

REPORTS AND REVIEWS

REPORT FROM “INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM COURSE 2013”

Piotr GAWLICZEK, Assoc. Prof.¹

“The International Symposium Course 2013” was held from 14 October to 29 October 2013 at the College of Defence Studies (CDS), the National Defence University (NDU), of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (CPLA) in Beijing.

Thirty seven military officers with the rank of colonel and brigadier and civilian officials at the corresponding level from Asia, Africa, Europe, America, Oceania and some international organisations participated. Eight Chinese military officers and research fellows with good English communication skills and corresponding ranks also participated. Chinese and English were used as working languages during the course.

The objective of the symposium was to provide a platform for dialogues and exchanges for officers from different countries to collectively analyse the diverse threats to regional security facing the Asia-Pacific and to explore ways to strengthen regional security cooperation, so as to further promote mutual-

¹ Capt. (N) ret. Piotr GAWLICZEK, Assoc. Prof., NDU Warsaw Rector-Commandant’s Representative for the Innovation. His research and educational activities are focused on ADL, military strategy, asymmetric threats, joint operations, leadership and the Bologna Process. He is a member of many international scientific and educational bodies, i.e.: (1) the Editorial Board of the “Connections” – PfP Consortium Quarterly; (2) the NATO Advanced Distributed Learning Work Group Task Group - NTGTG WG ED & IT; (3) the ADL WG of the PfP Consortium; (4) the Editorial Advisory Board of the reviewed journal Defence and Strategy. He supports the efforts of the PfP Consortium Partner countries within the Defence Enhancement Education Programmes (DEEP).

understanding, trust and friendship among the Chinese military and militaries of respective countries.

The topic of the symposium was “Regional Security for the Asia-Pacific and China’s Peaceful Development”. Aimed at exploring effective ways to maintain regional security, the main topics included: the regional security situation of the Asia-Pacific and its development trends, relations among major powers and regional security, security of sea lanes and multilateral cooperation on regional security. The course also focused on China’s essential policy on diplomacy and national defence, the achievements of China’s reform and opening up, the modernisation of China’s Armed Forces and China’s position towards important security issues worldwide.

The course was conducted in the forms of lectures, academic exchanges, group discussions and study tours. Besides Beijing, participants also visited PLA troops, large-scale enterprises and scenic spots during field trips to Shanghai and Xi’an.

Every participant was required to write a paper in English focusing on the topic of the symposium, with the emphasis on the security situation of the Asia-Pacific region, hotspot issues and their influence, measures taken by militaries of different countries to deal with diverse security threats, and ways to conduct international or regional security cooperation. The length of the thesis was about 3,500 words and the CSD compiled all the papers into one collection. Moreover, the CSD arranged for some participants to present the main points of their papers on a voluntary basis, and there was about 15 minutes for each presenter.

The NDU held the opening and closing ceremonies for the symposium. During the closing ceremony, diplomatic envoys were invited, and the NDU leaders granted certificates to the participants.

The most important points of the agenda of the symposium were as follows.

Oct. 14 Monday

Morning: Meet-and-greet, opening ceremony, Presentation: Achievement of China’s Economic Development and the Challenges It Faces (national development and reform Commission)

Afternoon: Presentation: Changes in Global Strategic Pattern and China’s Diplomacy (MOFA)

Oct. 15 Tuesday

Morning: Presentation: China's Religious policy (State Administration For Religious Affairs of PRC)

Afternoon: Presentation: China's National Defence Policy and the New Version of China's Defence White Paper (FAO, Ministry of National Defence of PRC)

Oct. 16 Wednesday

Morning: Presentation: Dispute of Maritime Rights and Interests Faced by China (Navy Information Expert Advisory Committee)

Afternoon: Presentation: Cross-Taiwan Strait Relation: Current Situation and Issue (Institute of Taiwan Studies), China's Tibet Issue (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)

Oct. 17 Thursday

Morning: Forum: the major Security Issues facing China and the Way-out (Experts from NDU and participants of the ISC)

Afternoon: Presentation: The security Environment In Asia-Pacific (NDU)

Oct. 18 Friday

Morning: Presentation: US Strategic Rebalancing and Regional Security (NDU)

Afternoon: Presentation: Korean Peninsula and Regional Security (NDU)

Oct. 19 Saturday

Morning: Participants Forum: Major Factors Affecting Asia-Pacific Security

Afternoon: The Status and Role of ASEAN (MOFA)

Oct. 20 Sunday

Whole day: Visiting the Great Wall and Forbidden City

Oct. 21 Monday

Morning: Forum: Sea Lines of Communication Security and International Cooperation (FAO, Ministry of National Defence of PRC)

Afternoon: Visit special police Academy of Chinese People's Armed Police Force

Oct. 22 Tuesday

Morning: Presentation: The Status and Role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)

Afternoon: Discussion: The Multilateral Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific Region and the Role of Armed Forces (Expert from NDU and participants of the ISC)

Oct. 23 Wednesday – Oct. 26 Saturday

Whole day: Field Trip

Oct. 27 Sunday

Whole day: Study trip

Oct. 28 Monday

Whole day: Papers Exchange

Oct. 29 Tuesday

Morning: Wrap-up discussion

Afternoon: Closing ceremony

It is important to stress that the National Defence University (NDU) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is the highest institution of military education and is directly under the leadership of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China. The NDU mainly focuses on offering training courses to senior commanding and staff officers and senior theoretic research fellows, as well as high-ranking government officials. It also engages in research on national security strategy and defence modernisation drive. The College of Defence Studies (CDS) is under the command of the NDU, which is mainly tasked to train senior foreign military officers and promote exchanges in the field of security and military affairs in China and other countries in the world. The CDS is located at the foot of the Great Wall and is 30 km away from downtown Beijing.

It is important to stress that CDS has complete teaching facilities, such as computers, audio-visual equipment, LAN and internet. A small library was well stocked with over 10,000 books and more than 100 kinds of newspapers and periodicals published in the major countries of the world. A card phone was available in each living room. Participants could buy telephone cards from the Service Centre to make domestic calls or IDD (International Direct or Distance dialing) calls. The CSD provided free access to the internet in each living room. The CSD provided each participant with a standard room containing a TV set, refrigerator, air conditioner, furniture, and bedding. A gymnasium and other recreation facilities were free to use.

There was a Participant Service Centre in the college, providing comprehensive daily life support. When course participants encountered any difficulties on a daily basis, he could seek for help from the service centre by interphone, duty call, face-to-face communication, etc.

Since the participants came from different countries, they were on duty in turn, each for one day, assisting the Chinese staff officer in the daily administration. The duty officer advised others to be present on time for lectures or other collective activities; checked the whole team before and after lectures or visits (especially when embarking and moving), controlled the order of the lecture room and visits, was kept informed on others' leave, and informed the liaison officer about the team situation. The duty officer was supposed to give a speech or present courtesy on behalf of the team (or name someone else to do so) on certain occasions. The participants were required to wear ceremonial dress (civilian suits) at the opening and closing ceremonies and other important events such as banquets. Working uniforms were worn during lectures and formal visits and civilian clothes on other occasions.