CNA Maritime Asia Project

Workshop Two: Naval Developments in Asia

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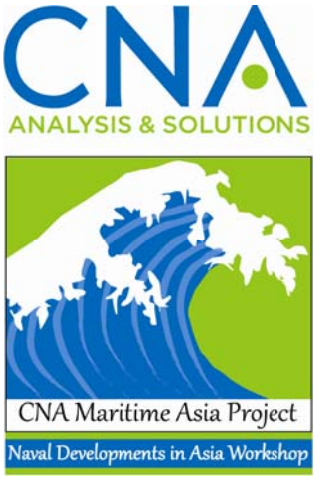

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Workshop Overview

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Introduction

As part of its Maritime Asia project, the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) conducted a workshop focused on naval developments in Asia. The purpose of this workshop was to explore the interaction between China's ongoing naval modernization and the navy modernization programs that most of China's neighbors are pursuing. The point was not to revisit the often asked question of whether a naval arms race is underway in East Asia. The entire "arms race" paradigm probably does not make sense: technically speaking, a naval arms race in Asia with China is not really possible, because no other Asian country can keep pace with the scope and sophistication of China's naval modernization. China simply is too wealthy and has too much capacity.

Rather, the hope was to explore what has been called a "capabilities competition." For example, Chinese anti-access/area-denial capabilities are triggering an approach that the United States has dubbed the "Air-Sea Battle," which is intended to field capabilities that will assure access. So what we have are diametrically opposed concepts based on different sets of capabilities – one set to deny access versus another set intended to assure access. Other Asian countries are responding to different aspects of Chinese access denial capabilities, especially its submarine force and its eventual power-projection capabilities (the PLAN aircraft carrier program). Meanwhile, everyone confronts the classic security dilemma. China's attempt to improve its security is making its Asian neighbors who depend on US maritime power less secure.

The combination of China's expanding overseas economic activities and corresponding need for security has created a demand signal for the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to protect People's Republic of China (PRC) interests abroad. This entails supporting United Nations-sanctioned missions, assisting PRC citizens who are in jeopardy or require evacuation, protecting sea lines of communication (SLOCs), and responding to natural disasters. Over the last half decade, the

PLAN—more so than China's other military services—has been seriously involved in integrating distant, prolonged peacetime operations as part of its core mission set.

As the PLAN has learned, these new missions require a different mix of naval capabilities than its wartime "counter intervention concept." It is the submarine force and land-based naval aviation arm which are the central players in what DOD characterizes as area-denial operations. The PLAN's surface force plays second fiddle in these scenarios. This role is reversed during peacetime; then, it is the surface navy that has pride of place due to its ability to deploy worldwide.

As the PLAN demonstrates genuine competence and professionalism in distant sea operations, Asian littoral states will likely begin to notice that it is becoming more expeditionary—which is another way of saying that it will be able to project power. Clearly, the introduction of modern amphibious ships, and shortly an aircraft carrier force, provides the PLAN with a credible power-projection capability. The workshop explored how much this emerging capability is creating a demand by Asian littoral states for naval modernization that in some cases includes area-denial capabilities, such as submarines and land-based aircraft with anti-ship cruise missiles.

Naval arms race in Asia

Noted maritime strategist Professor Geoffrey Till undertook a systematic exploration of the naval arms race issue in a paper which was delivered at a different CNA workshop. Since the topic is germane to the focus of this workshop, his paper is included in this report. He addressed the question by positing seven criteria and evaluating the current situation in Asia against those criteria. His criteria are:

- A naval arms race must be ***internationally driven***, meaning that it results from countries' perceptions of their external security environment.
- It is a ***bilateral rivalry*** between two rival hegemonic states or coalitions.
- It is characterized by ***abnormal intensity*** with expenditures that go beyond the necessities of pure defense.
- It is accompanied by ***political tension*** between the protagonists in which the use of lethal force cannot be ruled out as a policy option.
- There is a specific ***operational focus*** of the naval acquisitions in that they are aimed at a particular nation or coalition of nations.

- Both sides view the naval arms race as having ***high stakes***, in that the outcome could result in a decisive shift of the military balance.

- Both parties have the ***perception*** that they are involved in a naval arms race with the other.

Using these criteria, it seems clear that if applied to the United States and China, or even to Japan and China, some of these considerations are relevant. But when applied to other Asian nations versus one another or versus China, the arms race paradigm does not fit.

What is going on is that countries with sound economies are embarking on normal naval modernization, especially in terms of quality at the high end of naval capabilities, as older systems are replaced or new capabilities are added. In both Northeast and Southeast Asia, there also is an element of keeping up with one's neighbors—South Korean naval modernization is rationalized in part by Japan's capabilities. In Southeast Asia, both Indonesia and Malaysia appear to be motivated in part by what Singapore procures. Arguably, today's situation actually adds stability to the region as many nations will increasingly be able to defend their maritime approaches.

Maritime strategies of China's neighbors in Northeast Asia

Northeast Asian countries are hedging against China's rising power by cultivating economic relations with Beijing while at the same time closely monitoring the direction of PLA modernization, including its naval developments. Northeast Asian nations have drawn closer to China through dramatic increases in bilateral trade as China's economy has expanded. While economic ties draw China closer to its Northeast Asian neighbors, its territorial and maritime sovereignty claims in its near seas have resulted in disputes with those same neighbors. Japan and South Korea take umbrage over China's claims of island territories, its oil and gas exploration activities, and the illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing by its civilian fishing fleet. While Northeast Asian nations certainly want to share in and benefit from China's meteoric rise, they also want China to accommodate their interests in the maritime domain.

Japan's evolving maritime defensive orientation

Japan and China are engaged in a strategic competition in Northeast Asia, but they are not enemies, despite their mutual distrust. As a result of the perceived threat from both North Korea and China, Japan has slowly been shifting its security orientation from its northeast and Russia, to its southwest islands. This is the location of China and Japan's intractable dispute over the sovereignty of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea. One need not look further than the recent landings and counter-landings by Hong Kong-based Chinese activists and right-wing Japanese activists on the islands to see how nationalist passions, rooted in Japan's treatment of its neighbors during the first half of the 20th century, can turn a territorial dispute over an island group that has no intrinsic value (save its oceanic resources) into a potential flashpoint.[1]

There are two big shifts in Japan's national security strategy. First, as indicated, the posture of Japan's Self-Defense Force has shifted to its west and southwest in order to accommodate the continuing threat posed by North Korea as well as the growing Chinese presence in the East China Sea, which Tokyo believes poses a threat to the south Ryukyu Islands. The second change is the doctrinal shift from what the Japanese have characterized as a static defense, to what they call "dynamic defense."[2] It is not entirely clear what "dynamic defense" entails, but it does seem to imply a more proactive mindset. Dynamic defense will require an unprecedented degree of integration among Japan's three services. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF), for instance, will need to integrate its command and control structure with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) in order to defend its southwest islands. This is because while the JMSDF has advanced surface combatants and submarines that are capable of long-range missions, it lacks the tactical aircraft (TACAIR) necessary to establish local air superiority. The JMSDF will likewise need to integrate more thoroughly with the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) should they have to repel an attempted invasion (think the Senkakus, for example) or retake a Japanese island.

1 "Rightwingers land on Senkakus, hoist flags: No arrests as nationalists respond to H.K. landing," AFP-Jiji, 20 August 2012.

2 Sarah Serizawa, "An Interview with Christopher W. Hughes on China's Military Modernization and Implications for Northeast Asia," *Policy Q&A*, The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR), August 2, 2012, http://nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=266.

Japan is slowly building and expanding JMSDF capabilities within the parameters of its defense orientation. The centerpiece of this effort is the Hyuga-class helicopter destroyers (DDHs), which are designed for anti-submarine warfare missions.[3] Despite their stated ASW missions, these ships are in effect large-deck amphibious ships; the newest and largest will displace 30,000 tons. The JMSDF today is a well-balanced, very capable force. With a planned force structure of 44 destroyers, 21 submarines, and the appropriate mix of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, it is certainly the most capable navy in Asia if not the largest (the PLA Navy holds that spot), and is among the top three in the world. The only thing that separates the JMSDF from, say, the French navy, is the absence of a carrier that can operate fixed-wing tactical aircraft. If the STOVL version of the F-35 ever goes into production, the improved Hyuga-class DDHs will provide Japan with a ship capable of taking these tactical aircraft to sea. The PLA Navy carrier program is likely to provide a strong incentive for Japan to move in this direction.

Since the US-Japan alliance remains the cornerstone of Japan's security policy, JMSDF developments support the alliance. In the past, this has meant limitations on JMSDF's force structure and strategy, as well as its roles and missions. Increased Chinese presence and provocations in the maritime domain have led to both alliance and domestic pressure for the JMSDF to take on greater responsibilities. While alliance demands for the JMSDF are growing, at a practical level operational integration with the United States is still a work in progress. To this end, the alliance will benefit from discussions on how Japan can contribute to efforts, such as the Air-Sea Battle, that are aimed at overcoming anti-access concepts. Ballistic missile defense, likewise, will require a greater degree of operational integration between the USN and JMSDF, and thus drive the two forces closer to one another.

The JMSDF is also increasing its international profile, not only through its alliance relationship with the United States, but also by reaching out more and more to like-minded nations. This is in marked contrast to the political sensitivities that surrounded its participation in the USN-sponsored RIMPAC exercise 25 years ago. The JMSDF has been a steady contributor to international anti-piracy operations as well as replenishment to USN units in the Indian Ocean. The recently established Japanese base in Djibouti, moreover, signals ongoing support to international maritime security operations. Furthermore, the JMSDF is increasing its cooperation with the Australian and Indian navies through talks and exercises.

3 See for instance, VADM (ret.) Yoji Koda, "A New Carrier Race? Strategy, Force Planning, and JS *Hyuga*," *Naval War College Review* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 31-58.

As neighbors with common interests and democracies with maritime orientations, Japan and South Korea would seem to have many reasons to cooperate with one another, but those possibilities eventually fall victim to the "demons of history." The latest nationalistic firestorm in both countries over the Korean-occupied but Japanese-claimed Dokdo/Takeshima islands has intensified since South Korean President Lee Myung-bak visited the island in August.[4] As a result of this lingering history question, Japan and, even more so, South Korea eye one another as a possible threat, which continues to frustrate US attempts to structure an informal trilateral naval relationship comprising the United States, Japan, and South Korea.

South Korea: balancing multiple interests

South Korea—as a rising power with maritime interests that at times conflict with China's—has a powerful incentive to develop blue-water naval capabilities regardless of what China does. It is dependent upon international trade, which creates an imperative to protect its SLOCs with significant naval capabilities. South Koreans, in fact, often refer to their country as an island, due to their peninsular geography and sealed land border with North Korea. An example of South Korea's blue-water aspirations is its active participation in international maritime peacekeeping such as anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, where it has personnel currently deployed with Combined Task Force (CTF 151).

Although South Korea has been building an open-ocean navy since the 1990s, its vision of a "five-ocean navy" was officially captured in September 2005 by a South Korean Ministry of Defense (MND) plan, called "Defense Reform Plan 2020," whose underlying emphasis is on issues beyond the peninsula with a concomitant reduction in ground forces. The MND plan had been a work in progress since at least 1999.[5] The goal was to have a "Blue Water" force fully realized by 2020.

However, budgetary shortfalls were causing shipbuilding plans to be stretched out to 2025. That timetable is now in question because of the major embarrassment the ROK Navy suffered as a result of the investigation into the sinking of the corvette *Cheonan* in April 2010. In September 2010, the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Kim Sung-chan issued the following

4 "South Korea erects monument on Dokdo to mark presidential visit," *Kyodo,* 20 August 2012.

5 Bruce W. Bennett, *A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defense Reform Plan*, RAND National Defense Research Institute Occasional Paper, December 2005, p.1.

statement: "A consensus has been built among Navy leaders that it is time to put an emphasis on deterring North Korean maritime provocations rather than developing our blue-water capability."[6]

Clearly CNO Kim understood which way the political winds were blowing, because he anticipated the recommendations of a high-level commission formed by President Lee that was charged with looking at the assumptions and recommendations of the 2020 plan. The result was a revised plan known as DR 307, which modifies and extends the 2020 plan until 2030. The most immediate impact on the ROKN was to modify the plan to build six KDX III class Aegis destroyers. The class will end with the three currently in commission, and the funding planned for the second batch of three will go instead to six smaller (5,600-ton) KDX IIA class ships that will, however, be equipped with an Aegis combat system. Finally, plans for a new class of coastal defense ships, the FFX program, are being accelerated.[7]

The centerpiece of the South Korean Navy was to be a three-ship class of large amphibious ships (LPHs). The LPH is a 14,000-ton ship that can carry some 750 Korean marines, landing craft, and upwards of 10 helicopters, or potentially the F-35B if it is ever built. One of these ships is in commission, and the future of the other two is on hold.

The ROKN is now placing much more emphasis on littoral war-fighting issues, especially capabilities that can focus on the North Korean submarine threat – Pyongyang's inventory of midget submarines (40 small 300-tonners, and 10 minis) is challenging. One of the most embarrassing features of post-sinking investigation was the finding that ASW readiness for ships operating in the Yellow (West) Sea had been neglected because of the ROKN's assumption that the Yellow Sea was too shallow for effective submarine operations.[8]

6 Sung-ki, Jung, "Navy to Focus on Littoral Warfare," *Korea Times*, September 15, 2010, online at: www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/09/205_73102.htm, accessed September 10, 2012.

7 The current plan for major warships includes nine KDX I and II destroyers, three KDX III Aegis destroyers, five KDX IIA Aegis destroyers, 24 FFX-class frigates, 18 modern submarines, and associated helicopters and ASW aircraft. It also includes three Dokdo-class LPHs. If realized, the ROKN will have a larger surface combatant force than the Royal Navy or many other "traditional" maritime powers.

8 Park Chang Kwon, "The Long Term Impacts of Cheonan Sinking on the Alliance Naval Concepts and Operations," a paper prepared for the 5th Annual KIMS-CNA Conference, 1-2 December 2011. In author's possession.

While China and South Korea enjoy close economic relations, South Korea is pursuing a hedging strategy with regard to its much larger neighbor. South Korea remains concerned about China's support for North Korea. China's refusal to condemn its erstwhile ally over the sinking of *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeongpyong Island in 2010, exacerbated these concerns.

