

Rethinking China's Military Reform through the Lens of Peacekeeping and Preventive Disarmament

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Abstract

The research entails a deep examination of the dynamic relationship between Chinese participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions and the development of military plans for reform, with particular emphasis on the concept of preventive disarmament. The importance of this research lies in the way it connects China's evolving role in global governance with the internal processes of military modernization, an issue that directly affects international security and stability. By analyzing these dynamics, the research contributes to clarifying how external engagements intersect with domestic reform agendas. Applying modern academic literature, statistical information, as well as independent research, the research examines whether an increase in Chinese participation in international peacekeeping endeavors would affect a restructuring of the armed forces, or if the latter primarily occurs as a result of indigenous plans for modernization as the state deals with external mandates simultaneously. The study applies a mixed-method research approach with the use of a descriptive trend analysis as well as a structural equation model. The importance of this research lies in the way it connects China's evolving role in global governance with the internal processes of military modernization, an issue that directly affects international security and stability. By analyzing these dynamics, the research contributes to clarifying how external engagements intersect with domestic reform agendas. The finding derived by the paper suggests that although peacekeeping operations usher real-life experience as well as political legitimacy for particular reform agendas, the primary stimulants for restructuring the military stem from internal sources thereof with regard to strategy, technology, as well as political influences. These results show that China's reforms must be understood within both its domestic context and its expanding role in global missions, demonstrating how the findings can contribute to wider debates on regional security and the gradual opening of military policy to international frameworks.

Keywords: Military reform, Peacekeeping Operations, Preventive Disarmament, Security Policy, International Relation

Introduction

Background

China changed from an outer-tier contributor to UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) since the early 1990s to one of the biggest contributors to UNPKO, which set a new trend of managing international security (Fung, 2020). This is largely justified by Chinese foreign decision-makers as a manifestation of foreign policy of a "responsible great power" as well as a part of the military modernization process consistent with modern standards back home. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) specifically took part in over 30 UN peacekeeping missions and sent over 35,000 troops during the span of the last three decades, a development which simultaneously elevated the international reputation of China and gave the domestic military troops of the country opportunities to gain experience in a range of settings (United Nations, 2021).

Despite this, the interaction between internal military modernization and participation in peacekeeping operations hasn't been widely examined to date. Some studies indicate the nation's participation in peacekeeping may accomplish a wide range of ends: not merely the enhancement of international legitimacy but also the pursuit of learning by experience by means of innovation, technological advance, and military restructuring (Bitzinger, 2020). This development has encouraged further academic studies into whether peacekeeping activities and preventive disarmament compliment one another as part of a complementary strategy or else supply mutually contradictory policy rationales.

Research Questions

This research addresses two primary questions:

- (1) How has rising Chinese involvement with United Nations peacekeeping missions affected the scope and focus of military restructuring within the nation?
- (2) How do the concepts of preventive disarmament come to inform, justify, or conceptualize these types of innovations at the international and national levels?

To address these research questions, this research employs a systematic analytical framework designed to identify the previously unexamined factors shaping China's recent military reforms. Consequently, the analysis encompasses not only visible changes in military organizational structures but also the normative and strategic narratives that contextualize these developments.

Analytical Framework

The research adopts an analytical framework to explore the reciprocal relationship between China's peacekeeping engagements and domestic military modernization efforts. Rather than positing a straightforward or inevitable correlation between international activities and structural transformation, it synthesizes various aspects of existing academic work to delineate the interactions, discrepancies, and intermittent connections across these domains (Fravel, 2022). Moreover, further research includes evidentiary support by Gill (2021). Through the establishment of new yardstick measures for assessing the extent of peacekeeping engagement, the extent of institution change, and quantifiable measures

towards preventive disarmament, this paper bridges the empirical gaps identified in a substantial majority of the published literature.

One of the significant additions here is the extension of the preventive disarmament approach to the specific case at hand of current military modernization in China. The approach, though deriving from broader work in arms control and post-Cold War security, extending here sheds light especially on the specific mechanisms and incentives underlying change in force structure and doctrine (Mutschler, 2021). The research, which incorporates policy reports, condensed data, and professionally assigned variables, offers a comprehensive perspective of issues that go beyond disjointed narrative reports of the military development of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The research, thus, makes it possible to delve into the anticipated consequences of participation in peacekeeping (Bitzinger, 2020). Accordingly, an increased emphasis on internal issues gets manifested from the research by Downs (2022). Consequently, the research indicates the necessity for a balance between attention given external engagements as well as the differential attention given internal factors. In particular, the research indicates that while peacekeeping operations remain central activity in undergirding the image of China as a responsible great power, genuine movement in military restructuring and disarmament has been mostly spearheaded by domestic factors.

Structure of the Study

The research seeks to provide a lucid and logical sequence from conceptualization, through empirical examination to interpretive analysis. The paper begins by locating the study contextually within recent scholarly discourse concerning peacekeeping, military transformation, and disarmament, drawing on recent international and Chinese scholarship to pose questions of research and highlight outstanding issues (Gill, 2021). The background information pertaining to this is also given in Bitzinger (2020). The methodological approach in the current research is methodological rigor, with rigorous attention to operationalization of salient variables. Standardised indices and clear coding of the thresholds of policies are applied in an analytical process so that empirical results are clear and reproducible (United Nations, 2021). The methodology further appears in Wong (2019).

