

Concerned US urges closer ties with China's military

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The US yesterday called for more interaction with China's military, as the two nations try to build trust over defense issues amid US concerns about Beijing's rapid military buildup.

"More still needs to be done to ensure that our defense and military establishments both have greater ... interaction with one another," US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told reporters.

The two nations also need to develop "rules of the road for how we cooperate in the future," he said on a trip to Beijing that comes two weeks after China showed off military weaponry in its National Day parade.

Campbell, whose visit is partly aimed at laying the groundwork for US President Barack Obama's visit to China next month, was due to meet Chinese defense officials later yesterday.

"It is incumbent on the United States and China to take steps ... so that as our two militaries increasingly operate in proximity to one another, that we establish procedures ... so that we can avoid crises and miscalculations on either side," he said.

China is in the midst of a drive to modernize its armed forces and has announced large military budget increases in recent years, prompting US officials to question Beijing's intentions.

The two nations also experienced a series of standoffs involving Chinese vessels and US navy ships in waters off China earlier this year.

China cut military exchanges with the US for months last year over a proposed US arms package to Taiwan worth US\$6.5 billion, but agreed to resume them in February.

Since then, the two sides have held several rounds of military talks.

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