China and South Korea have overlapping EEZs in the Yellow Sea, which lead to disputes over sovereignty and fishing rights. Both China and South Korea claim the submerged Ie Do Reef/Suyan Rock, which is located closer to South Korea in its EEZ but it is also within China's claimed EEZ. South Korea raised China's ire by building a maritime research laboratory on the reef. China responded by increasing its patrols in the area. In addition, as fishery stocks in the Yellow Sea are depleted through overfishing and pollution, Chinese fishermen are venturing into South Korean waters more frequently. South Korea has called on China to respect the median line between the two countries in the Yellow Sea and to restrict illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in these waters until they can arrive at a permanent settlement. The 2011 fatal stabbing of a South Korean coast guardsman by Chinese fishermen represented the nadir of multiple incidents involving South Korean Coast Guard attempts to intercept Chinese IUU fishing.

Adding to its immediate concerns about North Korea and the need to hedge against China, South Korea also views Japan as a potential regional competitor. While both countries attempted tentative steps toward cooperation through an intelligence-sharing pact, electoral politics in South Korea thwarted even this modest effort. Bilateral cooperation between the JMSDF and South Korea Navy is not likely in the near future, unless South Korea is able to resolve the impasse. This is not likely until nationalist passions in both countries calm down, or North Korea commits a serious provocation that makes both countries realize they face more serious security issues than quibbling over intrinsically worthless rocks in the Sea of Japan.

The Russian Pacific Fleet: a slowly modernizing coastal defense force

Russia's Pacific Fleet, though the second largest of Russia's four fleets, is mainly a coastal defense force charged with enforcing Russia's economic interests in Northeast Asia. Largely built during the Soviet era, the Pacific Fleet's primary goal is to present a defense against foreign aggression and to localize any conflict that

may break out.[9] To this end, it protects the offshore oil- and gas-drilling platforms in the vicinity of Sakhalin Island and enforces Russian fishing rights around the Southern Kuril Islands, which Japan also claims. Although the latter is a coast guard mission, the Pacific Fleet is based nearby and could support the Russian Coast Guard if necessary. In addition to its coastal defense role, the Pacific Fleet regularly demonstrates the Russian Navy's continuing blue-water capabilities by conducting bilateral exercises in Northeast Asia and beyond. Most notably, it has maintained a near-continual presence off the coast of Somalia in support of international anti-piracy operations.

Like Japan and Korea, Russia also worries about the implications of China's increasing power in Asia. These worries, however, are more likely to result in caution vice adventurism in the Pacific. Though the Pacific Fleet is likely to be the recipient of planned ships coming on line, all indications suggest that the introduction of these ships will be a prolonged process. Future missions of the Pacific Fleet will include the legacy missions of protecting Russian sovereignty over the Southern Kuril Islands and protecting the offshore energy infrastructure off the Sakhalin coast. In addition to the legacy missions, new missions will include countering the rapidly modernizing PLA Navy and showing the flag in South and Southeast Asia.

US interests in Northeast Asian naval developments

Since the early 1990s, forging a closer trilateral relationship—some have called for a "virtual trilateral alliance"—has been seen as an important security objective. The logic appears irrefutable. South Korea and Japan have more in common with one another than they do with either of their huge Eurasian neighbors, in terms of democratic politics, economic interdependence, common alliance partners, and dependence on the high seas to export goods for economic growth and to import vital materials and energy to sustain that growth. But, so far, the difficulties stemming from Japan's 35-year-long colonization of Korea (1910-1945) have been difficult to overcome.

US alliance obligations to Japan and South Korea figure prominently in regional territorial disputes. This is a particularly touchy issue when it comes to territorial disputes among Northeast Asian countries. The US policy is not to take a position

9 Greg Austin and Alexey D. Muraviev, *The Armed Forces of Russia in Asia* (I. B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 211-212.

on the sovereignty of disputed territories. Yet when one of the claimants is a US ally, this can become a precarious position. In the case of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the United States does not take a position on their sovereignty; however, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated in 2010 that they fall within the scope of Article 5 of the 1960 US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security.[10] This means that as an ally of Japan, the United States would fulfill its treaty obligations if the Senkakus come under attack. A US State Department spokesman reiterated this as recently as July 2012, although emphasizing the United States does not take a position on the issue of sovereignty.[11] However, the US government has made no such statement with regard to Dokdo/Takeshima, which has been under the effective control of South Korea since 1953, leading many South Korean strategists to believe that in a showdown the United States would side with Japan.

Maritime developments in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia's geography places it at the center of the Asian littoral between the wealthy trading countries of Northeast Asia and the rising power of India and the Middle Eastern oil-producing nations. This geography makes the South China Sea a critical artery between the Pacific and Indian oceans for commercial and military traffic. There is a dual power dynamic ongoing in Southeast Asia: The first is between China and Southeast Asian nations who claim territory in the South China Sea. This is overlaid by the second, which is the regional "competition" between China and the United States for influence, access, and the establishment of its views regarding norms of maritime behavior.

On the issue of the South China Sea, Southeast Asian nations can broadly be divided into three camps: those on the front lines of the issue, especially Vietnam and the Philippines; those with interests in the outcome of the South China Sea issue, specifically Indonesia and Malaysia; and those sympathetic to the Chinese position, including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand. This dynamic was on full display at the most recent ASEAN summit in Cambodia, where discussion of the South China Sea issue was prohibited. Indonesia is frustrated by China's use of ASEAN proxies, such as its "little robot" Cambodia, to block progress on the South

10 Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Joint Press Availability with Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara," Honolulu, October 27, 2010, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/10/150110.htm.

11 Patrick Ventrell, Department of State Press Office, "Daily Press Briefing," Washington, D.C., July 11, 2012, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2012/07/194883.htm.

China Sea. Manila's actions on the South China Sea, moreover, have not garnered support from ASEAN.

Because this workshop focused on naval developments, only Vietnam and the Philippines were addressed with any specificity. The differences between the two are dramatic. Vietnam has for the past five years been embarked on a systematic and focused effort to put into place the naval and air capabilities necessary to defend itself and its South China Sea claims against China in a limited war. In contrast, the Philippines has struggled, unsuccessfully, for many years to put into place a modest naval or coast guard capability.

The front lines

Vietnam

Vietnam remains deeply distrustful of China as a result of their long history of conflict and, most recently, the 1979 Chinese "lesson teaching" invasion. The two nations have, however, nominally resolved both land borders and maritime borders in the Gulf of Tonkin. That is not the case in the South China Sea. Vietnam and China claims largely overlap, with both claiming all of the Paracel and Spratley Islands groups. China has possession of all of the Paracels, after having militarily seized the western-most islets in the group from South Vietnam in 1974 and then defeating a Vietnamese Navy "surveillance" mission to the islands in 1979. Since that time, Vietnam has not militarily challenged Chinese possession of the Paracels. Rather it has been building a legal argument justifying Vietnamese sovereignty, and, over the past few years, has been seeking closer ties with countries outside the region, including the United States, in order to balance against China. As a result, US-Vietnamese military ties have continued to improve, to include US Navy port visits to Vietnam.

In addition to seeking powerful friends, Vietnam has been making serious investments in its own maritime capabilities. The most newsworthy has been the six Kilo-class submarines ordered from Russia in 2009, the first of which will reportedly arrive by the end of 2012. Dating back to the early 1980s, Vietnam has been interested in purchasing submarines from Russia; an earlier deal with Russia was cancelled by Premier Gorbachev for fear of offending China. Concerning the 2009 order of Kilos, Professor Carl Thayer, a veteran specialist on the Vietnamese military at Australia's Defense Force Academy, said that Vietnam was seeking a credible deterrent against China, hoping to defend its own claims to the South China Sea.

"It's a very bold step," Thayer said. "It has been apparent for some time now that Vietnam's sovereignty is under threat in the South China Sea, and that is something that is painfully felt in Hanoi. Hanoi knows it could never hope to match the Chinese navy, but it can at least make them think very hard before any attempt to, for example, drive Vietnam off some of their Spratley Islands holdings. Even a few Kilos makes that a very complicated business, indeed you suddenly have to factor in losing ships."[12]

It is not just submarines; Vietnam has ordered four Russian built Gepard-class corvettes. The first two, fitted for striking surface ships, are already in operation; the second two, still being built, will be optimized for anti-submarine configuration. Vietnam is also producing 550-ton fast attack craft under license that are fitted with anti-ship cruise missiles. At least 10 are planned. Added to these acquisitions are the so-called Bastion Coastal Defense System, also from Russia, which consists of truck-mounted anti-ship cruise missiles; the 20-odd Su-27/30 aircraft, which are capable of maritime strike; and the announced purchase of four modern Dutch corvettes of the SIGMA class. It is clear that Vietnam is putting into place a formidable offshore naval force.

Knitting all these off-the-shelf purchases together into an integrated force, with effective surveillance and command and control, is still to be accomplished, but Hanoi's intent seems clear. It is investing significant resources to make certain it can defend its maritime claims, and avoid a replay of the 1988 South Johnston Reef clash with the PLAN, in which two of its landing craft were sunk, a third was badly damaged, and over 80 of its men were killed.

The Philippines

In the Philippines, ongoing and multiple insurgencies ensure that their army remains the dominant service, despite their extensive coastline and archipelagic geography. The Philippine Navy, moreover, is in poor material condition and is not capable of defending Philippine claims in the South China Sea, which they first asserted in 1955. Corruption in Manila's leadership is an additional obstacle to modernization of the Philippines' navy and coast guard. As a result of this sad situ-

12 Thayer, quoted in Greg Torode, "Vietnam buys submarines to counter China," *South China Morning Post*, December 17, 2009, http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/vietnam_buys_submarines_SCMP.htm.

ation, the Philippines can only look to the United States, as their treaty ally, to help them modernize their navy, and to assist in surveillance of its Spratley Island claims. For its part, Washington has refused to be committed to the defense of Philippine Spratley claims, which were made after the 1951 mutual defense treaty with Manila was signed, and are of questionable provenance.

Philippine claims over South China Sea island features are an ongoing irritant in its relations with China. Earlier this year a standoff over illegal fishing near Scarborough Shoal between the Philippine Navy on the one hand and Chinese fisheries enforcement vessels and civilian fishing boats on the other, significantly ratcheted up tensions between the two countries. Withdrawal of the Philippine Navy units at the beginning of the typhoon season headed off a crisis, but the incident raised questions about how both countries intend to enforce their South China Sea claims.[13]

US bases in the Philippines were essential during the Vietnam War and for keeping an eye on Soviet naval activity in Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay. Then, the failure of the base renegotiations in 1991 and the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo resulted in the closure of the two key American bases—Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station. Since then, the United States and the Philippines have slowly rebuilt a defense relationship on a basis of counter-terrorism cooperation, bilateral exercises, port visits, and training exchanges.[14] Chinese claims and presence in the South China Sea, moreover, are softening Philippine attitudes regarding American use of strategically located facilities in the Philippines.[15]

What has not evolved over the years is the material condition of the Philippine Navy. It remains poor; it is not capable of defending its coastline and islands, let alone its claims in the South China Sea. Although the Philippines is attempting to modernize

13 Jane Perlez, "Philippines and China Ease Tensions in Rift at Sea," *New York Times,* June 18, 2012, online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/world/asia/beijing-and-manila-ease-tensions-in-south-china-sea.html?ref=philippines, accessed 6 September 2012.

14 "State Department Fact Sheet on US-Philippines Partnership," US Department of State Office of the Spokesman, April 30, 2012, online at: http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/04/201204304823.html#axzz1wZc7mjGs, accessed 6 September 2012.

15 Dario Agnote, "US Marines to set up Marine Command Post Facing the South China Sea," *Kyodo News,* September 4, 2012. The next day, Philippine Foreign Minister Alberto del Rosario denied this claim. See "DND Denies Plan for US Command Post in Palawan," *Philstar.com,* online at: http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=845778&publicationSubCategoryId=63, accessed 6 September 2012.

its navy under what it has named "Sail Plan 2020," it is doubtful whether it will be able to muster the necessary resources to acquire the missile-armed ships, maritime patrol aircraft, offshore patrol vessels, and utility helicopters that it has identified as navy requirements. The Philippine Navy has recently acquired two Hamilton-class coast guard cutters from the United States, which, despite being more than 40 years old, are the most capable ships in the navy's order of battle. However, given the age of these ships (which would increase maintenance difficulties for any navy), it is not clear that the USG did the Philippines any favors by transferring very old ships that have every possibility of remaining tied up at their berths because of mechanical breakdowns.

If the US ambitions for the Philippine Navy are for it to become a credible force able to police the Philippine EEZ, it will have to put into place a sustained long-term effort that will involve on-the-ground advisors and proper resources. Failing that, the Philippines will continue to hope that the US Navy will be its surrogate for defense of its territory. Because access to former US facilities has become an important US interest, Manila has some leverage in this issue, as it is in a position to broker "location, location, location" for assistance in improving its own capabilities.

Interested parties

Indonesia

Indonesia has a history of informal leadership on South China Sea issues, but a limited stake of their own in them. Although Indonesia has no territorial claims in the South China Sea, China's infamous nine-dashed line overlaps with Indonesia's EEZ around the Natuna Islands. Moreover, Chinese claims in the South China Sea do not stoke Indonesian nationalism. Indonesia's real interest appears to be in preventing the South China Sea from becoming a venue for competition between powerful extra-regional actors.

Indonesia is modernizing its navy based on its national interests of protecting SLOCs and chokepoints.[16] Although Indonesia has the largest navy in Southeast Asia in terms of both ships and personnel, it is barely adequate to protect the country's extensive coastline. Indonesia aims to transform its current force into one with "green water" capabilities by 2024. Planned acquisitions in support of this vision

16 *Indonesia's Naval Development and Maritime Cooperation,* RSIS Policy Report, July 5, 2012, p. 4.

include guided missile destroyers, tactical submarines, fast attack missile boats, torpedo boats, and minesweepers.[17] Since 2003, the Indonesian Navy has acquired 13 new patrol vessels and has budgeted to acquire five to six new boats per year. The Indonesian Ministry of Defense has also ordered a destroyer escort from the Demen Schelde Netherlands Shipyard in August 2010, and it is due to be delivered by August 2014.[18] The major enabler of Indonesian naval modernization is an economy that is doing well enough to allow a serious naval modernization plan to be put forward. In addition to the national security interests that rationalize such a plan, keeping up with the naval modernization plans of its near neighbors Singapore and Malaysia is also a factor. At this stage, there is no concrete evidence, only a hunch, that this naval modernization plan is also a hedge against Chinese naval modernization.

Malaysia

Of all other South China Sea claimant countries, Malaysia's claims are the most distant from China. As a result, the two countries have been able to successfully manage their differences. Malaysia, for instance, extracts energy resources from contested South China Sea waters. Furthermore, the presence of Chinese fishing boats in Malaysian waters has not escalated tensions between the two countries.