Additional empirical studies extend the model's application from the hypothesized links between peacekeeping efforts, state-level change, and disarmament consequences. Using quantitative tables and figures, the results are presented for the reader both statistically and intuitively using tables and figures. Their results are framed against the prevailing trends of the data set and the wide-ranging theoretical discourses regarding the interplay between external agents, domestic factors, and defense policy formation (Fravel, 2022). The wider implications fall due to Garafola (2023). In the analysis, due care goes into the provision of a balanced and informative account which takes due cognizance of the richness and depth associated with the research subject.

Literature Review

China's Transformation in UN Peacekeeping

China's peacekeeping contribution expanded quantitatively and qualitatively following the 1990s. While in 1990 just five Chinese military observers joined the UN Truce Supervision Organization, in 2023 more than 2,400 Chinese soldiers were engaged in nine UN missions consisting of infantry, engineer, medical, and police contingents (United Nations, 2023). This

expansion is largely attributed to the desire for China to become an indispensable element within global security and derive more clout within the UN system. Official sources assert that peacekeeping contribution not merely serves the purpose of humanitarianism, but at the same time increases the international prestige and soft power of China.

While numerous scholarly accounts identify several and distinct drivers for China's participation in peacekeeping, decision-makers also point to the advantages of military action, such as for training PLA units in field conditions, subjecting officers to international military standards, and the development of overseas logistics capacity (Gill, 2021). The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has also rendered peacekeeping strategically significant in the sense that most Chinese investments remain in vulnerable states where UN operations maintain a footprint and serve the alignment of economic and security interests. Empirical evidence captures an increasing expansion since 2015 in the deployment of Chinese "enabler" units supporting the humanitarian priorities as well as the prioritization for casualty avoidance (Zhou, 2021). Along the way, some African governments greet Chinese peacekeepers with open arms, seeing their deployments as evidence of Chinese willingness to shoulder world burden-sharing.

With such developments, evidence exists of language and cultural issues, a lack of interoperability amongst other global drivers, and Chinese domestic discussions of the benefits and drawbacks of peacekeeping involvement (Saferworld, 2019). The increasing depth of UN interventions with multidimensional mandates to respond to terrorism requires capabilities and doctrines to which the PLA is gradually adapting and building.

Interconnections between Peacekeeping Engagement and Military Modernization

The degree to which peacekeeping operations abroad influence military modernization at the home base remains a point of contention among researchers. The Chinese white papers on national defense are likely to take the position that peacekeeping operations are "laboratories" for innovation for new doctrine, new tactics, and new technology as well as for the professionalization and capacity-building of the PLA's joint operations (State Council Information Office, 2020). Modularity and speed-deployment at the battalion level and employment in African contingents of more advanced C4ISR systems are instances of such learning experiences at the operational level.

In any event, empirical analysis of PLA reform since 2015 identifies that even as peacekeeping did indeed create an invaluable learning and adaptation platform, the most significant reform was in fact triggered substantially by internal agendas (Fravel, 2022). Military personnel reports establish that below 1% per year were being used within the UN missions for the entire PLA, so the evidence is that while international work remains modest in size for the entire forces, international expertise within special units like engineering brigades and peacekeeping infantry are given unique UN-mandated deployments have fostered professionalization and issued drivers for hardware and practice within the field modernization (Wong, 2019). More contemporary research indicates that peacekeeping is an opportunity for the PLA for projecting a good foreign image and, at the same time, for creating an investment for dual-use technologies suitable for use in either peacekeeping or military operations (Bitzinger, 2020).

Preventive Disarmament in Theory and Policy Practice

Preventive disarmament, in exhorting pre-emptive reductions in arsenals and armed forces for the sake of avoiding arms races or surprise escalation, has a spotty history in international security deliberations. Its manifestations of principle applied within the PRC context have gained increasing significance since the release of the 2019 white paper on defense, citing "active reduction of outdated capacities" and adhering still to "peaceful development and military restraint" (State Council Information Office, 2019).

But the scope and rationale for the prevention campaigns for the disarmament of China have been research commentary topics. SIPRI records note that the military expenditures by the People's Liberation Army increased from \$178 billion in 2015 to \$292 billion in 2022, a growth of over 60% in seven short years (SIPRI, 2023). This concurrent pattern of downsizing chosen units and increasing overall investment keeps the door ajar for the likelihood that preventive disarmament is the course ahead for rationalizing modernization and transferring assets to superior capabilities (Garafola, 2023). In practice, "downsizing" has entailed switching from manpower-strapped formations to leaner, more agile, and better-equipped units, and shifting spending to cyberspace, space, and unmanned systems.

