

China paper warns of outmoded PLA military thinking

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China's military thinking is outmoded and should learn from others, especially the US when it comes to modernizing its vast armed forces, a leading armed forces newspaper said yesterday.

A commentary in the People's Liberation Army Daily said modernizing China's military was central to reforms which have seen heavy investment in high-tech weapons like advanced fighter jets.

China has slimmed down its military, the world's largest by number, over the past few years, trying to build a more effective force to face US-supplied Taiwan and Japan, as well as the US itself, but this needs creativity and more open thinking, the newspaper said, which could be a problem.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

"Because conservative thinking has a rather large influence in traditional Chinese culture, the task of renewing its culture and rethinking the military will be extremely difficult," it said.

China had to "audaciously learn from the experience of the information cultures of foreign militaries," it said.

"History and reality have shown again and again that a country which does not have a world view is a backward one. A military which lacks global vision is one without hope," it said.

The US was a good example to follow in two regards, the article added.

The US military buys technology already available on the open market when it can, such as global positioning systems used in the Gulf War, a cheaper and more practical method than trying to develop such equipment itself, the commentary said.

In addition, the US pays a lot of attention to training, "enlisting large numbers of able-bodied men and boldly using them," it said.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Chinese military looked on with horror during the first Gulf War in 1990 and 1991, when US guided missiles and precision bombs easily took out Iraqi equipment such as tanks, much of it similar to what China was using at the time.

Since then the People's Liberation Army has come on in leaps and bounds, though analysts say poor training and coordination among different branches of the military remain serious challenges.

During last year's national day parade, China showed off its DongFeng 21C missile, which could force US aircraft carriers to keep a greater distance if it is successfully developed into an

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anti-ship ballistic missile.

That would make it harder for the US to come to Taiwan's aid in the event of a conflict.

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