Malaysia, like Indonesia, is acting on its national interests and taking advantage of its growing economy to modernize its navy. Also, like Indonesia, it is modernizing its navy partly as an effort to keep up with Singapore's naval capabilities. The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) acquired two French-built Scorpene SSK-class submarines in 2009 and 2010.[19] Although these boats are a significant new capability for the RMN, it is currently consumed with integrating the new SSKs into the fleet. Under the 10th Malaysia Plan of 2011-2015's second phase, which begins in 2013, the RMN has requested funding for six anti-submarine helicopters, modernization of the Mahamiru-class minehunters, and additional weapon systems for the Kedah-class patrol vessels.[20] These planned procurements reflect a desire to modernize

17 Ibid., p. 5.

18 "Navy of the Republic of Indonesia Modernization," *Globalsecurity.org,* accessed September 6, 2012.

19 Richard A. Bitzinger, "Southeast Asian Military Modernization: A New Arms Race?" Presentation at the East-West Center, February 2, 2011.

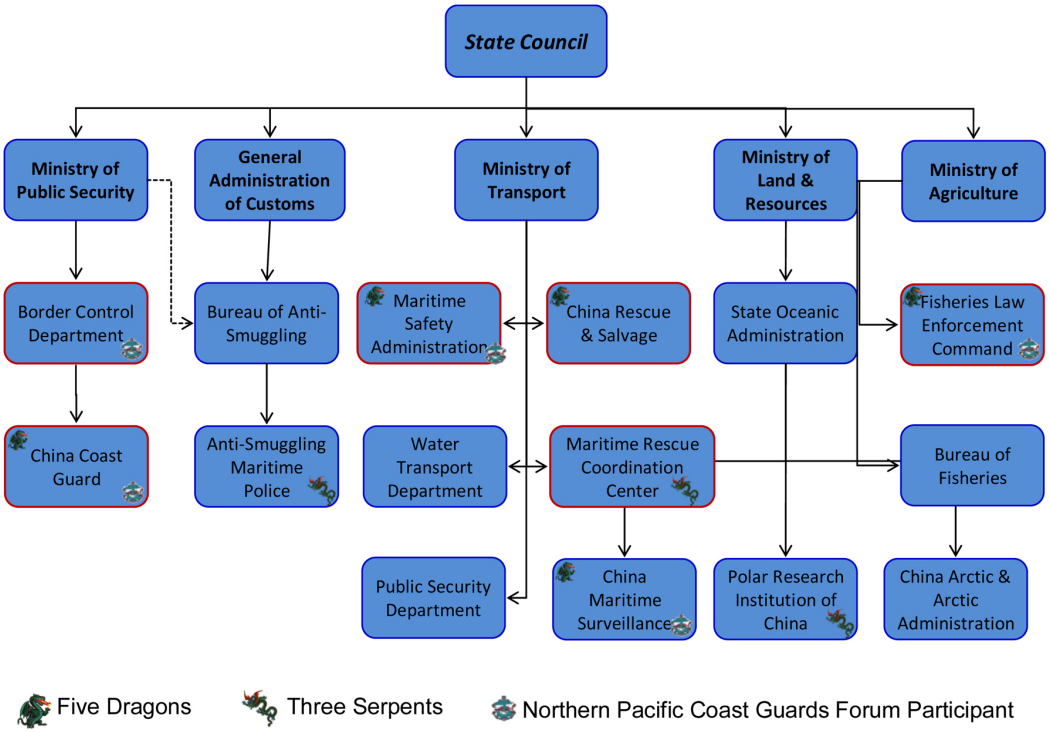
20 *Jane's World Navies, Malaysia,* updated July 30, 2012.

and upgrade existing capabilities vice adding new capabilities. Overall, Malaysia's naval developments are not a reaction to China's presence and activities; rather, they reflect Malaysia's national interest in protecting its maritime boundaries and SLOCs.

Chinese presence in the South China Sea

The unique aspect of Chinese maritime presence in the South China Sea has been the relative absence of the PLA Navy. Beijing has apparently decided that its civil maritime agencies would be less escalatory in enforcing what it perceives as its rights in these waters. Unlike the United States, where the Coast Guard fulfills the full range of enforcement duties in the maritime domain, China has a number of players, all with different enforcement responsibilities and reporting to different ministries in Beijing. Figure 1 illustrates China's civil maritime organization, which crosses five ministries and multiple agencies with widely divergent authorities and responsibilities. Not all of the agencies depicted in figure 1 have operational capabilities. In fact, regulatory authorities and enforcement capabilities often exist in different organizations.

Figure 1: China's civil maritime organization



China's panoply of civilian maritime organizations operate in a stove-piped fashion: they do not coordinate with one another and, generally speaking, do not deconflict their operations. The Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC), within the Ministry of Agriculture, is perhaps the most relevant of China's civilian maritime organization when it comes to interactions at sea with its Southeast Asian maritime neighbors. FLEC is charged with enforcement of Chinese laws concerning fisheries and maritime resources within China's territorial waters and EEZs. Similarly, China Maritime Surveillance, located within the State Oceanic Administration within the Ministry of Land and Resources, is responsible for law enforcement in China's territorial waters, EEZ, and coastal zone. The Ministry of Transport has wide-ranging responsibilities within the maritime domain, which are diffused among multiple agencies and include search and rescue, salvage, hydrographic survey, and elimination of oil spills to name only a few. Although the China Coast Guard under the Ministry of Public Security is charged with maritime security and law enforcement, including narcotics trafficking and illegal migration, this authority does not extend to fisheries enforcement. The coast guard is essentially the maritime division of the People's Armed Police. Within the General Administration of Customs, the Anti-Smuggling Maritime Police focus on revenue collection and, practically speaking, operate within a fairly limited geographic area.

This web of civilian maritime organizations may lead to further strained relations with China's Southeast Asian neighbors through inconsistent or overlapping enforcement efforts. This is, of course, the opposite of China's de-escalatory intention of employing civilian maritime enforcement, vice PLAN, assets in the South China Sea in order to assert its interests there.

Economic interests including fishing, hydrocarbon exploration, and freedom of navigation; these are a driving factor of China's approach to the South China Sea. Chinese fishery incursions into other countries' claimed EEZs have risen since 2009. But fishery disputes are not the only contentious issue in the South China Sea. Energy exploration is also contentious. Although South China Sea hydrocarbon resources are unproven, the countries in the region—including China—are eager to exploit the resources that are there. This competition was evidenced in 2011 when a Chinese maritime surveillance vessel cut the undersea cables of a Petro-Vietnam survey ship.

China is also doing its best to put into place "facts of ownership" by making certain that its garrisons scattered around the Paracel and Spratley island groups are well supplied. In the most recent step in its attempts to make sovereignty a fait accompli,

Beijing raised the administrative status of the Xisha (Paracel), Zhongsha (Macclesfield Bank), and Nansha (Spratley) islands from a county-level administrative office to a prefecture-level city named Sansha based on Woody Island in the Paracels. This was followed, in July 2012, by the establishment of a division-level garrison in the newly created city.

It is important to understand that, in the PLA, division-level military garrisons do not command main force combat units such as infantry or armored divisions or brigades. They also do not command PLA Navy or PLA Air Force units. They are administrative headquarters established in major cities, and are responsible for supporting the military work conducted by the municipality, such as conscription and national defense mobilization tasks. From a military perspective, the significance of Sansha garrison should not be overstated. Alone, it will not lead to an increase in combat units in the region; nor does it portend a new effort by China to militarize the disputes in the South China Sea.[21] If China were to mount an offensive operation against features in the Spratleys occupied by Vietnam or the Philippines, it most certainly would come from the forces in Hainan, not from this small garrison that, for all practical purposes, is marooned on Woody Island.

US Interests in Southeast Asian maritime developments

Southeast Asian countries welcome US presence and involvement in South China Sea issues, but the United States must be careful not to imply a military commitment that might embolden Vietnam or the Philippines to come to its support militarily in a dispute with China, or conceivably with one another.

The ultimate US interest in the region is peace and stability. The United States has been outspoken about the need for China and Southeast Asian nations to resolve their disputes amicably, either multilaterally under ASEAN auspices or bilaterally. Secretary of State Clinton clearly articulated this interest at the ASEAN summit in Vietnam in 2010, much to China's consternation.[22] At the same time, the United States is not willing to engage directly in resolving these disputes.

21 Dennis Blasko and Taylor Fravel, "Much Ado about the Sansha Garrison," http://the diplomat.com/2012/08/23/much-ado-about-the-sansha-garrison/.

22 See for instance, Robert Sutter, "China-Southeast Asia Relations: US Interventions Complicate China's Advances," *Comparative Connections,* October 2010.

Freedom of navigation, meaning unfettered transit for US Navy ships through the South China Sea, is a key US interest. US Navy ships homeported in Japan routinely exercise with Southeast Asian friends and allies in the South China Sea, or they transit it enroute either to Southeast Asia, or onward to the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden. China's position is that US naval ships that are conducting surveillance of China while in its EEZ are not permitted without China's blessing. The United States argues that, under UNCLOS, the full range of "high seas freedoms" that are spelled out, which include surveillance, are permitted. In other words, Beijing wants to divide high seas freedoms into two parts: for commercial traffic, no restrictions; for military traffic, certain restrictions. The US position is clear: high seas freedoms are indivisible, and must not be parsed. Attempting to do so infringes on "freedom of navigation."

It is also in the US interest that China not take advantage of its superior military capabilities to throw its weight around in the South China Sea. Determining how to actually execute this policy is difficult since it can easily stray close to moving off its position of neutrality on sovereignty claims. This, of course, is what Beijing claims that Washington is doing, by interfering in its sovereignty disputes with its neighbors. To this end, naval modernization by Southeast Asian countries is in the US interest insofar as it can provide a reason for Beijing to think twice about using force to expel other claimants from the islands in the Spratleys that they occupy or pressuring them through military threats to cede their claims to Beijing.

Yet, it is decidedly not in the US interest to be involved in a South China Sea conflict with China on behalf of the Philippines or Vietnam. US policy has to keep a careful balance: it must reassure allies while curbing their adventurous tendencies, and it must object to any egregious behavior on the part of China while not being deliberately provocative. This is one reason why Washington's rebalance-toward-Asia policy has focused on providing more routine, peacetime presence in Southeast Asia. Stationing four small surface combatants in Singapore provides a way to increase routine US naval presence in these waters.

Chinese views on maritime developments in East Asia

The final workshop panel focused on Chinese perceptions of developments in what it calls its "near seas," including Chinese reactions to the US concept of Air-Sea Battle (ASB). Chinese military doctrine recognizes that "China is located in an area

where the geo-strategic interests of big powers meet, and its national security is influenced by the competition of these interests."[23] In assessing the possible strategic environment in the Western Pacific over the next few decades, it is essential to examine Chinese views on many of the central issues related to the maritime environment, as well as its posture.

Chinese views of Air-Sea Battle

Although the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) announced the joint development of the Air-Sea Battle concept by the Navy and Air Force,[24] it was over a year later, in late 2011, when Chinese commentators began to express their own viewpoints on the matter. This coincided with the founding of the ASB office in the Pentagon in November 2011 and President Obama's announcement of 2,500 Marines deploying to Darwin, Australia, in October of that year.

The emerging Chinese view of ASB has three basic points: first, the purpose of ASB is to contain China; second, US implementation of ASB will be hindered by constrained future US defense budgets and inter-service rivalry; and third, ASB will require the United States to rely more on its Asian allies. As described in the QDR, the purpose of ASB is to solidify US military superiority over "adversaries equipped with sophisticated anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) capabilities."[25] Although the United States has emphasized that ASB is not aimed at any particular country,[26] Chinese analysts compare ASB to the late Cold War Air-Land Battle concept and infer that China is its target.

Chinese analysts view ASB as being difficult for the United States to implement due to shrinking DoD budgets and the inability of the Navy and Air Force to cooperate effectively to conduct joint operations. According to this viewpoint, since the United

23 Guangqian, Peng and Yao Youzhi, ed. *The Science of Military Strategy,* (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2005), p. 439.

24 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, February 2010), p. 32.

25 Ibid.

26 Greg Jaffe, "US Model for a Future War Fans Tensions with China and Inside Pentagon," *Washington Post*, August 1, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-model-for-a-future-war-fans-tensions-with-china-and-inside-pentagon/2012/08/01/gJQAC6F8PX_story.html.

States has spent the last decade waging costly wars in the Middle East and has recently experienced an economic downturn, it will be unable to afford ASB. The ASB concept will require moving expensive new technologies to a distant region, involving long supply chains.[27]

The final common theme in Chinese analysts' ASB writings is that it will require the United States to rely on its allies—especially Japan and Australia—for its implementation. They assert that the United States will need to develop a large network of bases for ASB assets, including planes, anti-ship missiles, and littoral combat ships, and will need to draw on allied military forces for operational and logistical support.[28] Due to the closeness of US-Japan defense relations and the capabilities of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, they contend that the United States will likely call upon Japan to shoulder a greater responsibility for ASB. The announcement of rotational deployments of US Marines through Australia and US-Australia negotiations for increased US military forces in Australia likewise lead Chinese analysts to the conclusion that Australia will be instrumental in the realization of ASB.

Based on these views, Chinese strategists recommend that China improve its capabilities to attack the United States at its weak points using an asymmetric strategy. Senior Colonel Gaoyue Fan puts it this way: "If the US military develops Air-Sea Battle to deal with the PLA, the PLA will be forced to develop anti-Air-Sea Battle doctrine and capabilities."[29] Possible Chinese asymmetric strategies include developing information-based weapons and counterspace systems in order to target the

27 Hu Jiemin Guo Meichu, and Yang Bin, "An Analysis of 'Air-Sea Battle,'" *Journal of Defense Technology*, February 2011; Sun Fei, "Deciphering the US 'Air-Sea Battle' Concept," *Ordnance Knowledge*, no. 4, 2011; Peng Guangqian and Peng Kuang, "US 'Air-Sea Battle' Ideology Runs Counter to Reality," *Liaowang*, 12 March 2012; Gao Jungyang, "Air-Sea Battle: A New Round of Strategic Adjustment?" *World Affairs*, no. 24, 2011.

28 Yang Yi, "'Air-Sea Battle' Goes against World Trends" *People's Daily*, 10 December 2011; Wang Xiubai, "Considerations Triggered by the US 'Air-Sea Battle,'" *China Youth Daily*, 22 April 2011; Deng Encheng and Li Wei, "At Whom Is the Spearhead of the US Military's Air-Sea Battle Pointed?" *China Youth Daily*, 18 November 2011; Jiang Guoping, "How to Understand the US Military's 'Air-Sea Battle,'" *Journal of World Politics*, no. 2, 2012; Li Jie, "The US' New Military Strategy Is a Signal: The Beginning of an Official Response to China," *People's Daily*, 12 January 2012.