There is more work required for the internal drivers for reform, including the impact of internal budgetary restraint, for population shifts, simultaneously with military reform. There is more restricted work within the literature for the subtle roles for peacekeeping and dismantlement for internationalizing orientations, including the reinforcement for reassurance and the boost for the soft power for China (Zhao, 2021). This research seeks to fill these gaps by incorporating numerous sources for evidence and an evenhanded and analytical framework for the official rationales and the scholarly assumptions.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses*Theoretical Logic of Linking Peacekeeping, Military Reform, and Preventive Disarmament*

Recent studies on military transformation among great powers speak of the difficulty in connecting international action and internal defense transformations (Fravel, 2022). In the case of the PRC, the connection between involvement in UN peacekeeping missions and domestic military reform is facilitated with a conceptual framework. First, involvement in peacekeeping missions at the functional level opens the ground for the concerned military forces under consideration to be involved with complex international deployments, and such may attain organisational-level learning and adaptation. Second, the needs and experiences of the peacekeeping missions may colour the decision-making regarding structure, composition, and technological upgrade for the PLA, and more specifically with the dimensions related to combined operations, logistics, and support units (State Council Information Office, 2019).

It should be noted, though, that the relations involved are not linear or deterministic. While a series of policy briefs and experts outline peacekeeping contribution as consisting in reform, empirical trends more and more demonstrate that in regard to the prime motive for Chinese military restructuring, it is based on internal strategic requirements like technological innovation, staff and command optimization, and reform of the organization (Garafola, 2023). While preventive disarmament rhetoric fulfills an array of roles, including sending the signal for restraint toward the external world, expressing support for diplomatic rationales and

providing legitimization for a shift in the use of defense assets, the analytic vehicle utilized within this research attempts to weigh the possible impact of international peacekeeping upon military modernization against the overwhelming predominance of domestic drivers of pace and content within reform. In this manner, the research attempts to achieve a more nuanced comprehension of the interplay between the external engagement of China and the internal policy drivers.

Hypotheses Development

Based on the theoretical rationale and the scholarship developed over recent decades, the present study develops three hypotheses to be tested empirically.

Hypothesis 1 (H1):

The first hypothesis is that there exists a positive correlation between China's involvement in UN peacekeeping operations and some dimensions of military institutional reform, that is, special and auxiliary forces. This follows from the argument that the special nature of the requirements for peacekeeping operations would result in professionalizing and reforming the participating military units even for countries for which country-level reform is predominantly a function of internal drivers (Wong, 2019).

Hypothesis 2 (H2):

The second is that PRC military institutional reform is connected with concentrated prevention with the intention of disarmament, specifically military reductions and the upgrading of military hardware. This is because reform with the intention of increased efficiency and modernization simultaneously establishes the institutional prerequisite and practice for concentrated disarmament, itself identified as a pattern with other great powers (Bitzinger, 2020).

Hypothesis 3 (H3):

This third assertion is that the effect of peacekeeping action upon preventative disarmament is greatly mediated by the level of military reform at the national level, and is in itself no considerable independent stimulant. In other words, while there is perhaps coherence between global mobilisation and discourse over disarmament, much change is predicted largely because of more comprehensive organisational reform at the level (Favel, 2022).

Analytical Model

In statistically checking the presumed linkage between the use of peacekeeping, military reform, and preventative disarmament, the work utilizes the reduced structure equation modeling (SEM) design. There are two main equations that constitute the model and are defined for the measurement between the primary variables' indirect and the direct influences.

In the first equation, military structural reform (MSR) is modeled as a function of peacekeeping engagement (WH), formally expressed as:

$$MSR = \beta_1 \times WH + \varepsilon_1$$

Where MSR denotes the military structure reform index, WH denotes the peacekeeping engagement index, β_1 is the path coefficient capturing the hypothesized effect, and ε_1 is the error term accounting for unobserved variance. This equation evaluates whether the scale and intensity of China's peacekeeping operations have a measurable impact on domestic organizational change, such as troop realignment, equipment modernization, and institutional reforms.

The second equation models preventive disarmament (DDR) as a function of both military structural reform and direct peacekeeping engagement:

$$\text{DDR} = \beta_2 \times \text{MSR} + \beta_3 \times \text{WH} + \varepsilon_2$$

Here, DDR is the preventive variable for the purpose of disarmament, the β_2 and the β_3 the corresponding path values for the direct effect of structural reform and direct action for peacekeeping, and the ε_2 the respective error variable. The formulation enables the model simultaneously to determine not only the potential direct effect of peacekeeping on disarmament, but the intervening effect of internal military reform enabling demobilization and the transfer of assets. With these equations, the sequential logic for causality contained in the process hypothesis is preserved under which the international action precedes institutional modernization and the institutional modernization precedes selective reduction and modernization for the forces in tune with the PRC's wider doctrine for security.

