of Available Evidence Says No,” *War on the Rocks*, December 14, 2022.

“Book Review: ‘Isolating the Enemy’ by Tao Wang,” *Pacific Affairs*, April 27, 2022.

“The China Dream: Never Closer, yet Never More Elusive,” *The Hill*, October 1, 2019.

“The Ramifications of China’s Reported Naval Base in Cambodia,” *World Politics Review*, August 7, 2019.

“Public Evidence of Huawei as Cyber Threat May be Elusive, but Restrictions Could Still Be Warranted,” *The Hill*, May 7, 2019.

“China’s Military Has No Combat Experience: Does It Matter?,” *Foreign Policy*, November 27, 2018.

“U.S.-China Relations See Potential Thaw, but Risk of Military Crisis Remains,” *Newsweek*, November 20, 2018.

“Partisan Rancor Undermines Our Ability to Act on China,” *The Hill*, November 8, 2018.

“What Does China’s Pursuit of a Global Coalition Mean for World Politics?,” *Pac Forum*, October 3, 2018.

“Elite Politics in the New Era,” *Party Watch 2018 Report*, October 1 2018.

“Huge Military Drills Show Both the Limits, and Durability, of China-Russia Ties,” *World Politics Review*, September 11, 2018.

“China Prepares for International Order After U.S. Leadership,” *Lawfare*, August 1, 2018.

“Without Reform and Cooperation with China, the International System Cannot Hold,” *The National Interest*, June 21, 2018.

"To Protect Interests Abroad, China Will Feature a Diverse Array of Military, Nonmilitary Forces," *The National Interest*, April 9, 2018.

"China's Strengthening of Communist Party Rule is Not Just a Power Grab," *World Politics Review*, April 2, 2018.

"Beijing's Influence Operations Target Chinese Diaspora," *War on the Rocks*, February 28, 2018.

"The Competition for Status Could Increase the Risk of a Military Clash in Asia," *Asian Maritime Transparency Initiative*, February 2, 2018.

"China's Endgame: The Path Towards Global Leadership," *Lawfare*, January 5, 2018.

"Trump's National Security Strategy Ratches Up U.S. Competition with China," *World Politics Review*, December 26, 2017.

"Is Xi Jinping the New Mao Zedong," *Here and There Podcast with Dave Marash*, December 6, 2017.

"What Does the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Mean for the PLA?," *China Policy Institute Analysis*, October 18, 2017.

"U.S.-China Tensions are Unlikely to Lead to War," *The National Interest*, April 30, 2017.

"Rocky Road Ahead Likely for U.S.-China Relations," *The Cipher Brief*, April 11, 2017.

"The Strategic Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal from TPP," *The Cipher Brief*, March 27, 2017.

"Why China Will Not Unify with Taiwan by 2020- and Beijing Lacks Compelling Military Options," *Lawfare*, March 20, 2017.

"How China Plans to Beat the Rebalance," *The Diplomat*, February 9, 2017.

"China Intensifies Effort to Establish Leading Role in Asia, Dislodge U.S.," *China Brief*, February 6, 2017.

"China's Military Modernization and the South China Sea," *CSIS*, January 26, 2017.

"China Pushes Global," *US News and World Report*, January 20, 2017.

"Taking Stock of the U.S. Rebalance and the Contest for Influence in Asia," *World Politics Review*, January 19, 2017.

"Cracks in the Chinese Powerhouse," *Cipher Brief*, December 17, 2016.

"The Risks of an Accelerating Rivalry between China and Japan," *World Politics Review*, December 12, 2016.

"Book Review: China's Military Transformation, by You Ji," *H-Net*, July 3, 2016.

"South China Sea Spat a Symptom of U.S.-China Jockeying for Advantage," *World Politics Review*, July 27, 2016.

"Beijing Ups the Ante in the South China Sea Dispute with HQ-9 Deployment," *China Brief*, March 28, 2016.