29 Eric Sayers and Gaoyue Fan, "Air Sea Battle: An Exchange," *PacNet* 17, Pacific Forum/Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Mar. 17, 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/pac1117.pdf.

US military's networked systems. Chinese analysts are not unanimous in their views of ASB; thus, it is unclear what actions China will ultimately take in response to ASB.

China's views of naval developments by its neighbors

China has deeply rooted fears about its neighbors drawing together in an anti-China coalition. The tone of its commentary indicates an admiration for the naval capabilities of its Northeast Asian neighbors; this is especially so in the case of Japan.

South Korean naval developments are likewise admired by Chinese naval commentators. China tends to view South Korean naval developments inquisitively and in a largely positive light. The Chinese are impressed with the rapid pace and success of South Korean naval modernization. South Korea faces challenges similar to those of China in developing and maintaining a modern, blue-water navy.

By contrast, Chinese writings on capabilities of Southeast Asian navies tend to be dismissive. When discussing Vietnam in public forums, for instance, Chinese analysts describe their southern neighbor's naval developments in adversarial terms. Chinese analysts tend to have an antagonistic tone and tend to blame the United States for these countries' actions. Vietnam's 2009 announcement that it would purchase six Kilo-class submarines from Russia resulted in charges of aggressiveness. The July 2010 statement by Secretary of State Clinton at the ASEAN summit in Vietnam was especially vexing to the Chinese. Secretary Clinton stated that the "United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commons and respect for international law in the South China Sea."[30] In response, PLA Navy Senior Captain Li Jie leveled a charge that the United States was challenging China's core interests.[31]

China's statements and actions betray a concern about an incipient naval arms race in Asia. Its concerns about this issue are twofold: first, it does not want neighboring countries to coalesce into an anti-China coalition; and second, it does not want

30 Secretary of State Clinton quoted in Mark Landler, "Offering to Aid Talks, US Challenges China on Disputed Islands," *New York Times*, July 23, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/24/world/asia/24diplo.html.

31 Li Jie, "The Inexplicable Motive Behind Frequent US Military Exercises," *Modern Ships*, October 2010, p. 60.

neighboring countries to enlist the help of outside powers—namely, the United States—in resolving their disputes with China.

Maritime developments and US interests

Due to its alliance commitments, economic interests, and use of the maritime space, naval developments in East Asia are of direct interest to the United States. The US maintains four alliances in the region, with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. With the exception of Thailand, each of its Asian allies is engaged in territorial disputes in the maritime domain with China—and in the case of Japan and South Korea, with each other. In addition to its military alliances, the United States has extensive trade relations with the growing economies of Asia. Of course, it is in the US interest that trade with countries in the region and through the region's critical waterways not be disrupted as a result of conflict in maritime Asia. Furthermore, the US Navy transits Asian waterways, especially the South China Sea, to reach operating areas in the Middle East. Finally, US Navy ships operate throughout Asia and will do more as US partnerships in the region expand.

China's naval developments are in the US interest insofar as they provide China with seaward security and support Chinese economic interests at sea. Since both China's navy and its civilian maritime assets actively challenge the maritime interests of China's Asian neighbors, it is unclear whether China's naval developments are truly a force for regional peace and stability. Essentially, due to its alliance commitments and economic interests, it is in the US interest that China's naval development and modernization not infringe upon the interests of US allies and partners in the region.

Conclusion

With the possible exception of Vietnam, no Asian nation is modernizing its navy solely in response to China's naval advancements and maritime activities. While there is a clear hedging element to their plans, especially in the case of Japan and Korea, the major reasons behind naval developments in Asia appear to be twofold: first, they wish to protect their growing economic interests; and second, advanced naval forces are a visible symbol of having arrived on the international stage. The latter pertains most directly to Southeast Asian nations, especially Indonesia and Malaysia. The major exception to the regional rule of naval development is the

Philippines, which has the will and the requirement to develop its naval forces in order to defend its territory but does not have the resources to achieve its plans.

China's naval developments and the reactive naval developments of its neighbors need not lead to regional instability, because peace and continued trade relations are in the interest of all of the concerned parties. Interests, however, can change when circumstances change, and the naval capabilities that have so carefully been built over years can be used for their intended purpose: waging war at sea. Asian navies are wisely developing capabilities that capitalize on precision weapons and submarines.

The widespread naval modernization that Asian countries are embarked upon—driven by their economic prosperity and desire to hedge against China—is in the US interest. If every country in Asia were able to defend its EEZ and maritime approaches, that could be very stabilizing; however, if, in the process of doing so, they made their neighbors worry about their own security, that could trigger destabilizing naval competition. Making sure that the US Navy's posture in the region is perceived as imposing and militarily viable under all conditions, will go a long way toward preventing adverse outcomes as navies around Asia improve their capabilities.

Naval Arms Racing and Control in the Asia-Pacific Region. Is There a Problem?

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Concern is often expressed in the literature and in the media about the absence of anything substantial in the way of an arms control regime in the Asia Pacific region on the one hand and the dangers of a naval arms race on the other, especially given the substantial naval modernization programmes now in place. Given the bad results frequently said to follow a naval arms race, it seems an easy step from this to conclude that naval development far from being the solution to a variety of security problems has become a, if not the, problem itself. This paper is intended to explore this proposition.

There is not much doubt, first of all, that a substantial naval modernization programme is indeed in place. The modernisation of Asian naval forces began in the 1980s as part of a growth in its share of global defence expenditure from 11 per cent in the mid 1980s to 20 per cent in 1995 with a corresponding leap in the region's arms imports.[1] A natural reflection of Asia's growing economic clout and political confidence, together with a need to replace obsolescent second-hand equipment acquired decades before, this was more a 'festival of competitive modernisation' than a potentially destabilising naval arms race as generally understood. In any case, it was largely brought to a halt by the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.

By the early 2000s most countries in the region had recovered from this crisis sufficiently to resume naval modernization programmes funded by steadily increasing levels of defence expenditure. The US-based naval consultancy firm AMI International anticipates a naval spend in the Asia-pacific of US$ 173 billion by 2030; the Asia-Pacific naval market as a whole is 'expected to move past NATO countries to become the second largest source of future naval spending after the United States.' Asia already

1 Des Ball notes 26 Jan 2010.

spends more on defence in general than does Europe. According to the French naval armaments firm DCNS, the Asia-Pacific region was considered 'as a future centre for defence business. The defence market in the Asia-Pacific should be, in about 2016, a major market – even above the US.'[2]

This increase in focus and effort is especially evident in Northeast Asia, an area primarily engaged in the acquisition of platforms, weapons and sensors such as anti-ship/land attack cruise missiles, submarines, anti-submarine capabilities [ASW], sea-based air and missile defence capabilities, electronic warfare capabilities, and so on, which at first glance only really make sense for operations against peer competitors. With its acquisition of submarines and modern frigates, something of the same behaviour may be seen in Southeast Asia too.

But does this constitute a 'naval arms race' and if so would it matter ? Perhaps we should attempt first to explore the term. The notion of an arms race is famously ambiguous and the literature dealing with it is voluminous.[3] Amongst the most useful and searching of reviews is Barry Buzan and Eric Herring's *The Arms Dynamic in World Politics*. They make the point that naval arms races are often associated with, and are held to increase, levels of political tension and the likelihood of conflict. The naval arms race between Britain and Germany in the days before the First World War is usually cited as a classic example of the *genre*. Its most intense period was 1909-1910, but continued until the outbreak of war and was characterised by an apparent competition between the two countries to build the new all-big-gun Dreadnought battleships and their more lightly armoured faster consorts, battlecruisers, both of which became known as 'capital ships'.

The British started the process by constructing a brand new style of ship HMS *Dreadnought*, to a revolutionary design in 1905 and then ordering another 12 over the

2 Robert Karniol 'Boom time ahead for Asia-pacific navies.' The Straits Times, 9 Nov 2009. I am indebted to Bob Nugent Vice-President [Advisory] of AMI International (http://aminter.com) for these figures and for his personal support of this project. 'DCNS plans to expand business in Asia Pacific' Jane's Defence Weekly 11 Nov 2009.

3 Barry Buzan and Eric Herring's The Arms Dynamic in World Politics (Boulder, Col and London: Lynne Rienner, 1998) pp 75-9. Colin Gray, however, (Book review of Grant T Hammond 'Plowshares Into Swords' in International Studies ,1996 22:3, pp 323-335) urges the abandonment of a concept so ambiguous as to confuse rather than clarify analysis. But see his Weapons Don't Make War (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993) pp 47-64.

4 Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany and the Coming of the Great War* (London Jonathan Cape, 1991) pp 609-625.

next 3 years [at 4 per annum].[4] In the Summer of 1907, the Germans responded by expanding their programme to 9 capital ships. And so it went on. Making use of this particular example, analysts have inferred seven inter-related characteristics of a naval arms race, which to a degree distinguish it from ordinary processes of naval modernization:

Internationally driven. Naval arms development is driven mainly by perceptions of the external security environment rather than by domestic or technological imperatives.[5] This is not to say that there were not domestic benefits. The Daily Mail, pointed out that 80 per cent of the cost of these vessels would be wages which would trickle through the rest of the economy. But such benefits did not drive the process in Britain. The situation in Germany was more complex. There has been a long and frankly inconclusive debate amongst German historians about extent to which the German drive towards naval and military power was in fact driven by international pressures (*Aussenpolitik)* rather than internal domestic ones (*Innenpolitik)* that were more to do with the struggle between various groups for influence within the country.[6] But at the very least the external environmental has to be sufficiently competitive in nature for such domestic pressures to seem credible.

- Bilateral rivalry It involves conscious competition for political or military superiority between two rival hegemonic states, or coalitions. The resultant naval preparation is accordingly usually aimed against another specific state or coalition. Germany and Britain had each other in mind of course. France was concerned about Italy and Austria. Russia was determined to recover itself after its catastrophic defeat by Japan and was concerned about Germany.

- Abnormal intensity The level of defence expenditure suggested a level of effort and intensity that far exceeds the obvious and normal demands of pure defence. This can be measured by the percentage of GDP devoted by the protagonists to defence expenditure and by the frequency of their resort to worst-case analysis of the intentions of the 'other side.' This is often associated with the dynamic of new technology [quality] or particularly large numerical expansion [quantity]. The Anglo-German case resulted in defence taking up something like half of government expenditure. Willingness to devote so much effort to naval arms was reinforced by worst-case perceptions of the other side's real intentions. Both Ger-

5 For this see Buzan and Herring, pp 101-118; Gray op cit, pp 50-52.

6 Fisher, Richard D., China's Military Modernisation: Building for Regional and Global Reach (Stanford,CA: Stanford University Press, 2010) Ppix-x.

many and Britain accused each other of a conspicuous lack of transparency. From ambiguous evidence about the construction and accumulation of capital ships guns, engines and armour [and even some building starts before *Reichstag* authorisation] the British thought there might be a secret shadow building programme intended to provide the basis of a sudden, rapid acceleration to reach Tirpitz's ambitions for 1920. (They were right about the evidence, but wrong about what it demonstrated.[7])

- Political tension naval armament is seen as a sign of a particularly high level of political tension between the protagonists in which the use of lethal force cannot be ruled out as a policy option. Thus the naval relationship of the US and the UK in the 1920s and 1930s would be seen as a naval competition not an arms race, because military conflict between the two was inconceivable except as a convenient force structure planning device. Instead there are what Colin Gray calls merely 'intimations of danger.'[8] This was quite unlike the period before 1914, when major war was generally thought likely sooner or later.

- Specificity in Operational Focus There is a specific operational focus for the accumulation of naval arms. It is aimed at a particular nation or coalition, rather than the needs of naval defence in general. The German surface fleet of the early part of the 20th century was clearly designed for operations in the North Sea, and so could hardly have been aimed at anyone apart from the British—and maybe the French, their allies, a point of which the British were well aware and to which they responded.

- High stakes The protagonists sense that 'winning' or 'losing' the race could well result in a decisive shift in the nature of the military balance and the consequent power relationship between them. The status quo may in consequence be drastically changed to the disadvantage of the loser rather than simply maintained. This was summed up by the Foreign Secretary Lord Grey:

  If we, alone among the great powers, gave up the competition and sank into a position of inferiority, what good should we do? None whatever. We should cease to count for anything amongst the nations of Europe,

7 German ship-builders seemed merely to be smoothing out their production schedules in order to produce a stable building programme over time. To a limited extent this required them to assume commercial risk in starting programmes before the contracts were finalized.

8 Gray, op cit, p 48.

> and we should be fortunate if our liberty was left, and we did not become the conscript appendage of some stronger power.'[9]

> Moreover, because Britain was a maritime power, its stake in the outcome was disproportionate. Secure sea lines of communication were critical to the strate- gic survival of Britain and its empire. For Germany, as the First World War was to show, naval power was a matter merely of prestige and diplomatic influence and of being better able to protect their commerce, not a matter of life and death, independence and integrity as it was for Britain. As far as the British were concerned, things had to be settled on a basis of British maritime superiority.

- Racing Perceptions. In the period before the war, there was little doubt that Germany and Britain were in an expensive and potentially dangerous arms race. The analogy was often used by the statesmen of the time. In March 1912, Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty bluntly stated Britain's determination to defeat the German challenge and promised to out-build whatever the Germans produced. The expense and potential dangers of this inspired liberals in both countries to try at least to slow the process down. It was also the reason why Churchill and others suggested building 'holidays' in the last three years before the war.

This gets us to the issue of why naval arms racing was and is considered such a bad thing. The basic idea is clear enough. The process may well feed the 'security dilemma' of countries in the region; one country's defensive preparations may make its neighbours feel less secure, so sparking counter-reactions on their part. Domestic imperatives such as the influence over decision-makers of the 'military-industrial complex' can encourage an accumulation of arms in one nation that encourages others to respond in a vicious spiral that leads to ruinous levels of economic expenditure and greatly increased prospects of conflict.[10]

Thus Foreign Secretary Lord Grey March 1909 in the House:

> The great countries of Europe are raising enormous revenues and something like half o them are being spend on naval and military preparations [which are], after all preparations to kill each other. Surely this expendi-

9 Massie, p. 617.

10 Mary Kaldor, the Baroque Arsenal (London: Abdre Deutsch, 1982) pp 219-230.

ture becomes a satire on civilization. If it goes on sooner or later I believe it will submerge civilisation.