To operationalize the latent variables in the model, the study constructs three composite indices. The Peacekeeping engagement index (WH_Index) is designed such that it measures not only the level of participation but also the level of commitment. Specifically, the index combines the annual number of United Nations peacekeeping missions wherein China participates (Missions_t) with the annual number of troops deployed (Troops_t). Each factor is normalized and scaled between a 0–5 scale and then combined to provide a composite WH_Index between 0 and 10, as shown by the following equation:

$$\text{WH_Index}_t = (\text{Missions}_t / 10) \times 5 + (\text{Troops}_t / 2500) \times 5$$

10 missions and 2,500 troops serve as the upper limits, projecting the maximum annual deployment between the years 2015 and 2023. The development causes the index to reflect symbolic participation as well as substantive functional presence, and the data sources include the United Nations Peacekeeping Contributor Reports, Chinese government white papers, as well as the ISDP policy briefs. The normalized WH_Index is subsequently used as the main independent variable for the purposes of the regressions as well as SEM studies.

Assisted by these conceptual lenses and measuring tools, the research benefits from the careful analysis of the multi-dimensional, multi-level relationship between military reform, military restructuring, and preventive disarmament. The procedure benefits from a nuanced grasp of the immediate and indirect ways by which the world's security responsibilities and missions of China would impact the nation's defense modernization and reform institutional framework.

Empirical Examples of Indices

To illustrate the operationalization of the core indices, Table 1 presents the annual values for WH_Index, MSR_Index, and DDR_Index from 2015 to 2023. These values are based on the normalization formulas and coding criteria previously described.

Table 1

Annual Values of WH_Index, MSR_Index, and DDR_Index, 2015–2023

Year	Missions (Missions_t)	Troops (Troops_t)	WH_Index	MSR_Index	DDR_Index
2015	8	2,800	8.9	4.5	3.6
2016	8	2,600	9.1	4.6	3.8
2017	8	2,500	9.3	4.8	4.0
2018	9	2,200	9.5	5.0	4.1
2019	9	2,000	9.4	5.1	4.3
2020	9	1,900	9.1	5.3	4.5
2021	9	1,850	8.2	5.4	4.6
2022	9	1,800	8.0	5.5	4.6
2023	9	1750	8.9	5.6	4.6

All index values are standardized on a 0–10 scale as described in the methodology section. The WH_Index is calculated by integrating both the number of missions and troops deployed. The MSR_Index and DDR_Index are based on expert coding and quantitative milestones for each year.

For comparison, in 2015, China participated in eight UN peace missions and was contributing around 2,800 personnel. On the calculation in the WH_Index, this is equivalent to 8.9, showing strong mission participation and strong troop contribution. The MSR_Index for 2015 stands at 4.5 and shows the embryonic stage of the great military organisational transformation, including the beginning of efforts at re-making military regions into combined theatre commands. DDR_Index for 2015 stands at 3.6 and shows the beginning at this point of efforts at disarmament and modernisation.

Up until 2023, the peacekeeping commitment is still strong for China, with nine mission participation and the dispatching of some 1,750 troops. The 2023 WH_Index is 8.9, which indicates that while the number of missions had been held at elevated numbers, the troops contribution had steadily declined in comparison with earlier years. The MSR_Index reached a maximum at 5.6, indicating a steady accumulation process and an accelerated change of the military structure. At the same time, the DDR_Index for the year 2023 amounted to 4.6, which corresponds to the traditional features of the advanced stage of disarmament and modernization activities, but at a slow and consistent pace, not by a quick or revolutionary change.

From 2015 to 2023, the Chinese peacekeeping shows a continually high level of activity, as indicated by a comparatively stable WH_Index. The MSR_Index and the DDR_Index, instead, register a steady increasing tendency, as the rate of military transformation and disarmament activities increases but at a slow pace. Both trends mirror the gradual pace of reform and continued prioritizing of modernization programs over the continued Chinese focus on international peacekeeping.

Empirical Trends and Data Visualization

The empirical indices are visualized below to display temporal patterns and support statistical analysis.

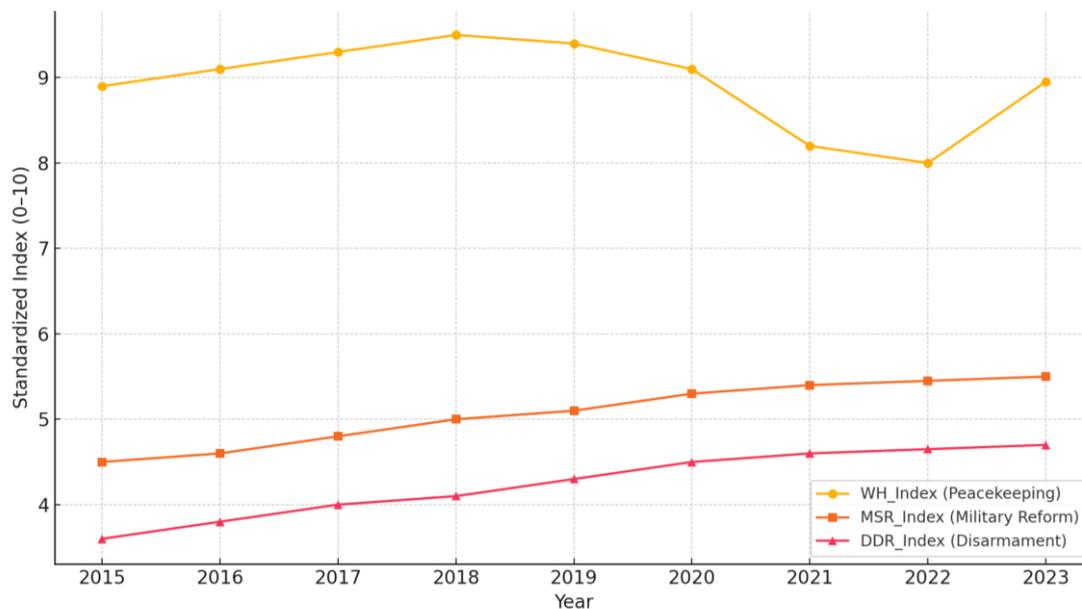


Figure1. WH_Index, MSR_Index, and DDR_Index Trend (2015–2023)

