Contested Terrain:
China's Periphery and International Relations in Asia

A Conference Sponsored by the
Foreign Policy Research Institute
and the
Reserve Officers Association

Friday, November 4, 2011
Reserve Officers Association, One Constitution Avenue NE, Washington, DC

China's long-term rise and its recent international assertiveness have made long-standing and recently emerging issues of relations along China's periphery matters of pressing international concern. The rapid development that has provided the material underpinnings for China's rapid rise as a regional power has been fueled partly by economic integration along China's periphery. Foreign investment flows, integration in a regional supply chain that feeds global markets and burgeoning intraregional trade have made Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and other states in East Asia key participants in China's rise and eroded the economic significance of political borders in the region.

At the same time, along China's periphery, political and security frictions abound:

- In littoral Northeast and Southeast Asia, some —areas variously claimed by China, Japan, several ASEAN states and Taiwan have been a recurrent focus of tension among the claimants (including among U.S. friends and allies). The often cooperation-inducing prospect of economic gain through agreements for shared or collaborative exploitation of natural resources has had little impact.

- China's maritime claims—specifically territorial and more broadly of "interests"—also are a source of friction with the United States, despite the two major powers' shared interest in open sea lanes of communication.

- The question of sovereignty over Taiwan remains unresolved and likely unsusceptible to progress toward resolution, even in an era of striking advances in cross-Strait economic relations.

- Recurrently and increasingly provocative moves by North Korea, growing alarm in Washington, Seoul and Tokyo, and looming leadership transition in Pyongyang raise the prospects of instability, regime collapse and a disruptive (and, from Beijing's perspective, threatening) form of reunification on the peninsula.

- Long-fraught relations between continental Asia's two giant states face old and new challenges, stemming from still-unsettled territorial boundaries, the lingering scars of a decades-old border clash, and Beijing's resentment of India's support for the Dalai Lama in an era of increasing restiveness in Tibet. Additional sources of tension lie in China's suspicion of deepening U.S.-India ties, and New

Delhi's evolving security policy that increasingly focuses on countering China's rising power and that can draw upon the resources generated by India's economic boom.

- In recent years, within and along the PRC's western borders, Tibetans and Uighurs have grown restive. These conflicts have brought new international attention to issues of human rights, self-determination and territorial sovereignty in those regions. Beijing has reacted with charges of foreign interference and meddling from across China's borders in south and central Asia and, in turn, raised the prospect of new sources of conflict in China's relations with its inland neighbors.

- In addition, the protracted and likely long-ongoing presence of U.S. military forces near China's western fringe has added an inland territorial dimension to China's suspicion that the United States seeks to contain China's rise. Much the same can be said of the consequences of reaffirmed, reinvigorated or emerging security cooperation between the United States and those along China's maritime periphery (including Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and Singapore) who seek to hedge against a rising China.

This conference will address this complex cluster of issues through papers and panels, each of which will be organized along geographic lines but will also have a distinct analytical focus on the issues most germane to the region.

8:30 a.m. Registration and Refreshments

9:00 a.m. **Opening Remarks**

9:15 a.m. **Keynote Address: Implications for U.S. Policy and Interests**

Speaker: Michael Green, Georgetown University and Center for Strategic and International Studies

10:15 a.m. Coffee Break

10:30 a.m. **Panel 1: China and Its Great Power Neighbors**

Papers:

Sheila Smith, Council on Foreign Relations, "Japan and the East China Sea Dispute"
John Garver, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology, "China's Relations with South Asia: Cooperation, Conflict and Implications for the United States"

Commentators:
Gilbert Rozman, FPRI and Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
Ashley Tellis, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. **Panel 2**: **China's Peripheral Visions: Land and Sea Borders**

Papers:

Allen Carlson, Cornell University, "A Hard or Soft Frontier?: New Chinese Discussions about Securing China's Territorial Periphery"

Jacques deLisle, FPRI and University of Pennsylvania, "Sea Changes?: China's Approach(es) to Territorial Claims and Sovereignty in the South China Sea."

Commentators:
Richard Bush, The Brookings Institution
Scott Kastner, University of Maryland

2:30 p.m. Coffee Break

2:45 p.m. **Panel 3: "Domestic" Disputes: Tibet, Xinjiang and Other "Chinese" Territory**

Paper:
Michael C. Davis, University of Hong Kong
Domestic Disputes: Tibet and China's `National Minority´ Policies.

Commentators:
Jacques deLisle, FPRI / University of Pennsylvania
Arthur Waldron, FPRI / University of Pennsylvania

4:00 p.m. **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**