Naval modernization or arms racing in the Asia-Pacific Region?

And so, after this rather long introduction, to the heart of the matter. Is there evidence of such a naval arms race developing in the Asia-Pacific region and if so would it matter? Analysis of this point tends to focus on the level of naval competition between China and the United States, but other evidence of competitive naval activity can be found in the Asia-Pacific region (APR) as well. To seek an answer to such questions, the same seven issues and questions need to be considered.

1. Naval Modernisation Internationally Driven?

While around the region, naval policy-makers are clearly reacting, in the main to the international environment as they see it, there are certainly other factors at play, even in the most dramatic example of modernization in the area, the PLA[N].

China, like most countries in the region has strong domestic incentives to build up its defence industries. The aviation and ship-building sectors are leading the innovation surge. [11] Since its inauguration in 1982, for example, the China Shipbuilding Trading Company (CSTC) with its 27 shipyards, 66 manufacturing plants and 37 R&D institutes, has become the sole means by which China supplied more than a dozen kinds of naval platforms and auxiliaries including conventional submarines and missile frigates and destroyers. But this is but a small part of a much larger export portfolio of civil projects including bulk and crude carriers, large LPG carriers and VLCCs, as well as bridges and steel for civil construction. Quite apart from the military strategic benefits of developing a home-grown capacity to design and build ships weapons and sensors, the CSTC's activities foster industrial expertise and socio-economic development across the country.[12] CSTC have opened offices in 8 countries and exported to 52; their continued economic success, accordingly, depends on the overall prosperity and stability of the international system.

11 Tai Ming Cheung, The Chinese Defense Economy's Long March from Imitation to Innovaton, Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 34, No 3, June 2011, p 331.

12 Info from CSTC documentation and web address www.chinaships.com Their e-mail address webmaster@cstc.com.cn.

This is reinforced by a disinclination to have to rely on foreign defence suppliers, whose record is distinctly spotty in terms of quality, cost and reliability. Accordingly there is a substantial emphasis on 'Indigenous Innovation with Chinese Characteristics.' Military Delegates to China's National Congress in 2007 argued: 'if a Country failed to establish and independent and powerful system for military industrial develop and the army did not completely operate under an independent military equipment and logistics service system, then that country's army cannot be regarded as a strong army, and the military power of the country cannot be further enhanced.'[13]

The same kind of urge for defence led technological innovation and independence of strategic decision is equally manifest in India and in parts of Southeast Asia too. Countries like Singapore and Malaysia are anxious to develop the industrial skills associated with ship-building, weapons and sensors and systems integration. Sadly there is also ample evidence in the region of graft, corruption and programmatic incompetence as determining the outcome if not 'driving' particular phases of naval modernization. Indian naval programmes for example are constantly bedevilled by acquisition and dockyard inefficiencies. Other elements of ''Innenpolitik' can be found elsewhere within the region too, especially where there is a significant requirement to protect the ruling elite by showering the military with resources to keep them happy and supportive.

2. Bilateral Rivalry?

There are strong bilateral tendencies at play in the naval modernisation programmes of the Asia Pacific Region; the most obvious adversarial pairings are the two Koreas, China and the US, China and Taiwan, China and Japan, China and Vietnam and India and Pakistan. The naval rivalry between North and South Korea provides the currently most deadly example of the genre, with the sinking of the ROK Corvette *Cheonan* and the bombardment of Yeonpyeong island in 2010. Many of the ROK Navy's acquisitions are clear reactions to the actions and capabilities of the North and seem often to stimulate asymmetric responses from Pyongyang. China's rivalry with Vietnam over the South China Sea has had lethal consequences too, most notably with China's seizure of the Paracel islands in 1974 and the battle of Fiery Cross reef in 1988. Vietnam's response to this has been a reactive defence programme which includes the prospective acquisition of six *Kilo*

13 Chang Hsin, 'China cautiously Allowing Foreign capital Access to Military Industry, Wen Wei Po, aug 2007, WNC 200708141477.1_1f4b02507c03c455.

submarines. For its part, China has much increased its naval position at Sanya on Hainan island and its activity level in the South China Sea area.

But other factors limit the arms-racing potential impact of these two most difficult of bilateral relationships. The ROK Navy, for example has as we shall see later other unrelated global aspirations as evidenced by its participation in the counter-piracy effort in the Gulf of Aden and also keeps a wary eye on its Japanese and Chinese neighbours.

The most obvious, if not the most lethal, naval rivalry in the area, however is clearly that between China and the United States which is part of the much wider suspicions that each have of each other's future role in the region and, indeed, globally.[14] In addition to its extreme sensitivity about US policy towards, and potential arming of, Taiwan China's attitude towards what it regards as its near seas, in terms both of the ocean areas it claims, and what it regards as permissible activity by other navies within those areas has been a cause of sporadic flaring of tension between the two navies, most obviously with the incidents surrounding the harassing of the *USNS Impeccable* in 2009.

Hedging' tendencies (the inclination to take precautions against another state just in case the employment of force turns out to be necessary) are strongly characteristic of many navies in the region. We may take India as an example. The naval situation between China and India is complicated by the parallel difficulties that India has with Pakistan. Thus defence Minister Antony,

> The increasing nexus between China and Pakistan in the military sphere remains an area of serious concern. We have to carry out continuous appraisals of Chinese military capabilities and shape our responses accordingly. ...(w)e need to be vigilant at all times'[15]

These historic antipathies not infrequently manifest themselves in the maritime domain. India's launch of its first SSN in July 2009 for example was bitterly criticised by the Pakistan Foreign Ministry as 'detrimental to regional peace'; the Ministry promised 'appropriate steps' to maintain a 'strategic balance.' A spokesman

14 Michael S. Chase, 'Chinese Suspicion and US Intentions' Survival Vol 53 no 3, June-July 2011, pp 133-150.

15 'Growing Sino-Pakistani defence ties alarms India' Jane's Defence Weekly, 8 Dec 2009.

for the Pakistan Navy remarked that 'It is a matter of serious concern not only for Pakistan but also for all littoral states in the Indian ocean and beyond. All littoral states, including Pakistan, have to take necessary safeguards in the wake of new induction in its navy by India.'[16] The following month saw Admiral Sureesh complaining about alleged modifications to the Pakistan Navy's Harpoon missiles that would make them capable of hitting land targets in India. These maritime frictions demonstrate that mutual trust between the two countries remains in short supply, further complicating the naval balance between India and China.[17]

In general, there is a noticeable tendency for the navies of Japan, India and the United States to benchmark their policies against China and for China, most obviously, to do so against the United States—although all of these navies have other distractions as well, Pakistan in the case of India, Iran and North Korea in the case of the United States, North [and to a certain extent, South] Korea and Russia, for Japan, and Taiwan and the South China Sea for China. These pre-occupations especially manifest themselves in both their declaratory thinking and in their fleet construction programmes, being especially observable in the attention paid to their nuclear and conventional deterrent postures, their understanding of the nature and requirements of sea control (with a special focus on ASW and fleet air defence). Such approaches sometimes also surface in their actual, rather than their declaratory, willingness to compromise on operating procedures and jurisdictional propriety in the common pursuit of maritime security against low-level threats like pirates and drugs smugglers too.

From Beijing's perspectives, a particularly worrying aspect of all this [and hence a great incentive to develop its naval forces] is the extent to which this hedging process seems to end with China being the common denominator in all this. Having to deal with this 'the rest versus China' prospect presents the country's leaders with a major strategic dilemma, given its oft-repeated renunciation of any hegemonic aspirations. Should it arm aginst such a contingency—or should it desist on the grounds that such a response would only encourage the 'China threat theory'?

These wider and sometimes cross-cutting relationships mean that the situation is not cleanly bilateral. For instance, neither China nor India see each other as their

16 Pakistan hits out a 'detrimental' Indian nuclear sub, AFP (Islamabad) 28 July 2008.

17 Indian navy chief slams Pakistan missile 'proliferation' AFP (New Delhi) 31 Aug 2009. For a recent review of the background, see Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, India Versus Pakistan: From partition to the Present, RUSI Journal, August 2009, pp 60-65.

primary antagonist but do not that they are allied to the countries that are the US and Pakistan respectively. India is mainly worried about the notional threat on the border and what it calls China's developing Chinese presence in the IO, especially with what India calls its 'string of pearls' concept. The principal players in 1914 had such secondary concerns as well, or course and they led to a system to an essentially bilateral situation of one alliance against another. The suspicion must arise that the more todays' secondary cross-cutting influences make the 'China versus the Rest' a reality, the more 1914 (Europe's past) come to be Asia's future.

3. Abnormally Intense?

The intensity of the naval competition in the region can be measured in a number of ways. The most obvious perhaps is the extent to which national budgets are devoted to naval development. Here the situation is generally much more encouraging, since defence expenditure levels as a proportion of GNP remains very low by the standards of the 20th Century, and in many cases is actually falling rather than rising.

This is offset to some degree of course by the increase in the size of the national budget made possible by economic growth. In this regard the Chinese example is often used as a worrying trend, particularly as its results tend to set the standard by which other countries define their needs. According to the latest Japanese Defence White Paper Chinese defence expenditure is doubling every 5 years and as a result has now become the world's second biggest defence spender. China repeatedly explains this away by its undeniable need to modernize, to improve the position of its service personnel and to meet rising commodity process.

Concern is increased substantially by the Chinese budget's perceived lack of transparency, a critical characteristic of the Anglo-German position before the First World War. Dire references are made to Sun Tsu: 'the pinnacle of military employment approaches the formless if I determine the enemy's disposition while I have no perceptible form, I can concentrate my forces while the enemy is fragmented.' Analysts have pointed out that the 2010 Chinese Defence White Paper for example made no mention of the DF-21D, the J20 or the prospective launch of the country's first aircraft carrier and so provided a distinctly inadequate guide even to China's short term naval intentions. It cannot, moreover, be said that this is a unique example of the opaqueness of Asian defence decision-making which appears in strong contrast to the almost embarassing candor of the American system.

With this we approach a second source of measurement of the intensity of the competition- the nature of what is being produced, and perhaps the manner in which it is being used. Battleships had little function other than to deal with other battleships, preferably by blowing them out of the water or threatening to do so. Much of the effort in the Asia-Pacific effort, and certainly a high proportion of the money expended on naval development centres on the acquisition of equivalent high-intensity capabilities, such as ballistic missile defence, nuclear deterrence systems, sophisticated submarines and ASW capabilities, long range missile capabilities, 'electromagnetic dominance and informationisation' (to use Chinese terminology) and so forth. [More ?] A third measure might well be how such capabilities are actually being used. One obvious indication is the relative lethality of their use. With such episodes as the forcible Chinese seizure of various features in the South China Sea, the extent to which fishermen both here and elsewhere are subjected to physical force and the sinking of the ROKS *Cheonan* this if anything is actually significantly worse than the situation that prevailed in Europe before the First World War.

4: High levels of political tension?

Here the position seems very mixed. On the one hand, it is frequently pointed out that levels of trade dependency are very high in the region. The prosperity of all the region's countries rely absolutely on the continued smooth operation of the globalised sea-based trading system in general and on a mutually beneficial trading relationship with China in particular. At the very least this economic inter-dependence seems likely to moderate levels of dispute between competitors in the region. For evidence, the improving relations between Taiwan and the mainland could be pointed to. This proclivity towards the peaceful resolution of its disputes is held to be characteristic of the Asia way and an encouraging indication that the region will not follow the example of early 20th Century Europe.

For naval evidence of this, advocates point to the extent of naval togetherness and functional cooperation in the region, in terms of fraternal exercises and common efforts against common threats such as that of piracy in the Straits of Malacca, and the emphasis given multinational naval cooperation in all their declaratory statements and doctrinal formulations.

On the other hand, it is easy enough to point to exceptions to this general rule if that is what this is taken to be, not least the lethal confronations described earlier.

The three Indo-Pakistan wars, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the Chinese invasions of India and Vietnam, the continued tensions between the two Koreas, and the face-off over the Taiwan straits all suggest that the area is not quite as pacific in nature as its name would suggest. Moreover, the rise of nationalism throughout the region, manifested among other things by 'netizen' fury over such incidents as the collision of a Chinese trawler with a Japanese Coast Guard vessel in the East China Sea, must be a cause for concern.

Nor can high levels of economic inter-dependency be regarded as an automatic guarantee of ultimate peace and tranquility. After all Germany and Britain were each other's biggest trading partners in 1914. Economic imbalances even in very close economic relations can be both a source of tension and of what may be called 'sticky power' for the stronger side as the furore over the Chinese supply [or not] of rare earth minerals has recently demonstrated. For instance, between 2000 and 2009, two-way tradebetween China and India rose from US$ 2.4 billion to nearly US$ 41 billion. But since about 2005, India's trade deficit with China has grown substantially to upward of US$ 20 billion per year, generating a new source of tension between the two countries. These trade patterns have suggested a need to question early scholarly arguments that China and India had particularly complementary economies that showed great prospects for expansion.[18]

5: Operationally Specific

The most obvious and worrying example of a potentially dangerous operational specificity has to be the emerging competition between Chinese concepts of Anti-Access/Area Denial on the one hand and American responses in the shape of the Air-Sea battle on the other. Both concepts only really make sense, and justify their enormous budgets, when pitted against each other—just as did the German and British concepts of battlefleet operation of 1914. The Chinese are said to be developing a plethora of weapons, most famously the DF-31 and other long-range missiles, sophisticated submarines, land-based fighters and the capacity to disrupt the electronic means by which binds the US fleet together in order to deny US free access to their 'near seas.' The American naval reaction has included increased ASW training for Pacific fleet forces, a

18 United Nations, 2004 International Trade Statistics Yearbook and 2009 International Trade Statistics, available at http://comtrade.un.org.; Huang Yasheng, "The Myth of Economic Complementarity in Sino-Indian Relations," Journal of International Affairs 64, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2011): 111-124.

noticeable switching of US submarine forces to the Pacific (including all three Seawolf SSN-21 submarines, three Los Angeles Class SSN-688s to Guam, and two of the Navy's four converted Trident boats to Bangor; most BMD capable Aegis cruisers and destroyers are now deployed in the Pacific and substantial measures are afoot to improve that capability. The decision to switch back from the DDG-1000 Zumwalt class to renewed production of the *Arleigh Burke* DDG class of Aegis destroyers is attributed to the rise of Chinese anti-access capabilities as well. [19] Both the QDR 2010 and the Independent panel's report on it called for the overall posture and capabilities of the US to be enhanced in the Asia-Pacific Region, especially in the maritime sphere.[20]

There are other examples of the same operational specificity as well, not least the line up between the two Koreas, Taiwan and the mainland, and India and Pakistan. Sometimes these specific rivalries can take a symmetrical form – thus the competition in the deployment of long-range precision strike apparently developing between China and the US. Sometimes it is asymmetric thus the Japanese stress on BMD aimed against North Korea [and China ?] or the Vietnamese and Taiwanese bids to develop sea denial capabilities against China, strategies that might be thought to make sense on the assumption that in any such confrontation the bulk of China's strategic focus would still be on the US.