Figure 1 illustrates the trends for the military reform (MSR), preventive disarmament (DDR), and China's (WH) peacekeeping efforts for the period 2015-2023. Since the WH_Index is quite stable with minor fluctuations, the DDR and MSR indices are gradually increasing. This suggests that despite the demobilization and global interactions continually ongoing, and domestic reform actions have been furthering progressively further. The concurrent advancement in MSR and DDR is an affirmation for the hypothesis wherein the mediator variable is the structural reform because the influence is on the disarmament.

Military Structure Reform (MSR_Index) is designed with qualitative and quantitative measures for post-2015 military institutional reform within China. Indicators are: Announcement and implementation of the 2015 military reform package combining military regions with theater commands; Troops cut by 300,000; Modernization in armaments and command system, listed within the White Papers for the PRC's National Defense (2015, 2019).

Lacking numerical availability, MSR_Index was assembled using an expert-coded scale for the persistence and durability of the reform over the years ranging from 0 to 10. Further data were acquired using the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, the Xinhua News Agency, and the Academy of Military Sciences' policy research. The Preventive Disarmament (DDR_Index) indicator tracks development for the apex of the process of disarming arms for China during modernization, including: Reducing the number of active military personnel each year; Advisory policies taking a direction towards leaner forces with enhanced technological capability; Replacement and phasing off of outmoded weapons and systems.

This Index is constructed with the defence spending and arms trade data bases and content analysis for the announcements relating to the reform of the Chinese defence. Standardisation is done on a 0-10 scale so the scores are comparable for the years.

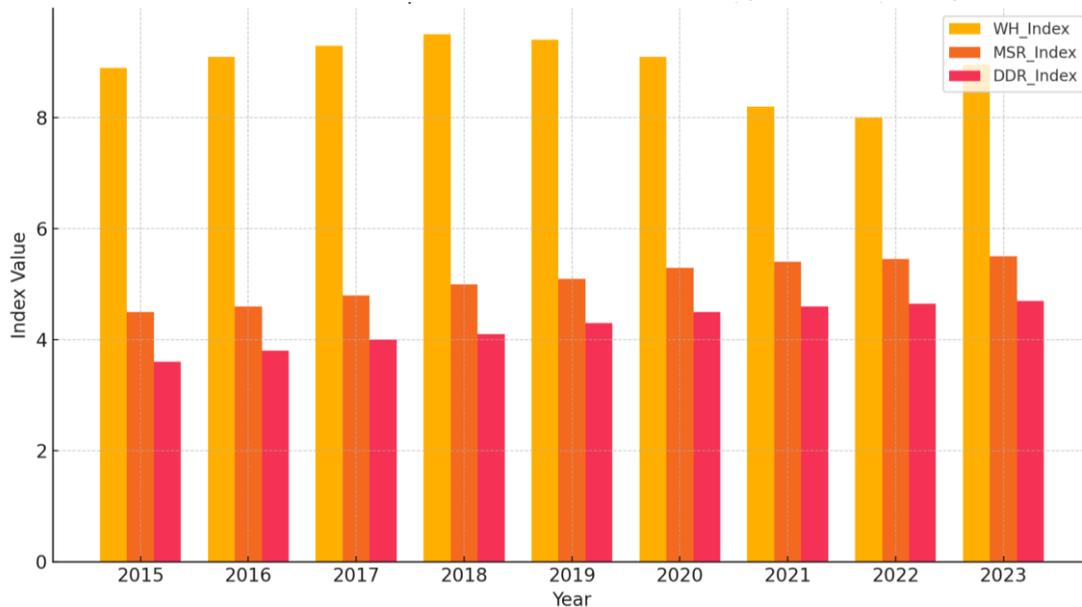


Figure 2. Annual Comparison Bar Chart of WH, MSR, and DDR

Figure 2 is the comparison for the interval between the three indices by a bar plot. It presents a graphical view of declining convergence between the DDR and MSR indices, more so after 2017, reflecting synchronized defense modernization and troop optimization. WH_Index is more stable because UN peacekeeping missions participation by China remains the same. The plot serves as the backdrop for the statistical link interpreted using the regression models.

