A Corpus-Based Analytical Study on *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China*

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This paper contrasts *Military Power of the People's Republic of China* from the year of 2000 to 2009 and *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China* from the year 2010 to 2013 with corpus analysis. It distinguishes the new reports' differences from the old ones and tries to explore American's discourse colonization and discourse hegemony through corpus software *WordSmith 5.0*—*Keywords* and *Concordance* analysis of high frequency words. The significance of the study is that it enlightens military texts which will influence audiences' viewpoints and provides a new perspective for strategies replying American media war.

Keywords: corpus, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China* and *Military, Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China*, Sino-America relation

Introduction

The United States Department of Defense finally released their annual report to Congress on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China on August 16, 2010, which was originally due on March 1, 2010. Moreover, the title of this report was changed from *Military Power of the People's Republic of China* to *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China*, which was released since 2000 (except 2001). The report is in a nod to a well-known series of bi-annual reports produced in the 1980s titled *Soviet Military Power*, which was the brainchild of some people in the Pentagon who used it to highlight what they considered to be the dangers of the Soviet military and a propaganda document intended to justify the Reagan administration's defense buildup (CHENG, 2010). The report on China's military is also a form of propaganda, but unlike its well-known predecessor, the Department of Defense produces the China report because Congress requires it in the defense authorization act.

In the *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2000*, "Chinese Threat" was first raised by the United States (YANG, 2010). Since then, the annual report put emphasis on the issue. In 2010, the Department of Defense changed its title into *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China*, which seemed to reflect their adjustment of propaganda strategy. Meanwhile, the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010* amended the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000* in several aspects. The title was merely one of the most attractive amendments.

The paper gives an account of how *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China* changes, employing qualitative and quantitative methods based on corpus in the framework of discourse analysis, trying to analyze the reports and revealing its culture hegemony.

Background

There has been four reports since the United States Department of Defense released the first *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China* in August, 2010. The contents of these four reports are almost the same, including Annual Update, Understanding China's Strategy, Force Modernization Goals and Trends, Resources for Force Modernization, Force Modernization for a Taiwan Contingency, and US-China Military-to-Military Contacts (DoD, 2013). In addition, report 2011 covered two special topics: China's Evolving Maritime Strategy and China's Military Engagement, while the number of special topics in report 2013 rose to four: Space-Based Imaging and Remote Sensing, China's First Aircraft Carrier, PLA Air Force Stealth Aircraft, and PLA Integrated Air Defenses, which drew special attention during the period. Although the current reports are still an extension of the old edition according to their contents, which still put an emphasis on military-technological development of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the trends of Chinese military modernization and military strategy, the scope of their attention has spread from pure military development into fields other than military, such as maritime security power development and operations other than war.

The speech activity has an inseparable relationship with the context in that the latter has a restriction on the former (SHI, 2010). The publication of the annual *Military and Security Developments Involving People's Republic of China*, to some extent, is the production of the domestic political struggle. The postponement of the 2010 report publication reflects that the Obama administration does not reach an agreement on how to view and handle bilateral relations with China (Chan, 2010). The adjusted report is a compromise of relevant departments' negotiation. However, introduction of the report does not represent the mainstream opinion of the America decision-making departments, but is only a representation of some personal will. As stated in *2010 China Defense White Paper*, "the future and destiny of China has never been so closely linked with the future and destiny of the international community" (White Paper, 2010). Common interests between China and US become more and more widely, therefore, how to coordinate the relationship with China will also affect the United States' national interests. American scholar Hans Morgenthau used to say,

culture imperialism, is the most ingenious, and it can succeed alone, is also the most successful imperialist policy. Its purpose, is not to conquer the land, nor to control the economic life, but the conquest and control of the heart, as a means to change the power relationship between the two countries. (LI, 2003, p. 34)

It even contains some contents admitting the positive role and cooperative attitude of China, for example, in the opening of the reports, it claims that "The United States welcomes a strong, prosperous, and successful China that reinforces international rules and norms and enhances security and peace both regionally and globally" (DoD, 2011, p. I). The United States recognizes PRC contributions and responsibilities in international society. Both 2010 and 2011 reports pointed out great contributions made by China in international peace keeping, anti-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief (DoD, 2010, 2011), which do not exist in the previous reports.

Corpus (Database)

There is no question that technology has changed—and continues to change—the way we study language. Over the past two decades, corpus linguistics has not only gained momentum in several areas of applied linguistics, but also branched out into various kinds of researches. It seems that recently the application of a corpus-based approach to the social researches has been a trend.