Against this, however, may be set the many other operational preoccupations that the great majority of the navies of the Asia-pacific region also have. The US Navy's *A Cooperative Strategy for the 21st Century* and its focus on expeditionary operations, HADR, and the global maritime partnership and constructive engagement are demanding aspirations that have little to do with China. Both India and Japan exhibit the same characteristics, the first perhaps rather more than the second. The Indian Navy's IONS *demarche* and its avowed sense of responsibility for helping to stabilise the Indian Ocean against regional conflict and irregular threats such as drugs smuggling and piracy provide good examples of this. Elements in India are clearly reluctant for the country to be seen to dominate the region or to get involved with any kind of naval arms race with China or any other external power.[21] Constrained by their constitution,

19 Testimony of Ronald O'Rourke, Congressional Budget Service, before US-China Economic and security review Commission; 'Implications of China's Naval Modernization for the United States' 11 June 2009. The DDG-1000 was primarily seen as a land-attack ship, the Arleigh Burkes as a cheaper, much more versatile and upgradable platform with considerable Air Defence utility.

20 The Independent Panel's report of 2010 report is accessible at http://www.usip.org/files/qdr/qdrreport.pdf. See Pp xiii, 58-60, 66.

21 Joshy M. Paul, Cooperative Security in the Indian Ocean Region, RSIS Commentary 55/27 May 2010.

experience and circumstances, the Japanese have been somewhat more circumspect, but they did organise the Pacific Coastguard Forum, are supporting *Operation Enduring Freedom*, the PSI and have been both active and sensitive in helping secure shipping safety in the Straits of Malacca. Encouraged by the success of their 'smiling diplomacy,' even the Chinese have shown a greater willingness to participate in cooperative measures of maritime security, but markedly less so than the other three. Chinese suspicion of multilateralism, especially when it involves the Americans, runs deep. Nonethless, the Chinese have recently developed the notion of the 'harmonious ocean' and argue it to be one of the guides of their acquisition policies.

The expansion of the PLA[N] also needs to be seen against a much broader aspirational context in which all aspects of maritime power are being developed in a manner which suggests that China's leaders believe general maritime development is critical for the country's future for economic and other reasons quite separate from its putative strategic rivalry with the United States. This explains the stress given maritime development in its recent 5 Year Plans, the attention given to the build up of its non-military agencies of maritime security, the support of all its maritime industries aspects, especially those devoted to the exploitation of marine energy resources[22] and the country's remarkable interests in the Arctic. Concern for the threat posed by the United States, and other countries in the Asia-Pacific Region is therefore far from being Beijing's sole preoccupation. If it was we could expect much more focus on outmatching the US Navy and rather less on its general maritime development.

The acquisition programmes of other countries in the Asia-Pacific region are similarly broad. Indeed the recent pattern of naval acquisitions can be read as an attempt to develop a portfolio of general all-round naval capabilities rather than a set narrowly aimed at another state. The bid for the ROK Navy to develop capabilities tailored to meet its global interests, rather than simply focusing on the threat from the north can be seen as particularly interesting example of this.

6: High Stakes

Two considerations make the stakes seem potentially very high and thus supportive of the conclusion that the current level of naval modernization does indeed approximate a naval arms race. This first has to be the intensely maritime nature of the Asia-Pacific Region and of the US approach to the area. This makes the naval rivalry between the two countries seem particularly intense, for rather the same

22 China "water dragon" to explore deepest seas' Daily Telegraph, 16 July 2011.

set of reasons that determined the British to secure their crucial maritime interests if necessary by winning their competition against the Germans. To a lesser extent the same consideration has the equivalent effect for all the other countries of the region.

Secondly, current developments are often seen as evidence of a totally transformational moment in a strategic competition between the US and China about their relative power in the new security architecture of the 21st Century. In such a case, it is perhaps hard to conceive of their being higher stakes for countries to play for. Accordingly, there is much discussion of the new vulnerability of the United States as a wolrd leader at a time of financial crisis, economic weakness, and growing dependence on a more assertive China. As a report delivered to Fourth Plenary Session of the 17th CCP Congress stated in 2009; 'the competition among major powers for a position of overall, comprehensive strength is becoming an important feature of changes in the global situation.'[23] This can be seen either as a competition for strategic dominace at either the global or 'merely' the regional level, or given the fact that there is not likely to be much difference between the two, of both. Hence the enormous literature which anxiously seeks to explore the extent and the implications of the narrowing gap between deployable levels of American and Chinese power, and the nature of their future trajectory.

Although, the Chinese have repeatedly said they have no intention of challenging the global position of the US Navy, sceptics point to evidence that leads them to suppose the Chinese do seek to challenge US primacy in waters they regard they regard as of particular interest to them, namely the South and East China seas, or the area within what is often called the first island chain. This challenge takes the form of the apparent area denial/anti-access strategies discussed earlier and a determined 'lawfare' campaign to challenge both politically and legally the US Navy's freedom of navigation in what Beijing regards as its waters. The requirement to bolster military responses with political and legal ones was the burden of the celebrated book by Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui that first appeared in 1999, *Unrestricted Warfare*.[24] The authors argue that non-military forms of competition are less risky and more productive than military ones, but should be regarded as a supplement not an alternative to them. For its part the United States regards this as a critical challenge because of the cen-

23 Wei Zhong and Fu Yu, 'China's foreign Strategy: Constantly Deeeninga nd brioadening' Contemporary Internationbal relationsBeijing 20 (2) march/April 20110, pp 80-1.

24 Colonel Qiao Liang and Colonel Wang Xiangsui, Unrestricted Warfare (???: Natraj Publishers, 2007).

trality of the freedom to manoueuvre of its fleet to its strategic posture of forward presence and the maintenance of its alliance relationships in the area.

Hence American (and some allied) concern that current margins of superiority are likely to be reduced in the future by declining naval appropriations in the United States over the next few years. The Navy currently has some 280 ships and submarines; as many commentators have pointed out this is the smallest 'battleforce' since 1916. The Navy's current target is a 313 strong battleforce, approximately to meet the future operational requirements of a two medium wars against regional adversaries plus permanent presence levels of readiness recommended by the Bottom-up Review of 1993 and the QDRs of 1997 and 2001. Estimates of the numbers of ships needed for this target have varied between 300 and 346.[25] The Independent Panel on the QDR of 2010 indeed recommended that 346 should once more become the target. This advice was rejected by Secretary Gates in August 2010, who argued that the target should remain 313-323 ships, and that any greater number was at once unnecessary and unaffordable within the constraints of his future spending plans.[26] The United States's current economic travails seem likely to reinforce this point, and for many observers, not all of which are in the US Navy this is profoundly worrying.

On the other hand, there are powerful arguments against such a pessimistic reading of naval developments in both countries, and indeed around the region generally. The stakes may in fact be nothing like neither as as high or the outcome so momentous as they appear at first glance. China's maritime rise may not necessarily mean America's demise and that this was supported by most Chinese leaders too. The 'competition' between the two may not need to be seen as a zero-sum game. Thus the view of the Obama administration that while the US will need to remain strong in Asia, it accepts that 'a successful China can make our country more prosperous not less.'[27] Accordingly, the argument goes, the rise of China as an emerging Superpower need not be seen as conforming to the general historic pattern of being associated with conflict with the existing great power(s) of the time.[28] Said Robert Gates in June 2011:

25 Robert O. Work The US Navy: Charting a Course for Tomorrow's Fleet (Washington: CSBA, 2008) p 14.

26 The Independent Panel's report of 2010 report is accessible at http://www.usip.org/files/qdr/qdrreport.pdf. See Secretary Gates, letter of 11 August 2010 to the Honorable Ike Skelton, Chairman House Armed Services Committee. 'Gates seeks Pentagon Overhaul' Defense News, 8 May 2010.

27 'Biden says China rise not America's demise' AFP Washingtojn, 8 Sep 2011.

28 Michael S. Chase, 'Chinese Suspicion and US Intentions' Survival, June-July 2011.

'We are not trying to hold China down. China has been a Great power for thousands of years. It is a global power and will be a global power.'[29]

Some in China, while accepting that there are elements of confrontation in their relationship with the U.S., nonetheless believe the cooperative tendency to be much stronger. As Rear-Admiral Yang Yi has argued:

> China is different from the Soviet Union, and China's strategic path and (the) means it adopts are not as overbearing as those of the Soviet union. Moreoever, the overall international strategic background is now different from the Cold war era.[30]

Their case is strengthened by reference to the growing economic inter-dependence of the two countries and the harm to both that would result from excessive levels of competition. There are also indications that the likely new leader in China, Xi Jinping, is a moderniser who will accordingly put much priority into improving relations with the US.[31]

China's military policy is represented by the Chinese as conforming to the general approach of a non-confrontational strengthening of the country's defences. Echoing the sentiments in the 2010 Defence White Paper, General Zhang Qinsheng, Deputy Chief of the General Staff told the RUSI in May 2011: 'China does not pursue hegemony. We will not do it even when we grow stronger. This is not only the basic state policy, but also a solemn commitment to the people of the world'[32] This non-confrontational approach is reflected in declaratory statements by the Chinese military too: "I can tell you,' said General Chen Bingde, Chief of the General staff, China does not have the capability to challenge the United States.[33]

29 Gates denies US wants to 'hold China down.' AFP Singapore 2 June 2011.

30 Cited in Michael S. Chase, 'Chinese Suspicion and US Intentions' Survival, June-July 2011, p 145.

31 'China's Military Preps for a New Leader' Defense News, 25 Oct 2010.

32 'China military build-up no threat: senior army official' AFP London, 1 June 2011. See also General Liang Guanglie, Minister of National Defense China at the 10th IISS Asian Security Summit, 5 June 2011.

33 'China will not challenge US militarily' Sraits Times, 20 May 2011; 'General says US Inflates China Threat' Wall Street Journal, 20 May 2011.

There is little talk, even amongst the strongest advocates of the Chinese navy, of its achieving dominance over the US Navy. Thus when discussing the Chinese carrier programme, the State Oceanic Administration in its report for 2010 stated: 'Building China as a maritime power is the mission of China in the whole 21st Century, and 2010 to 2020 is the critical period for accomplishing this strategic mission, *with the goal to place China among mid-tier maritime powers*.' [34] General Luo Yuan, senior researcher with the academy of Military Sciences reinforced the point in July 2011. The aim of the exercise was to match the developing efforts of India and Japan, not the United States. Both countries would have three carriers by 2014, and so should China, 'so we can defend our rights and our maritime interests effectively.[35]

7: Perceptions of Racing

In 1912-1914, as we have seen, there was a strong sense that the Continent was engaged in an arms race at sea and this was why Churchill and others pushed so hard for naval holidays and construction stretches.[36] These came to nothing as the protagonists could not agree what their legitimate naval needs were, and the same was true of the naval arms control negations of the 1980s between the United States and the Soviet Union. Whether or not countries are exceeding their legitimate defence needs and engaging in arms race behaviour is notoriously subjective, Diplomats in the area do not in general appear to be ready to state in public that a naval arms race is underway, even if they do think some countries are exceeding their legitimate aspirations, in striking contrast to the situation at the beginning of the 20th Century. The most that seems to be said are caveatted observations like that of Bob Gates, in June 2011, just before his retirement:

> I think the Chinese have learned a powerful lesson from the Soviet experience and they do not intend to compete with us across the full range of military capabilities. But I think they are intending to build capabilities to give them considerable freedom of action in Asia and an opportunity to extend their influence.[37]

34 Quoted in 'China reveals aircraft carrier ambitions' Jane's Defence Review, 5 Jan 2011.

35 Quoted in 'China needs at least three aircraft carriers: general' AFP 30 July 2011.

36 Maurer, op cit.

37 'Gates denies US wants to 'hold China down' AFP Singapore 2 June 2011.

Such careful and relatively limited formulations do not currently seem likely to approximate the rhetoric and indeed the level of concerns common in Europe in the period before the first World War. But it does perhaps suggest a need to make positive efforts through various programmes of naval togetherness to keep things that way.

Conclusions

The verdict on the extent to which naval modernization in the Asia-Pacific approximates to a naval arms race, then, seems very mixed. There is some evidence pointing this way, but a great deal that does not, certainly at the moment. This may be a consequence of the sheer difficulty of analysing the concept of a naval arms race in the first place, a difficulty which leads some experts such as Colin Grey to dismiss its analytical utility in the first place.

To end this preliminary survey on another perhaps mischievous note, there is a legitimate argument that even if it were concluded that such an arms race was either taking place or in prospect, that its consequences would necessarily be as bad as its critics assert. After all, although the naval preparations of Germany and Britain did certainly cost a great deal of money that could profitably have been spent on other things (social welfare, submarines or the army according to taste) and at times poisoned the international atmosphere, they had precious little to do with the outbreak of war in 1914, which was far more to do with the foreign policies of the powers, the limitations of contemporary diplomatic procedure and the constraining effect of army deployment plans. Sir Edward Goschen and many others were convinced that the 'Contingent 4' capital ships of 1909 were good for Sustained Anglo-German relations. It showed that liberal Britain had not become effete and soft; it deserved respect and provided incentive for friendship. Moreover there is something to be said for the notion that in the 1930s the reluctance of Britain, France and the United States to respond to the military preparations of Japan and Germany and their preference instead for a strategy of relying on Bernard Brodie's description of Washington treaties 'faith, hope and parity[38] was much more to blame for precipitating war in 1939 than was the Anglo-German naval arms of 1914.

38 Cited, Gray, op cit p 56.

The Reactions of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force to Evolving PLA Navy Capabilities and Operations

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Summary

Japan is developing its own modern amphibious ships and an aircraft carrier force of its own, plus other changes to JMSDF force levels and capabilities, but these developments need to be understood in their broader context. Overall, Japanese naval developments are closely tied to the U.S. Navy and the alliance with the United States. Clearly, Tokyo and the JMSDF are increasingly concerned with Chinese military developments and PLAN deployments and operations. Japan's national security strategy shifted in late 2010 from "Static Defense" to "Dynamic Defense". This has ramifications for Japanese military capabilities, if not for force levels, even though Japan's defense budget is not expected to increase, and will hover around 1% of GDP. However, there is a longer cycle to Japanese naval developments as. Additionally, there are important drivers and wild cards that must be considered.