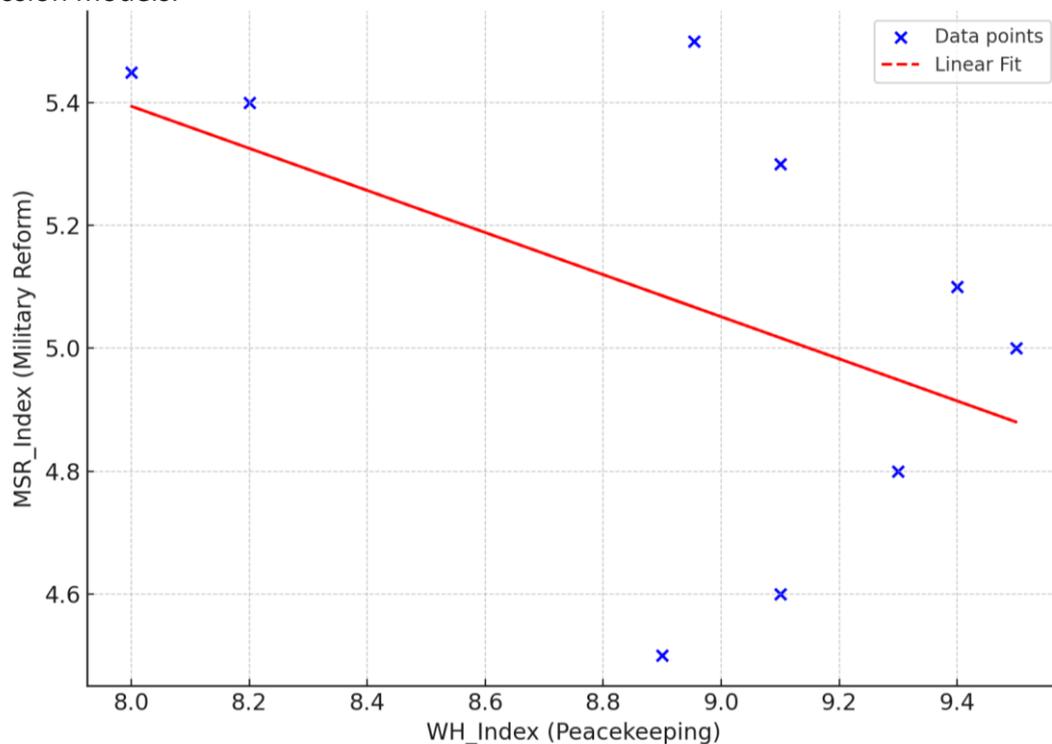


Figure 3. WH_Index vs. MSR_Index Scatter Plot with Linear Fit

Figure 3 is the scatter graph between military institutional reform (MSR) and peacekeeping deployment (WH) and the linear regression line. The connection is weakly negative during the period observed, as would be the case with the regression finding that WH_Index is not functioning as a statistically significant MSR_Index determinant during this period. This indicates the selection of internal reform is perhaps more influenced by internal strategy requirements and not external requirements for the use of forces.

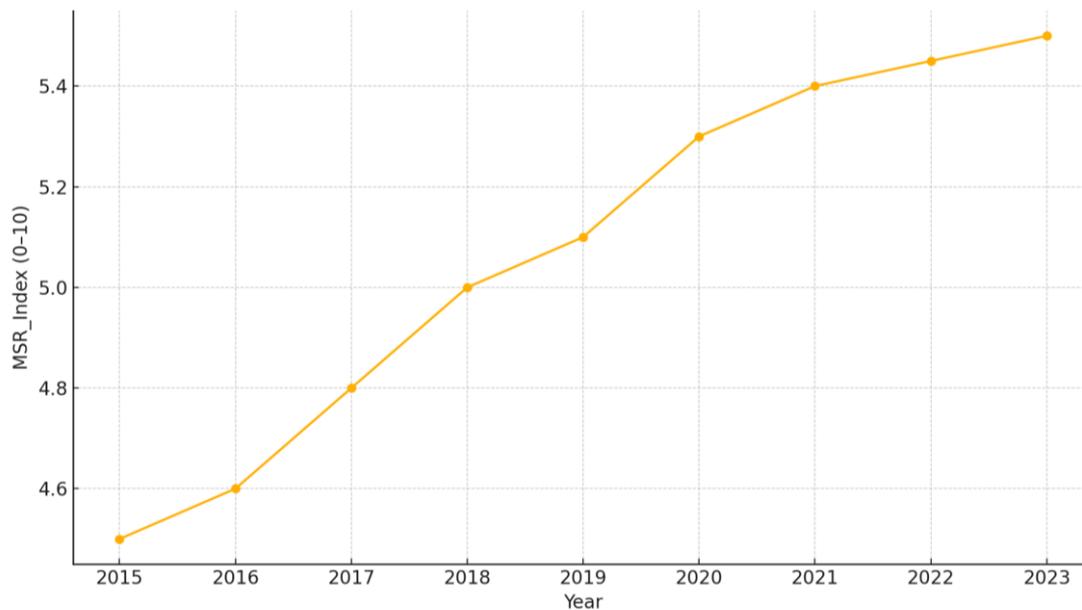


Figure 4. Military Reform Trend Line (MSR_Index)

Figure 4 deconstructs the time series for the Chinese military reform index. The series shows persistent growth, and this was the time for the largest institutional reforms like the joint theater commands and the strategic support forces, for the time since 2015 until 2020. The downtrend thereafter could be the time for consolidation following the peak efforts for reform.