A corpus-based approach is a modern language research method based on true language samples as the research objects, employing computer softwares and methods of probability and statistics, analyzing massive language facts from the macroscopic perspective (ZHOU, 2008). This method updates the ideas and methods of linguistic researches, constructs a new language analysis framework, and embodies a new philosophy of language.

The purpose of discourse, as a social practice, is to convey the speaker's ideology. Since language is the most common way of expression of social practice, the ideology is closely related to discourse and power. Through corpus, researchers can study on the propagation of cultural or ideological significance of the discourse and then reproduce to the readers with a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The development of corpus linguistics provides a strong theoretical and technical support for discourse analysis. It uses authentic language data as the research object, analyzing a large number of linguistic facts from a macroscopic perspective to find the regularity of language application. Using probabilistic method in discourse analysis, which is based on probability in the actual use of language, enhances the confidence of the research conclusion and avoids subjectivity stresses and representative deficiency (LI & LI, 2010).

In this study, the nine copies of *China Military Report* will be built into a temporary reference corpus, a total of 184,065 words, and its basic information is shown in Table 1. The four annual reports *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* are the raw materials of our corpus—definitely a database, which are all downloaded from the official website of the United States Department of Defense. We first scan the PDF format of the reports and save them into text form. Second, we exclude all the tables, figures, and graphs, which can not be disposed by the software *WordSmith 5.0* and more importantly are not the subjects of this study. As the appendix is information described with the methods of tables and graphs, the database does not cover this part as well. Finally, the corpus is established.

Table 1

Basic Information of the Reports

	<i>Military Power of the People's Republic of China</i>	<i>Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China</i>
Tokens	184,065	104,331
Types	7,782	6,189
Type/Token ratio	4.32	6.14
Standard Type/Token ratio	43.85	42.80

The database contains about 104,331 tokens. The quantitative analysis is mainly based on the data obtained by using the software *WordSmith 5.0* designed by Mike Scott from Liverpool University. It should be put forward that the ultimate purpose of the study is not to obtain the data but to find the reasons for these patterns with qualitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis of distribution of linguistic items combined with quantitative statistics is the main corpus analysis method. This paper, through analysis of keywords, production of high frequency words, and concordance of the specialized word, reveals the distinction among *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* and those previous reports, verifies whether the new reports are the so-called "old wine in a new bottle" by scholars, and attempts to explore some deep-seated reasons why the reports are changed through some variation of the surface.

Results and Analysis

The left of Figure 1 shows the keywords of 2010 *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*. It can be noted that the top five substantive are exchange, PRC, admiral, dialogue, and Obama. Compared with the previous reports, the outstanding characteristic of 2010 annual report was that Sino-American relationship became one of the foci of the whole report. The development of Sino-American relationship in 2009 reflected the maturity of the bilateral relation, while the twists and turns in 2010 represented the complexity of the relations between the two countries (CHEN, 2010). Moreover, the characteristics of the China-US relation in the next decade will remain vague and inconstant (FENG, 2010). Combined with the background of the report, China-US relation can be broadly divided into three stages since 2010, namely, stress-ease-tension. Early in 2010, there appeared huge bifurcations between China and US in Taiwan, Tibet and bilateral trade: United States' selling \$6.4 billion worthy of weapons to Taiwan, Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama, and the US government intervention on the RMB exchange rate issue. On the other hand, it also reflects America's need to use cooperation, participation, deterrence, persuasion, and competition to promote its interests related to China. It was pointed out in a criticism that the underlying cause of the suspension of 2010 report from the original March to August was that the United States worried China would not attend the Nuclear Security Summit hosted by the United States on April 12. China-US relation developed effectively during a short-term period, but was triggered by the Warship Tian'an event; America conducted a series of military exercises in surrounding seas of China, ignoring the strong protests from China. In the end, the United States returned to Asia, putting the relation into an impasse.

Discourse has social function: According to speech act, language is a tool, which can be used in communication, establishment of a social relationship, building language forms, and so on; therefore, we can excavate the rules, strategies, goals, etc., contained in discourse through the analysis of language forms and context, and obtain certain social effects in that the use of language symbols expresses implicitly or explicitly their concerns and values (SHI, 2009). Value has a discourse power, which is also the source of voice. The report quoted US President Barack Obama's words, "[the US-China] relationship has not been without disagreement and difficulty. But the notion that we must be adversaries is not pre-destined" (personal communication). The complexity of the US-China relationship did not show the two countries were hostile to each other, which meant that there would be a certain degree of tension between the two countries, because for the US, strategic challenges presented by China's peaceful development had been something that they could no longer use a simple deterrence or avoidance measure to solve. China's rapid development of domestic economy, modernization of the armed forces, China's growing influence in Asia, and the fact that the balance of power in the Taiwan issue is more and more inclined to the Chinese mainland are all challenges confronted by America while pursuing interests in the

