



China Introduces New Battle Rifle for the PLA

OE Watch Commentary: China recently displayed a new rifle during the military parade held to celebrate the 70th anniversary of its founding. According to the accompanying excerpted article, the new rifle was developed by the state-owned defense firm NORINCO's 208 Research Institute [208所], also known as the Chinese Soldier Equipment Research Institute [中国兵器装备研究院] in Beijing. As laid out in the article and related interviews with members of the development team, the new rifle represents a shift in how China develops firearms.

The new rifle, which does not currently have a public designation, incorporates a number of significant changes from the QBZ-95 used by most PLA units. Elements of the Chinese Armed Forces, including People's Armed Police and border guards, use the QBZ-03 assault rifle, which uses the same ammunition as the QBZ-95 but which follows a more traditional configuration.

Most obviously the new rifle abandons the Type 95's bullpup design, which places the rifle's action and magazine behind the trigger, with a more traditional configuration with the magazine in front as in the AK-47 or M-16. Both rifles use a 5.8mm cartridge designed at the time to pierce standard NATO body armor.

The top of the rifle has a Picatinny-style rail for mounting optics and the plastic handguard is capable of mounting lights and vertical grips. The rifle uses a new rail-mounted 3x optic called the QMK152, which uses light-gathering fiber optics. It is also equipped with backup iron sights that fold down when not in use and an ambidextrous charging handle. Several barrel lengths for the rifle appear to exist, with a shorter carbine version carried by some vehicle crews during the parade.

The rifle also includes improved magazines produced by Chongqing Construction Industry Company [重庆建设工业] that feature an enhanced grip over their predecessors, and the magazine release appears to have been lengthened to speed reloading or manipulation when using gloves. The rifle also features an adjustable buttstock, a change from the QBZ-95 whose bullpup design does not allow it. Another difference with the QBZ-95 is that the grip is removable and includes a storage compartment, likely for a cleaning kit or lubrication.

Overall these changes address a number of the criticisms of the QBZ-95 and bring it up to a standard adopted by most countries (though notably the UK, Australia, France, and Singapore among others still use bullpup designs).

Also on display at the parade was a pistol-caliber submachine gun or personal defense weapon (PDW) design, designated as the CS/LS-7 and carried by the crew of armored vehicles. It features an MP-5-like magazine and a retractable buttstock. It is equipped with a holographic sight similar to that produced by US-based company EOTECH.

He Long [何龙], deputy chief of the 208 Institute noted that previously whatever the 208 Institute developed the PLA would adopt, but that now they work together to develop equipment appropriate to requirements.

Wang Yingsong [王英松], director of the 208 Institute's Firearms Research Institute [枪械技术研究所], emphasized that digital design tools have significantly decreased their research and development times, with the various stages compressed from between six months or a year to roughly a month allowing them to move from conceptualization to prototype much faster. The 208 institute is able to fully model a prototype in a digital environment, fabricate a practical prototype and then begin testing at the institutes' environmental simulation labs. It was noted for example that the new rifle had undergone rigorous testing including firing after immersion in muddy water meant to mimic China's famously salty rivers.

More importantly, these new firearms are only one component of a broader set of improvements to the PLA's individual soldier equipment. What appear to be earlier versions of the new "Integrated Soldier Combat System" [单兵综合作战系统] from NORINCO were designed as a modularized system "composed of a weapon system, information system and protection system," "targeted at improving integrated combat capability of soldiers." **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

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Continued: China Introduces New Battle Rifle for the PLA



QBZ95 Automatic Rifle.

Source: User:Tyg728 via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:QBZ95_automatic_rifle.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

Source: “China’s New Rifle to help Create Future ‘Super Soldiers’,” *Global Times*, 24 October 2019. www.globaltimes.cn/content/1167915.shtml

China’s new service rifle, first made public at the National Day parade on October 1, is said to be reliable, accurate and comfortable to shoot with and has low recoil. China’s recently revealed new service rifle is reliable and comfortable, and “super soldiers” are in the making when paired with an advanced individual soldier combat system, said a senior Chinese light arms developer.

The gun, which was first shown to the public at the National Day parade on October 1, was developed by the No. 208 Research Institute of China Ordnance Industries, the developer of the QBZ-95 rifle, national broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) reported on Monday.

The rifle is highly reliable, feels comfortable to operate, shoots with very high accuracy and has less recoil, Li Xiang, a test marksman at the research institute, told CCTV, noting that the ergonomics of the weapon can better fit the battlefield.

Wei Dongxu, a Beijing-based military analyst, told the Global Times on Thursday that compared to the QBZ-95, China’s previous generation of service rifles that features a bullpup design, the new one has an optimized conventional design with better ergonomics.

It will likely use new materials that make it very light, and its advanced optics could help the user measure distance and accurately acquire targets any time of the day, Wei said.

Multiple tests under harsh conditions, including in simulated sandstorms and sand-filled river water, were conducted to make sure the gun can adapt to any situation and remain consistent, CCTV reported.

The No. 208 Research Institute applied advanced computer simulation technologies during the rifle’s development that can simulate every component of the gun and their movements and status when the gun fires or falls from high places. This greatly shortened the rifle’s development period, according to CCTV.

China’s guns have been ranked among the world’s most popular guns as China’s gun development capability grew, CCTV said.

Wei said China’s guns are very competitive in the international market. Older generations of guns still have huge international demand because they are cheaper and perform very well, while new and advanced guns can also compete in high-end markets, he said. Accompanying the new rifle is an individual soldier combat system, which integrates dozens of advanced devices, including an information exchange interface packed up on the chest of a soldier, the CCTV report said.

“We will provide the Chinese warriors with our advanced equipment, making them super soldiers on the future battlefield,” He Long, deputy head of the No. 208 Research Institute, told CCTV.

Wei said the individual soldier combat system can greatly increase the battlefield situational awareness of soldiers by sharing information, so the battlefield would become more transparent to them as they can recognize danger and more accurately attack targets, gaining a significant advantage.