1. The character of Japan's Self-Defense Forces

For the time being, the Self-Defense Forces can be described by four mutually dependent characteristics, and by one independent characteristic. These are defining political characteristics that emerge directly from Japan's national security strategy. They have rational and explicit technical and operational implications for Japan's national defense strategy, military posture, JSDF force levels, and operational capabilities.

The JSDF as a Constitutional Force

First, the Self-Defense Forces are the military Japan wants, whatever the objective requirement might be. It is not a rhetorical flourish that Japan's constitution re-

nounces war as a sovereign right. The JSDF is organized and equipped based upon a strategy of defensive defense, enshrined in both national and alliance policies. As such, the JSDF will remain politically and operationally constrained, small, and relatively less capable than might be the case otherwise.

The JSDF as a Cadre Force

While national demographics and Japan's and the alliance's defense economies impose certain limitations, nevertheless the JSDF is essentially a cadre force, inherently built for expansion in terms of both capability and force structure. In this regard, Japanese policy has been two-fold: to procure representative military capabilities and technologies—such as token aerial refueling and 767 AWACS aircraft—without building out the force to a logical, or even economical size; and to establish the legislative authority for operational and doctrinal expansion without necessarily exercising the right to do so. With regard to the latter, an unheralded accomplishment of the former Japan Defense Agency was the panoply of enabling legislation—some temporary and some permanent—written and enacted over the last 15 years.

The JSDF as a Garrison Force

In accordance with the national preference for strictly territorial defense, until now the Self-Defense Forces have been largely a garrison force. Obviously the JMSDF is somewhat of an exception to this, but even the JMSDF has a large part of its force structure invested in its regional flotillas designed for relatively close defense of Japan's maritime approaches. Certainly the JGSDF has been almost exclusively a garrison force, and divisions and regiments have become closely identified with their fixed bases. Likewise, the JASDF role is almost exclusively territorial air defense.

A general exception to this rule has been the limited extent to which the JSDF has deployed on peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance or disaster relief operations, but that role has been constrained consciously by both policy and budget.

The JSDF as an Alliance Force

Because of the profound influence of the alliance with the United States, the role of the JSDF has been defined—not only figuratively but literally—as a junior partner. In very practical terms of roles and missions, this has been both the cause and effect of severe doctrinal and experiential limitations upon the JSDF, as well as the implications for strategy, technology, and force structure. This has important limiting ramifications for JSDF capabilities, extending from its basic force structure design to how commanders are prepared to use the equipment they have.

The JSDF as a Transition Force

The foregoing four characteristics of the JSDF have been relatively constant for its entire history. Now, however, Japan is facing another round of domestic and alliance demands to "do more", currently construed as a response to what are seen as worsening Chinese provocations. Present circumstances have put pressure on these traditional characteristics. Japan's political mood with regard to national security —always complex—appears to be changing based on concerns regarding China.

While constitutional revision does not appear to be a realistic probability, nevertheless Japan's basic defense capabilities appear to be improving as a practical matter if not necessarily at the level of strategy and doctrine, with the concomitant potential for relatively rapid changes in force posture, if not levels. The NDPG has set the stage for transitioning from a garrison force to one based upon operational mobility. Alliance requirements are changing, with an emphasis on Japanese infrastructure and operational assistance for American forces, and an emerging JSDF role as a facilitator of U.S. forward presence is more than a remote possibility.

These fundamental interdependent JSDF characteristics are dependent upon a complex mix of domestic political and strategic military factors, against a variety of alternative futures. Whether they will change sufficiently to cast the JSDF in a new role as a transition force remains to be seen, but in the meantime relevant political, strategic, and military developments can be tracked, cataloged, and assessed on an ongoing basis.

2. The character of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force

It is the nature of things Japanese that the Maritime Self-Defense Force has been embarked on a force modernization and expansion program for the last 25 years and no one has noticed. While force levels are lower, force structure and capabilities currently and soon to be part of the Self-Defense Fleet reflect a remarkably consistent acquisition program of a force determined to modernize.

The interservice spirit of cooperation and good feeling between the JMSDF and the U.S. Navy over the last 65 years runs deep. The two Sea Services are known for their exceptionally good working relationship with the U.S. Navy, due largely to two factors: the way by which the U.S. Navy midwifed the birth of the successor to the Imperial Japanese Navy, and their extensive operational coordination against the Soviet Navy during the Cold War.

Therefore it is all the more remarkable that the two major gaps in JMSDF capabilities – nuclear powered submarines and heavy aircraft carriers—are due to the U.S. Navy's reluctance to endorse those JMSDF developments. Nevertheless, JMSDF ships are first rate, in many cases built around American sensors and weapon systems. Until now, the Fleet Escort Force had been divided into blue water and regional flotillas, with the latter somewhat less capable, and operationally less relevant to regional security. That organizational dichotomy is now being redressed, and the outcome should increase JMSDF combat power.

The JMSDF stands out because the Self-Defense Fleet has been integrated into real world operations to a far greater degree than the JGSDF or JASDF. For instance, as a fulcrum of planning and operational competence, JMSDF's longstanding coalition replenishment operations in the Indian Ocean have compensated for the fall off of antisubmarine operations that were the focus of alliance naval operations during the Cold War. The new Japanese maritime air patrol facility just established in Djibouti is another example of sustained operational commitment.

This is significant for any assessment of Japanese security because the JMSDF offers the clearest example of the Government of Japan's force-in-being strategy: significantly capable, operationally experienced, but carefully restrained by consistent civilian judgments from any but a posture of clearly defensive defense. The obvious corollary is the alternative JMSDF potential for strategic and operational normalization.

Nevertheless, the transparency of JMSDF planning is notable. In national level strategic documents such as the annual Defense of Japan White Papers, the recurring National Defense Program Guidelines, and the five year Mid-Term Defense Programs, JMSDF force structure and force posture are outlined clearly, and represent more than enough detail for informed judgments. While the same can be said of the coverage of the JGSDF and the JASDF, it is at sea where Japan's security interests largely will play out with regional competitors.

From the Defense of Japan 2012 White Paper:

> The principal aims of the Maritime Self-Defense Force include defense of the seas surrounding Japan, ensuring the security of sea lanes, and international peace cooperation activities through regularly conducting such operations as ISR, and anti-submarine operations.
>
> 1) The **Destroyer** unit has up to now consisted of the mobile operations units (32 ships), which respond swiftly in various situations and in international peace cooperation activities, and the regional district units (3 ships in 5 guard zones, 15 ships in all), which conduct warning and defense in coastal waters.
>
> However, in light of growing pressure on the operations of the Mobile Operations Squadron due to the expansion of international peace cooperation activities and other developments, the Area Deployment Unit is reworking its structure to enable it to function efficiently beyond guard zones, and is now operating in warning and surveillance in the southwestern area and in international peace cooperation activities.
>
> As a result, the Escort Ship Squadron is restructuring its forces and now maintains
>
> - the four-unit Escort Group (32 ships) whose basic unit is escort groups consisting of eight escort ships and
> - the new four-unit Escort Corps (16 ships) whose basic unit is escort corps consisting of four escort ships. The Self-Defense Fleet now comprises 48 escort ships in all.

2) The **Submarine** units continue to deploy submarines in key sea traffic points in the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan. The unit's 22 vessels also conduct continuous ISR over a wide area in the waters surrounding Japan including the southwestern area, ensure the superiority of information, and swiftly detect indications of security dangers, while taking into account the geographical relationship between strategic sea areas and military bases.

3) The **Patrol aircraft** units continue to maintain a nine-unit aviation corps consisting of four-unit fixed-wing patrol aircraft units and a five-unit patrol helicopter units. The squadron's capabilities are aimed at conducting ISR over a broad area in the seas surrounding Japan and to be effective in patrolling these seas and in ensuring the security of sealanes.

4) The **Minesweeping** units continue to maintain one-unit mine-sweeping group aimed at performing effectively in minesweeping operations in the seas surrounding Japan in order to ensure the safety of the lives of citizens who rely on marine transportation.

The nascent JMSDF aircraft carrier program

In the meantime, the progression of increasingly capable JMSDF air-capable ships is notable, U.S. Navy concerns over JMSDF development of this capability having been allayed some time ago. This program is part of a very long term strategy to field increasingly capable air-capable ships as flagships for JMSDF flotillas.

Each successive carrier class has been heavier and more capable than its predecessor, although no capacity for handling fixed wing aircraft or intentions to do so have been mentioned publicly. In this regard, so far the F-X fighter replacement program is designed to fulfill JASDF requirements with the F-35 A model, but the F-35 SVTOL B model probably could embark in the next JMSDF light carrier if the decision was made to go ahead. Given fading U.S. Navy objections, and increasingly problematic PLA Navy operations in the vicinity of Japanese territory and within Japan's EEZ, the JMSDF might be operating fighters at sea in the foreseeable future.

Specifics:

Osumi class

Given its lack of a bow ramp, full flight deck, starboard superstructure, stern gate and well deck, the *Osumi* landing ship tank (LST) (3 of this class built and in service) is closer in general layout to an Landing Helicopter Assault ship (LHA) or Landing helicopter dock ship (LHD), although at 14,000 tons full load displacement and approximately 585 feet overall, it is much smaller than either of these U.S. navy classes. It serves well, however, as an introductory flat deck ship, and plays a part in the JMSDF humanitarian assistance and disaster relief role.

Hyuga class

The follow-on *Hyuga* class helicopter destroyer deserves its description as as the first Japanese aircraft carrier built since World War II. Considerably larger than the Osumi class at 650 LOA and displacing approximately 20,000 tons full load, Hyuga is indicative of the JMSDF emphasis on rapid evolution of its air-capable flat deck designs. Hyuga's mission is antisubmarine warfare, with a secondary mission of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. 2 of this class have been built and are in service.

"Improved" *Hyuga*

Technically *Hyuga*-class ships, the follow-on 22DDH-class ASW ships are much larger: 815' LOA and displacing 30,000 tons full load. One of these ships is being built at the present, and another is planned.

Submarines

Submarines are the JMSDF centerpiece of the new National Defense Program Guidelines, with an increase in force levels of 6, for a total of 22 in the inventory. In acquisition terms, this is not even a stretch goal, as Japan's shipbuilding industry routinely produces one new boat a year, and the older units are retired early, on a one-for-one swap. Simply delaying the decommissioning of current submarine will facilitate the planned expansion in just a few years. Notably, the funds for these additional boats will come at the expense of JGSDF armor and artillery.

The new *Soryu* class—an improved *Oyashio*-class (with dropped-in AIP, 4200 tons submerged, 6,200 nm range, 6 tubes, torpedoes and Harpoon)—is a long-range boat, unlike many European exports essentially built for coastal defense. This class's combination of range, stealth, and weapons capacity is a significant development.

3. Japan's new national strategy

Japan announced its new national security strategy in December 2010, partly in response to the emerging question of the rise of China and the associated issue of "Whither Japan". This has caused Tokyo to reconsider its strategy and to revise it's long-standing static defense approach to national security and replace it with a dynamic defense strategy emphasizing offshore and Island and territorial defense to the Southwest. Another result of China's militarization is that if there were any question of the durability of the US-Japan alliance the fact is that China's rise is forcing the U.S. and Japan together.

Over time alliance relations have waxed and waned since the end of the Cold War, but there is a clear consensus now that neither party as an alternative to enhanced defense relations and building up albeit in a time of severe physical constraints additional capabilities designed to hedge against Chinese actions.

Specifically, the National Defense Program Guidelines of December 2010 advertised a doctrine of:

- Dynamic Defense (as opposed to the long-standing defense in depth of Japanese territory);
- A shift in operational orientation to the southwest, emphasizing offshore, island, and territorial defense;
- De-emphasis of JGSDF armor (and, as mentioned earlier, the budgetary beneficiary being the JMSDF
- Island defense, and the significant but relatively understated development of ground self-defense force amphibious warfare capabilities (ostensibly with the and JMSDF development of its own significant amphibious warfare sport force).

Understated in the national Defense program guidelines are:

- The emergence of Japan's operational area of responsibility: the TGT Triangle (Tokyo—Guam—Taiwan); [This construct does not overlap with the increasing U.S. emphasis on the South China Sea];
- The JMSDF operational emphasis on the Yellow Sea/East China Sea [This construct does not overlap with the increasing U.S. emphasis on the South China Sea];
- A continuing operational dichotomy in JSDF doctrines between "Defense in depth" and point defense;
- The deliberate move toward effective Self-Defense Force jointness;
- Continued emphasis upon JSDF operational integration;
- Across-the-board progress toward operational integration with U.S. forces.

4. Resultant significant events-driven "Dynamic Defense" changes to the JMSDF include:

- More submarines;
- More sea-based AEGIS BMD;
- An all-deployable force, with the elimination of regional flotillas; and
- The common, operationally unifying JSDF mission for island defense.

5. Longer-period changes to the JMSDF, over the course of more than 20 years, ":

- An action-forcing emphasis upon ballistic missile defense (and resultantco-operation with USN and JASDF);
- Much better submarines, long ranged and AIP-equipped;
- Ever-larger "aircraft carriers"; and

- A nascent JGSDF amphibious warfare capability that is building slowly but significantly, and which has obvious implications for the JMSDF.

6. The JMSDF is an increasingly international force, although still closely linked to the U.S. Navy

This is not your father's JMSDF. The maritime staff office has engaged in numerous strategic and operational relationships in an intuitively obvious set of interactions, which until a relatively short time ago would have been unthinkable, with:

- Australia
- ROK
- India
- Singapore
- Vietnam

Furthermore, for JMSDF also has instituted a series of interactions with maritime rivals has a distinctly political initiative:

- China
- Russia

However, when all is said and done, the JMSDF has but one real alliance relationship, and that is with the U.S. Navy.

7. There are a number of drivers that are shaping the JMSDF:

- **The U.S. Navy**, first and foremost, is the touchstone for JMSDF technology, equipment, doctrines, and operations. Typically this is seen as a positive factor for the JMSDF. However, given the potential for not only severe budget cutbacks in the United States, but for drastic reductions in the US defense budget, U.S. Navy shortfalls and the resultant reduction in operational commitments also could drive JMSDF futures.

- Increasingly, for JMSDF is committing to the general alliance response to emerging **anti-access and area denial (A2/AD)** challenges, primarily posed by China.