Asia-Pacific. Yet the rapid development of globalization dominated by the United States and China's nearly 30 years development made China and the United States become stakeholders. The United States needed to promote cooperation with China in order to promote common interests. The United States worried that the development of China's military would threaten the development of their own interests, and had to recognize the outstanding performance of the Chinese military undertaking a series of international affairs, which is an expression of "smart power" advocated by the Obama administration. Smart power not only emphasizes the necessity of a powerful military force, but also concerns greatly on alliance, partnership, and all levels of the mechanism, the purpose of which is to expand the influence and establish the legality of the United States' behavior.

The word *exchanges* (its keyness is as high as 59.87) is run in Concordance to get its word clusters, which are *military exchange* and *contacts and exchanges*. "China-US military exchanges" is a new content of 2010 report. It can be seen that the US government has begun to recognize the importance of strengthening the military exchanges with China. Sino-US relations are characterized by elements of cooperation and competition. The report did not reflect American arms sales to Taiwan which had an extremely negative influence on China-US military exchanges, but accused China of destroying the China-US military exchanges, claiming that "China's recurring decision to suspend military exchanges has impeded this effort" (CHEN, 2010, p. 58), which showed that the new report still bore the main duties of previous reports—reminding Congress China threat theory, guiding the international public opinion, and building the unfavorable international environment to China's peaceful development.

	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	P
1	EXCHANGES	31	0.13	27	0.01	59.87	0.0000000000
2	U	101	0.42	290	0.16	59.49	0.0000000000
3	PRC	78	0.32	234	0.13	42.51	0.0000000000
4	ADMIRAL	10	0.04	1		36.54	0.0000000000
5	DIALOGUE	21	0.09	23	0.01	35.09	0.0000000006
6	OBAMA	8	0.03	0		34.40	0.0000000016
7	DISASTER	18	0.07	16		34.35	0.0000000017
8	XU	10	0.04	2		32.68	0.0000000079
9	CONTACTS	16	0.07	13		32.13	0.0000000115
10	MMCA	7	0.03	0		30.10	0.0000000382
11	SIDES	15	0.06	13		29.04	0.0000000678
12	PIRACY	9	0.04	2		28.76	0.0000000789
13	CONTINUOUS	11	0.05	6		26.71	0.0000002336
14	RELATIONSHIP	18	0.07	24	0.01	25.98	0.0000003422
15	CONSULTATIVE	6	0.02	0		25.80	0.0000003762
16	CASEY	6	0.02	0		25.80	0.0000003762
17	PIPELINE	10	0.04	5		25.14	0.0000005301
18	HUMANITARIAN	11	0.05	7		24.97	0.0000005781
19	OIL	26	0.11	54	0.03	24.28	0.0000008285
20	C	9	0.04	365	0.20	-44.32	0.0000000000
21	CHINESE	16	0.07	508	0.28	-51.60	0.0000000000

	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	P
1	PRC	131	0.44	234	0.13	109.61	0.0000000000
2	MARITIME	81	0.27	117	0.06	86.13	0.0000000000
3	NAVY	91	0.30	156	0.08	80.04	0.0000000000
4	MISSIONS	59	0.20	78	0.04	68.41	0.0000000000
5	INTERESTS	64	0.21	102	0.06	61.24	0.0000000000
6	PEACEKEEPING	25	0.08	12		55.36	0.0000000000
7	PIRACY	17	0.06	2		54.71	0.0000000000
8	ADEN	15	0.05	1		51.84	0.0000000000
9	HUMANITARIAN	20	0.07	7		49.90	0.0000000000
10	HISTORIC	18	0.06	5		48.25	0.0000000000
11	ENGAGEMENT	23	0.08	14		45.64	0.0000000000
12	DOMAIN	13	0.04	2		39.97	0.0000000000
13	RELIEF	19	0.06	15		32.62	0.0000000083
14	RELATIONSHIP	22	0.07	24	0.01	30.11	0.0000000379
15	OUR	34	0.11	58	0.03	30.05	0.0000000391
16	SEAS	18	0.06	15		29.87	0.0000000433
17	JANUARY	24	0.08	30	0.02	29.28	0.0000000597
18	OFFICERS	17	0.06	14		28.42	0.0000000946
19	SEA	68	0.23	188	0.10	27.84	0.0000001288
20	EVACUATION	7	0.02	0		27.54	0.0000001509
21	DISASTER	17	0.06	16		25.99	0.0000003400
22	GATES	8	0.03	1		25.50	0.0000004399
23	CHINA	704	2.35	3,507	1.91	25.36	0.0000004728
24	OFFICIALS	14	0.05	11		24.10	0.0000009109
25	E	3	0.01	138	0.07	-24.36	0.0000007966
26	CHINESE	37	0.12	508	0.28	-28.22	0.0000001055
27	MAY	10	0.03	253	0.14	-30.60	0.0000000288
28	BE	53	0.18	716	0.39	-38.59	0.0000000000
29	C	4	0.01	365	0.20	-81.65	0.0000000000