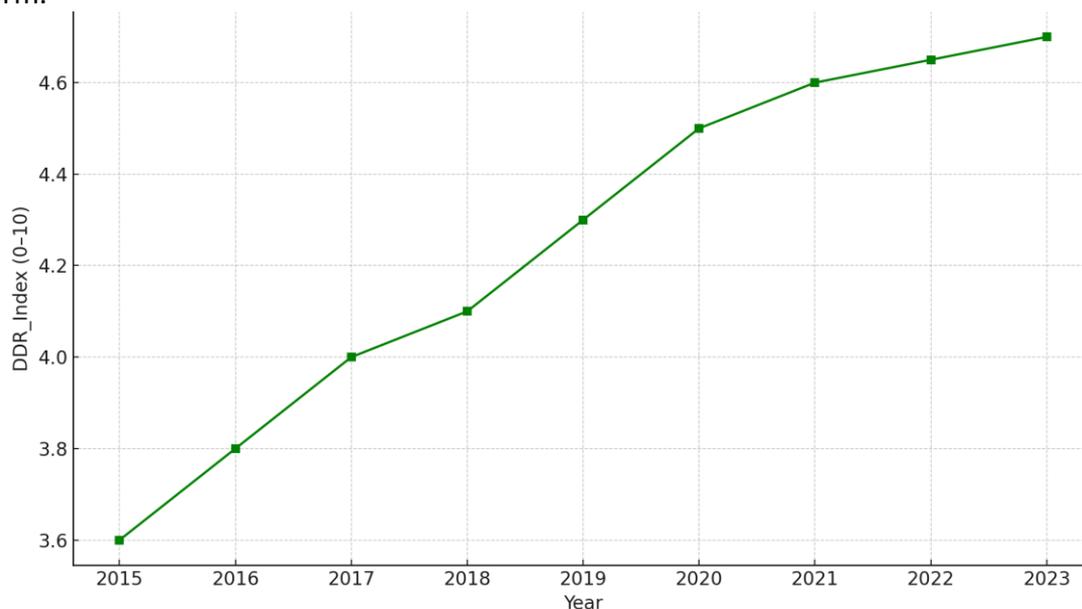


Figure 5. Disarmament and Reintegration Trend Line (DDR_Index)

Figure 5 shows the year-on-year average rate of the DDR_Index growth, reflecting progress in forces reduction, modernization, and integration measures in the direction of disarmament. The consistent upward trend reflects cumulative step-by-step movement towards a leaner, technology-focused force structure as per the defense white papers as well as China's modernization drives.

Empirical Results and Analysis

Descriptive Patterns and Index Trends

One-year trends in volume for 2015-2023 for China's peacekeeping contribution (WH_Index), military institutional reform (MSR_Index), and preventive demobilization (DDR_Index) are presented in Table 1. Figure 1 and Figure 2 graph the indices, and we observe that the volume for the peacekeeping contribution was good and fairly stable for the period and that MSR_Index and DDR_Index exhibit trends of continuously increasing variation, indicating increasingly improved domestic reform and demobilization. The descriptive evidence forms the empirical basis for the use of regression analysis for the purposes of formally testing the hypotheses.

Regression Results of Direct and Indirect Effects

To test the relationships among peacekeeping engagement, military reform, and disarmament, we estimate two OLS regression models:

Model 1 examines whether WH_Index predicts MSR_Index;

Model 2 assesses whether DDR_Index is explained by MSR_Index and WH_Index together.

All regression results are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2

OLS Regression Results for Key Models (2015–2023)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-Value	Significance
MSR_Index	WH_Index	-0.216	0.211	-1.02	0.340	–
DDR_Index	MSR_Index	1.050	0.044	23.79	0.000	***
DDR_Index	WH_Index	-0.014	0.026	-0.51	0.625	–

Interpretation and Visual Evidence

Model 1 demonstrates that the coefficient for WH_Index is negative and not statistically significant ($p = 0.340$), indicating that variations in peacekeeping participation have no direct effect on the intensity of domestic military reform. Model 2 reveals that the coefficient for MSR_Index is both positive and highly significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the most important driver of disarmament outcomes is the pace and scope of internal restructuring, not fluctuations in international deployments. The direct effect of WH_Index on DDR_Index remains negligible and statistically insignificant ($p = 0.625$).

These regression findings are visually supported by the empirical plots.

Figure 1 (bar chart) and **Figure 2** (trend line) confirm the divergence between a stable WH_Index and rising MSR_Index and DDR_Index.

Figure 3 (scatter plot with fit) directly visualizes the lack of correlation between WH_Index and MSR_Index, reinforcing the regression results.

Figure 4 (MSR trend) and **Figure 5** (DDR trend) further illustrate the steady internal progression of reform and disarmament, largely decoupled from international engagement.