"China's Naval Modernization: Where is it Headed?," *World Politics Review*, February 10, 2016.

"How China's New Russian Air Defense System Could Change Asia," *War on the Rocks*, January 21, 2016.

"Looking for a few Good Partners in Asia to Shore up the International Order," *War on the Rocks*, November 30, 2015.

"China's Turn Towards Regional Restructuring, Counter-Intervention: A Review of Authoritative Sources," *China Brief*, November 17, 2015.

"How Will China Respond to Future U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations?," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, October 29, 2015.

"Xi's Visit Exposes Mismatch in U.S. and Chinese Expectations," *World Politics Review*, September 23, 2015.

"The Holistic Security Concept: The Securitization of Policy and Increasing Risk of Militarized Crisis," *China Brief*, June 19, 2015.

"China's Emerging Vision for World Order," *The National Interest*, May 20, 2015.

"China's Island Building Stirs Fears, But Creates Openings for U.S.," *World Politics Review*, May 15, 2015.

"Xi's Bold Foreign Policy Agenda: Beijing's Pursuit of Global Influence and the Growing Risk of Sino-U.S. Rivalry," *China Brief*, March 19, 2015.

"No, China's Not About to Collapse," *The Diplomat*, March 13, 2015.

"Who Rules China?" *Australian Public Radio* [interview], February 13, 2015.

"The Declining Influence of Politburo Standing Committee Members and the Growing Strength of the Central Party Bureaucracy," *Sinocism Newsletter*, January 17, 2015.

"China's Big Diplomacy Shift," *The Diplomat*, December 22, 2014.

"China Overhauls Diplomacy to Consolidate Regional Leadership, Outline Strategy for Superpower Ascent," *China Brief*, December 19, 2014.

"A Thaw in Asia: Sino-Japanese Relations," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 14, 2014.

"Understanding China's Fourth Plenum: A Continuation of Foreign Policy by Other Means," *The National Interest*, November 11, 2014.

“Asian Economic Integration Fuels PRC Frustration with U.S. Alliance System,” *China Brief*, June 19, 2014.

“China and the U.S. Alliance System,” *The Diplomat*, June 11, 2014.

“Restructuring the PLA: Drivers and Prospects of Xi’s Top Down Reforms,” *China Brief*, February 6, 2014.

“Diplomacy Work Forum: Xi Steps Up Efforts to Shape a China Centered Regional Order,” *China Brief*, November 7, 2013.

“Xi’s Mass Line Campaign: Realigning Politics to New Realities,” *China Brief*, August 9, 2013.

“China’s Defense White Paper: A New Conceptual Framework for Security,” *China Brief*, April 25, 2013.

“The 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Work Report: Policy Blueprint for the Xi Administration,” *China Brief*, November 30, 2012.

**Select multimedia interviews:**

“The Truth Behind the Chinese Military with Timothy Heath and John Gordon,” Policy and Governance Perspectives Podcast, January 12, 2026.

“China’s Power: The PLA vs the USA,” The General and the Journalist Podcast, September 30, 2025

“Is China’s Military Ready for War? PLA Readiness, Regime Stability, and Taiwan with Timothy Heath,” Secrets and Spies Podcast, March 26, 2025.

“Book Event- the Autocrat’s Predicament,” CSIS, November 28, 2023.

“China’s Relationship with the International Order: A Conversation with Timothy Heath,” CSIS China Power Podcast, February 15, 2019.

**Awards:**

RAND Silver Medal (2025).

RAND Innovation Spotlight Award (2020).

PACOM JIOC Employee of the Year (2011), PACOM JIOC Employee of the Quarter (2011), USPACOM JIOC Outstanding Performance Award (2011), DIA Superior Performance Cash Bonus (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013), DNI-OSC Excellent Performance Award (4 awards). US Army Achievement Medal (AAM), 4<sup>th</sup> Award (2004).