Figure 1. Keywords of 2010 and 2011 *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*.

The right figure is the wordlist of 2011 report. The top 10 substantives in the table are PRC, maritime, navy, missions, interests, peacekeeping, the piracy, Aden, humanitarian, and historic respectively. From the above words, it can be found that a major difference among 2011 report and the previous reports was that the report paid considerable attention to a series of operations other than war such as international peacekeeping efforts, counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. China is steadily assuming new roles and responsibilities in the international community. In 2004, Chinese former President HU Jin-tao articulated new guidance for the People's Liberation Army, including missions extending beyond China's immediate territorial interests. This catalyzed China's growing involvement in international peacekeeping efforts,

counter-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and other international activities (DoDs, 2011). With the development of economy, China began to shoulder more and more international responsibility. The Defense Department's report also goes beyond the military level, paying more attention to China's development and military strategies. At the same time, the development of the PLA Navy also makes our country the capability to evacuate quickly Chinese citizens from overseas trouble spots. *China's Defense White Paper* in 2010 highlighted PLA's changing roles and missions, and pointed out that they organized preparations for military operations other than war (MOOTW) in a scientific way, worked out pre-designed strategic programs against non-traditional security threats, reinforced the building of specialized forces for emergency response, and enhanced capabilities in counter-terrorism and stability maintenance, emergency rescue, and the protection of security (White Paper, 2010). The development of network technology makes space for intercultural communication. The control of the technique, however, is the US-led developed countries, which makes the Internet as the medium of exchange become penetration from strong cultures represented by western culture into weak cultures. The 2011 annual report affirmed China's armed forces participation in international peacekeeping efforts, anti-piracy activities, and other international operations, but meanwhile, due to deterrence of China's development, it also concerned the rising capability of the Chinese troops in this region.

Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness
REPUBLIC	294	0.22	31	0.02	337.26
DEVELOPMENTS	340	0.25	76	0.04	275.08
INVOLVING	252	0.19	38	0.02	251.71
PEOPLE	323	0.24	111	0.06	186.03
OFFICE	115	0.09	5		162.52
SECURITY	585	0.44	345	0.19	161.89
SECRETARY	171	0.13	34	0.02	148.40
NAVY	345	0.26	156	0.08	145.37
MARITIME	277	0.21	117	0.06	127.29
PRC	412	0.31	234	0.13	122.11
PIRACY	79	0.06	2		119.86
MISSIONS	203	0.15	78	0.04	104.10
ENGAGEMENT	98	0.07	14		100.18

Figure 2. Keywords of 2010-2013 *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*.

Figure 2 is the copy of the new annual reports from 2010 to 2013. The figure reveals that the top 20 key words are basically covered by those from Figure 1, but in Figure 2 *PRC* (122.11) is the most significant thematic word, while the keyness of *Chinese* is -66.59 and that of *weapon* is -33.17. This suggests that the report focus was transformed from the development of the micro level such as Chinese military hardware to a macro level as military strategy. This is to remind the Chinese threat to America's strategic interests, and is also a positive response to China's rising at world stage. Therefore, the persistence of current discourse framework on our own image is the "active defense" of shaping a good international profile.

From the above figures, it can be seen that the keyness of navy-related vocabulary is higher, such as *navy* (8), *maritime* (9), *admiral* (18). The process of constructing the image is a social interactive understanding of the