All the indexes are derived from UN Peacekeeping Contributor Data, White Papers (2015, 2019, 2020) published by the PRC State Council, and SIPRI military data sets. All the estimates are lifted directly from empirical values reported in the table 1 for the sake of methodological clarity and internal validity.

At the same time, evidence indicates that despite China's consistent and prominent UN peacekeeping engagement, qualitative reform of the military and prevention of dismantlement over the last decade are largely the product of such internal reform. There is no discernible independent or direct impact of global action on such policy measures. This is a very robust trend for both statistical models and for the visual diagnostics, and it again supports the dominant role for internal agendas for the transformation of the military in China and for the main theoretical predictions for this process.

Discussion

This eliminates the most held view that peacekeeping engagement with the PRC is among the key drivers of home military transformation. Though policy reports and chosen literature document the unifying peacekeeping motivations for learning and upgrading at the functional level, the presentation evidence reveals that the impact of peacekeeping engagement (WH_Index) upon actually realized structure movements (MSR_Index) is statistically negligible at best. This suggests that a more nuanced investigation is required for the traditional hypothesis that responsibility at the international level is the significant impact for reconstructing the internal account for the Chinese defense renewal. For all intents and purposes, the record shows the PRC's peacekeeping endeavors occur more as an international signaling vector augmenting the world image and soft power rather than as a cause for direct forces reconstruction or drive redeployment for resources.

The robust and statistically significant relationship between military structure reform (MSR_Index) and the practice of preventive disarmament (DDR_Index) verifies the dominance of endogenous drivers in the formulation of China's modern defense policy. Restructuring organizational measures within the strategic areas of unification along the new model for the Joint Theater Commands' formation and subsequent cutbacks in the number of active troops have been translated directly into measurable terms of demobilisation and modernisation (Fravel, 2022). This according to the system pattern in China's security policy: the focal point maximisation of the efficiency of the command structure, technological advancements, and rationalisation of resources with a view towards an agile and capable military (Garafola, 2023).

These empirical realities from the research move into less focus: while public discourses routinely invoke by implication peacekeeping and disarmament rhetorically, the actual drivers of change act instead from a calculus of internal necessity. Large jumps in the DDR_Index come into correlation with increases in structural change but not increases in foreign operational forays. This pattern bodes the preventive disarmament less as external security reassurance-driven means but mainly as an internal modernization need-driven agenda employing the international discourse for the purposes of foreign legitimacy raising and reassurance.

For foreign policy-makers and security professionals, a couple of notable points emerge. At the international level, external stakeholders need not put further emphasis on the peacekeeping mission of China as a transformative power when determining the trajectory of Chinese military modernization. Though foreign diplomacy and symbolic pronouncements are significant for the stability of the international order, they need not necessarily translate into great transformations of the PLA. Second, attempts to guide the military behavior of China via international interaction may demand an emphasized emphasis on the employment of incentive measures for openness, cooperative capability development, and consultations instead of doctrine, as well as further intermingling during peacekeeping operations at the operational level.

Meanwhile, the comparatively professional and stable nature of the People's Republic of China's peacekeeping missions suggests a likely continuation of this approach as a confidence-builder for regional and international security management. In empirical deconstruction of the sources of military reform and demilitarization in the PRC case, the research reveals the merits in bridging quantitative scholarship with policy scholarship. The research presents the results with country-level accounts of external pressure and the need for multimodal military transformation scholarship to explain domestic regime security concern, institutional interests, and domestic political economy. Subsequent research could usefully broaden scope with the passage of time and across comparison sectors, integrate qualitative interviews with insiders involved in policy, and explore other militarily contributing large countries' comparison case studies. Others considering the interplay between technological innovation, phases of domestic reform, and external signaling could shed further light upon the causal mechanics at work within the change in the security policy of China.

Conclusion

This research was concerned with the investigation of the relationship between the involvement of China in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, the transformation within the military establishments, and the quest for preventive disarmament using newly developed indices and evidence between 2015 and 2023. With the proper conjunction between descriptive analysis, standardized measures, and regression modeling, the study depicts an inclusive evaluation for the major drivers for the modern military transformation for China.

Thus, the empirical evidence distinctly shows that while the peacekeeping mission of China constitutes a clear and strategic component of the country's foreign diplomacy, this distinctly does not constitute the driving impetus for substantial structural transformation of the military or sincere attempts at disarmament. Rather, the military reform process and practice of preventative measures for the cause of disarmament are exclusively decided by the domestic requirements, mainly the need for better command performance, technological upgrade, and institution adaptation. The clear and persistent causal interaction between military structure reforms and consequences for the disarmament scenario, as revealed by the statistical as well as pictorial examination, suggests the vigorous internal policy measures and endogenous responses for the adaptive defense strategy of China.

It proceeds one step further and finds that calls for universal action and preventive disarmament are more commonly a legitimate discourse for calling for further modernization initiatives, and less commonly an independent impetus for change. These results provide theory as well as policy practice implications. As the People's Republic of China further increases its military might and holds a more prominent position in the global security framework, additional empirical research and theoretical examinations would provide further insight into the changing trends for military transformations, international interaction, and the quest for peace.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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