China's military interventions

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Résumé ou extrait : Great powers have frequently employed large, expeditionary military forces engaged in various operations abroad. Some fought wars to defend colonial possessions, while others engaged in bitter fighting alongside besieged allies or undertook other missions throughout the world. As China has ascended in power, observers have debated whether the country might follow a similar path. In the three decades leading to the country's ascent as the second-largest economy in the world, China to date has deployed only relatively modest numbers of troops abroad in nonwar missions, such as maritime patrols and United Nations peacekeeping operations. Whether this pattern will persist or how it might change is the primary focus of this report. The project summarized in this report employed both quantitative statistical and qualitative analyses to examine patterns in Chinese military interventions. The researchers found that China has undertaken two types of interventions in its post-1949 history, which are illustrated in this report by the contrasting case studies of (1) China's invasion of Vietnam in 1979 and (2) its initiation of counterpiracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden and subsequent establishment of a supporting military base in Djibouti in the mid-2000s. The authors conclude that the pattern of military interventions adopted by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) since 2000 is likely to continue to define the general trajectory of Chinese interventions for at least the next five years because of the persistence of the principal drivers underpinning this pattern and the vulnerability of those interests to various nontraditional threats abroad.

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