value of the subject, active or passive, subjective or objective. Who puts forward the concept, marks it by language symbols, and defines discourse framework first, can usually guide the public opinion. Chinese navy developments in recent years are described in the reports. Two “special topic” are added in 2011 report: China’s evolving maritime strategy and China’s military engagement, and China’s aircraft carrier program, anti-ship ballistic missile, and development of aircraft are mentioned as well. According to the report, PLA Navy has realized a leap in the development since 2009, and there are a lot of new things for the first time. The PLA navy has kept in anti-piracy deployment in the Gulf of Aden. If navy diplomacy was put aside, the Gulf of Aden mission marked China’s first operational deployment of naval forces outside of regional waters. In September, 2010, the PLA Navy’s hospital ship, “Peace Ark” conducted its first overseas humanitarian mission by visiting five countries in Asia and Africa. In February, 2011, the PLA Navy deployed a Jiangkai-II class frigate, which had been operating in the Gulf of Aden, to support its evacuation of PRC citizens from Libya. Although largely symbolic, the description of these deployments reminded the US authorities that the development of China’s military power would become a threat to US national interests in the near future, and that China is an America’s real potential rival. This in part catered to senior US policymakers’ skepticism about China’s growing military spending and efforts for military modernization. Eventually, it reflected the essence of the report, that is, exaggerating China’s military buildup, alluding to Chinese threat to the United States, and warning Congress to ensure defense budget.

Table 2

The Raw Frequencies of the 20 Most Frequent Substantive Words

Rank	Word	Quantity	Frequency	Rank	Word	Quantity	Frequency
1	China	523	2.15%	11	capabilities	71	0.29%
2	military	297	1.22%	12	systems	70	0.29%
3	PLA	173	0.71%	13	force	66	0.27%
4	defense	141	0.58%	14	security	63	0.26%
5	Taiwan	119	0.49%	15	states	58	0.24%
6	operations	91	0.37%	16	air	53	0.22%
7	Beijing	81	0.33%	17	space	51	0.21%
8	PRC	78	0.32%	18	technologies	51	0.21%
9	development	76	0.31%	19	information	50	0.21%
10	forces	72	0.30%	20	international	50	0.21%

In order to understand the subtle changes of newly annual reports, 2010 report is taken for an example, using *WordSmith 5.0* to get its wordlist; eliminating the function words, the top 20 words are shown in Table 2. The new report maintained the old Chinese military reports style, but the overall framework was updated lacking of new content. According to *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010*, some minor adjustments were made in 2010 annual report delivered to Congress, the most obvious of which is that the title of the report is changed from “Military Power” to “Military and Security Developments”. Because the concept of “security development” is more general, the public would guess the US Department of Defense was deliberate to describe it lightly. *Washington Times* earlier quoted from some sources that the content of the reports was reduced, which reflected the Obama administration emphasized the use of “smart power” for its global strategy. However, the nature of the reports determines it will exaggerate China threat, and also reflects America’s China strategy is not

a major shift (CHEN, 2010). The core of political, economic, and cultural conflict is the conflict of value. Liberalism, new interventionism, even armed conflict spread western values (LI, 2003). Even though culture presents various forms worldwide, we must also see another important model of global culture, strengthening of cultural imperialism and the emergence of cultural hegemony.

On China's strategic cognition of "uncertain future", the United States emphasized the America's role in monitoring development of Chinese military power, rendered the expansion of the Chinese threat and reported the United States' willingness and capability of coming back to the Asia-Pacific region. As withdrawing troops from Iraq and Afghanistan successively, the United States has shifted its strategic focus to Asia and set up a series of obstacles on the normal development of Sino-US relations. However, the high cost and low effective strategic containment seems no longer an effective way of dealing with China. One of the goals of the annual reports is affecting international public opinion, namely through the report making China's neighboring countries alert to the development of China's military.

Conclusion

This study applied the general method of corpus linguistics to discourse analysis, compared the annual reports since 2000, and found out that from the structure's perspective, there was no significant difference between *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* and *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, and that the changed reports were more like a refined edition of the old. The inheritance is more than the innovation.

2010 Defense White Paper points out that China's "the future and destiny of China have been increasingly closely connected with the international community" (White Paper, 2010). As a major international responsible great power, the development of China will be very conspicuous. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* is released at the time that international political pattern changes and that difficulty appears in China-US relations, affected by American domestic politics. The new reports are not only a reflection of the current international politics, and also a means to deal with the reality. Although the adjusted reports have some subtle changes, from the purpose of the report to the tone and some other various linguistic aspects, they are still a continuation of previous reports. From the very first *Military Power of the People's Republic of China* putting forward the "China threat", China has always been described as a non-democracy, non-freedom, non-human rights, poor, and highly centralized "communist, nationalist, absolutism, alien civilization and economic threat" (TANG, 2009) to the international community. We should be aware that the "China threat theory" has its profound historical and realistic roots and will accompany the whole development process of China. Therefore, how to make China, the emerging country, and the United States, the existing great power, break through the so-called historical rules, not plunge in collision and confrontation is significant. Both China and the United States have responsibilities and obligations to strengthen strategic mutual trust for solid confidence.

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