- In this regard, it is **the People's Liberation Army Navy (the PLAN)** against which both the navies are composing themselves.

- The plus-up in JMSDF submarines from 16 to 22 is a dead giveaway of Japanese intentions with regard to **submarine warfare**. This increase could JMSDF defensive operations far forward from Japanese territorial waters and key straits. Conceivably, new boats of the *Soryu* class could make possible offensive submarine operations by the JMSDF.

- **Antisubmarine warfare** is the sine qua non of modern sea control, and the JMSDF continues to emphasize ASW as a key mission area (in fact having done a better job than most navies since the end of Cold War at preserving is perishable skill and capability set).

- In the ballistic missile and cruise missile bombardment environment created by the PLA, **ballistic missile defense** will only increase in importance. The JMSDF's AEGIS destroyers are a key capability in both Japanese national and alliance missile-defense, and missile-defense at sea is a key driver for both alliance and JSDF operational integration.

- Having rationalized its first post-World War II operations, **mine warfare** is an enduring specialized capability of the JMSDF. It is no coincidence that JMSDF minesweepers were deployed to the northern Persian Gulf for mine clearance operations directly after the first Persian Gulf War, chosen by then-chairman of the Joint Staff Council, Admiral Makoto Sakuma because of their operational readiness and good capabilities when he was determined to make available a Japanese military contribution after Operation Desert Storm. Mine warfare will remain and enduring driver for the JMSDF.

- Given the rise of China and the challenge to Japanese territorial integrity, **island defense** is a new driver for the JMSDF. This requirement is the basis for the new emphasis on dynamic defense, and in particular for the development of Ground Self-Defense Force amphibious warfare capabilities.

- Tokyo has committed to prolonged **anti-piracy operations** in the Horn of Africa, in fact having established Japan's first overseas base in Djibouti. For the foreseeable future, this forward-deployed cadre of JMSDF and JGSDF detachments will shape operations, and require budgets and talent to maintain them.

Potential drivers for the JMSDF going forward include the following:

- Alignment with emerging U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy concept of **Air-Sea Battle**, to the extent at these U.S. national capabilities and doctrines are integrated into alliance planning and acquisition;

- The development and proliferation of new on-orbit and air breathing **Broad Area Maritime Surveillance** (BAMS) capabilities in the Asia-Pacific, especially the new navalised Northrop Grumman MQ-4C *Triton* version of the Northrop Grumman *Global Hawk*, explicitly designed to work in tandem with the new Boeing P-8 *Poseidon*;

- **Fixed-wing tactical aircraft** (presumably the F-35B short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) variant of the F-35 aircraft) embarked in JMSDF aircraft carriers, the largest class of which now has reached the size of Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carriers during World War II;

- The potential for the relaxation of Japan's arms export control principles to enable for maturation and growth of Japan's defense industry, first in key technology areas, and eventually across the board.

8. Despite great professionalism and constant progress, a number of deficits will continue to challenge the JMSDF

- Jointness has not achieved a critical mass, despite the powerful forcing actions of island defense, BMD, and fleet air defense.

- Apparently, significant doctrinal limits persist with regard to JMSDF tactical and operational radii of action.

- Strike warfare largely is terra incognito for the JMSDF.

- Cruise missile defense is a challenge for all navies facing the proliferation of precision guided munitions at sea. With PLA anti-ship cruise missiles mounted on aircraft, surface ships, submarines, and land-based launchers, defense against these stealthy, fast, and low-flying targets will stress the JMSDF.

- Doctrines to go with new requirements, especially *joint* acquirements: amphibious warfare, island defense, (potentially tactical aviation), etc., have not yet emerged.

- Naval ship missile magazines are inherently limited, and the lack of a viable at-sea reload capability is a major deficit in both the U.S. and Japanese navies.

- Despite a transient JSDF reliance upon space-based surveillance and communications capabilities, Japan essentially has no national security space infrastructure. The controlling law has just been changed, but the entire national security enterprise of strategies, doctrines, operations, acquisition, and platforms is still to be developed.

- Due to long-standing restrictions, Japan's defense industry is not competitive. This reduces the range of technological and platform alternatives available to the Maritime Self-Defense Force, and drastically drives up equipment prices. It is not yet clear what the effect will be of the relaxation of Japan's arms export control principles, although the new policy is expected to have some positive outcomes.

- The Japan Self-Defense Forces, including the JMSDF, have struggled with implementing effective procedures that would satisfy the United States with regard to the secure handling of classified material. This deficit has had a dampening, even chilling effect upon alliance integration and cooperation.

9. There are a number of significant wild cards facing the JMSDF, the development of which may have profound consequences far beyond naval affairs.

- **China's political transition and stability** is of profound importance in the regional security equation. Economic developments in China may be as important going forward as are China's new leaders and continuing development of the PLA.

- **Constitutional revision**, presumably to remove the prohibitions and constraints contained in article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, is a low probability presently, but neither is it out of the question.

- **Collective self-defense**, perhaps more achievable than constitutional revision, would enable for more tangible operational integration between Japanese and American forces.

- **The American strategic pivot to Asia** will be a key barometer of Japanese military developments. Its success or failure, perceived or real, will be a significant driver for Tokyo.

- **Air-Sea Battle** developments could have a far-reaching effect upon the JMSDF, given the implications of his success as well as the potential for the failure to include allies in its implementation.

- **Budget sequestration** is looming in the United States, its automatic implementation becoming increasingly likely given congressional is inaction.

- **Naval exports** are a surprising possibility with the recent relaxation of Japan's arms export control principles. A key indicator is that the Australian Navy is seriously considering buying *Soryu*-class submarines to replace its *Collins* class boats.

- Chinese policies and military operations as a result of maritime territorial disputes is driving **increasing internationalization** between East

Asian navies. The potential spin-on effects of JMSDF leadership in the region are both considerable and hard to predict.

- **JMSDF relations with the ROK Navy** are hot and cold at same time. Both navies intuitively understand that they must cooperate in order to meet common challenges posed by North Korea and China. However, the history of their bilateral national relationship, exacerbated by acting territorial disputes, not only has precluded any substantial confidence-building cooperation—despite constant prodding by the United States—but has created tension and distrust so far out of reach of resolution.

- **Tactical aircraft at sea** embarked in its aircraft carriers (presumably the VSTOL version of the F-35B *Lightning II*) would change the entire operational profile of the JMSDF.

- Japan's self-defense forces so far have not embraced the myriad capabilities and possibilities presented by **unmanned vehicles**, which have become profoundly important force multipliers in other militaries. This is especially significant considering that JMSDF and sister service force levels are so depressed.

- With the news national security space law, the potential now exists for **rational JSDF space operations and on-orbit capabilities**. This recent development him could have potentially profound consequences for the JMSDF.

- If the result of **the relaxation of Japan's arms export control principles** is the rationalization and increase competitiveness of Japan's defense industry, potential for virtual technology and capability breakout by the self-defense forces is much more significant.

- China is emphasizing the use of its non-naval maritime security forces, its wide variety of white-hulled patrol vessels. This asymmetric Chinese strategy is a challenging development, not least because and pushes to the forefront coast guards of the region has the nearest equivalent force. In essence, the ironic result is that the emphasis upon the **Japan Coast Guard** becomes and opportunity cost for the JMSDF.

- The greatest and perennial wildcard for the JMSDF is **the U.S. Navy**. Traditionally this has meant that the JMSDF had to try to keep up with the

U.S. Navy. However, for the first time since the rise of Admiral Gorshkov's Red Navy, the U.S. Navy is facing a double challenge: at sea by the PLA Navy, and home by declining defense budgets. This inevitably will boost the profile of the JMSDF in the Western Pacific.

Republic of Korea Navy and China's Rise: Balancing Competing Priorities

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Introduction

South Korean concerns for China's evolving maritime interests and capabilities are part of a larger and complicated relationship. The two share a long history with far reaching cultural ties and numerous common interests. Seoul recognizes that it needs Beijing's help and influence in dealing with North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea—DPRK) and their economic ties have grown significantly since establishing formal diplomatic relations twenty years ago. In 1992, South Korea's (Republic of Korea—ROK) trade with China was only $6.4 billion but by 2011 had grown to $220.6 billion with a $47.7 billion surplus for South Korea.[1] Since 2003 China has been South Korea's number one trading partner, a position long held by the United States. For China, these trade levels are smaller as a share of its total trade but for South Korea, China consumes close to 30 percent of its exports. However, South Korea is the 4th largest source of foreign direct investment for China.[2] In May 2012, South Korea and China began negotiations on a free trade agreement. Thus, continued prosperity for the ROK economy, now the 15th largest in the world, depends greatly on its economic ties with China. Some ROK scholars and analysts have raised concern that growing U.S.-Sino rivalry will place South Korea in a difficult position that forces it to choose with the possibility of having to go against ROK interests by siding too closely with Washington. Others maintain that the ROK-U.S. alliance remains the bedrock of South Korea's security, with others arguing that the proper course is to balance these positions by

1 Korea Customs Service, "Import/Export by Country," http://english.customs.go.kr/kcshome/trade/TradeCountryList.do.

2 Li Jiabao, "China, S. Korea launch FTA negotiations," *Jakarta Post*, May 3, 2012, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/05/03/china-s-korea-launch-fta-negotiations.html.

maintaining the alliance while being more attentive to ROK relations with others in East Asia.[3]

Despite the strong economic ties and common interests, South Korea also has some anxiety regarding its relations with China. Some of the concerns include trepidation over China's overall strategic direction, Beijing's efforts to forcibly repatriate North Korea defectors along with its overall human rights record, a historical dispute over the ancient Kingdom of Koguryo (Gaogouli to China),[4] and Beijing's reluctance to criticize Pyongyang for the sinking of the ROKS *Cheonan* (March 2010) and the shelling of Yeonpyeong-do (November 2010). In addition to these matters, there are several maritime issues that are problems in the relationship that impact ROK maritime strategy and naval modernization. The South Korean Navy does not appear to have made any specific operational changes in response to its concerns but its development of a blue water navy continues in part with an eye toward China.

While China is a part of ROK motivation for developing a blue water navy, Seoul has other reasons. South Korean leaders have recognized that as its economic and political power have grown, so too have its interests and need to protect them. As its power and influence as a rising middle power have increased, South Korea has begun to build a blue water navy commensurate with that position. Heavily dependent on international trade, the South Korean Navy helps guard shipping lanes and contribute to global efforts to protect the maritime commons. In addition, ROK leaders are concerned about the continuing maritime threat posed by North Korea as demonstrated by the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong-do events along with the dispute that continues with Japan over Dokdo, or Takeshima to the Japanese.

Thus, South Korea faces a complex security environment that increasingly has important maritime components, a situation that produces many competing priorities from coastal defense against North Korea to regional concerns, and finally to global protection of sea lanes and contributing to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations (HADR). Consequently, concerns for China are only one piece of the ROK Navy's strategy and force planning decisions.

3 Song Sang-ho, "S. Korea faces strategic choices amid growing Sino-U.S. rivalry," *Korea Herald*, July 12, 2012 http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120712001111&cpv=0.

4 Terence Roehrig, "History as a Strategic Weapon: The Korean and Chinese Struggle over Koguryo," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 45, no. 1 (February 2010): 5-28.

The remainder of this paper will address the history and current structure of the ROK blue water navy, ROK-Sino maritime disputes, and recommendations to address future challenges.

Building the Blue Water Navy

The ROKN website is emblazoned with the banner "To the Sea, To the World," an apt indicator of the intention to build a blue-water navy. That path began in 1995 when Admiral An Byoung-Tae, then Chief of Naval Operations lobbied President Kim Young-sam to begin construction of an ocean-going navy. In its early years, the ROK Navy was a small fleet consisting mostly of coastal patrol craft. In the 1970s and 80s, the ROK fleet grew in size and capability through the acquisition of U.S. Navy destroyers and the construction of more modern patrol boats. However, the fleet remained focused on coastal defense.[5] President Kim agreed with Admiral An's proposal, and in the late 1990s, the Navy began its first steps toward building a blue water fleet.[6] In a 2001 speech before the graduates of the Korean Naval Academy, President Kim Dae-jung declared his backing for the decision stating that South Korea would pursue a "strategic mobile fleet that protects state interests in the five big oceans and plays a role of keeping peace in the world."[7] Thus, according to President Kim, "The government will do all it can to help the navy grow into a true blue-water force."[8]

In 2005, the Ministry of National Defense released Defense Reform 2020, a fifteen year military modernization program that called for increasing the size of the Navy from 67,000 personnel to 70,000 and continued the move toward a blue water navy. Later, President Lee Myung-bak expressed his support and stressed the importance of maritime power to the country.

5 Yoji Koda, "The Emerging Republic of Korea Navy: A Japanese Perspective," *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 13-26, and Michael McDevitt, "The Maritime Relationship," in Scott Snyder (ed.), *The US-South Korea Alliance: Meeting New Security Challenges* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2012): 22-26.

6 Mingi Hyun, "South Korea's Blue-water Ambitions," *The Diplomat*, November 18, 2010 http://thediplomat.com/2010/11/18/south-koreas-blue-water-ambitions/.

7 "ROK Navy," *Global Security.org,* http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/rok/navy.htm.

8 "South Korea: Joining Asia's Naval Arms Race," *Stratfor*, March 28, 2011, http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/south-korea-joining-asias-naval-arms-race.

> The 21st century is the era of the ocean. We have to build a state-of-the-art force that can protect our maritime sovereignty. With a vision for an advanced deep-sea Navy, our Navy should become a force that can ensure the security of maritime transportation lines, and contribute to peace in the world. Sea is the turf for our survival and national prosperity. Only if we efficiently defend and use the sea can peace and economic growth be secured.[9]

Aided by its accomplished shipbuilding industry that included the firms of Hyundai, Daewoo, and Hanjin, South Korea embarked on an aggressive shipbuilding program. Under Defense Reform 2020, ROK officials projected defense spending increases of 8-10 percent over the 15 years of the program.[10] The first few years, budgets met these targets but by 2007-08, the global financial crisis and the slumping ROK economy reduced the defense budget and slowed the pace of ship construction. The fallout from the sinking of the *Cheonan* in 2010 also forced an adjustment to the tempo of the blue water program. The tragedy was a reminder of the DPRK maritime threat and the need for a stronger coastal defense, particularly ROK anti-submarine capability and readiness. The newest version of the 2020 plan, Defense Reform 307 places greater emphasis on coastal defense and deterring a conventional war with North Korea.[11] As a result, it is likely that ROK ambitions for a blue-water capability will remain but will have a longer time-line for adding to its fleet of ocean-going warships.

South Korea's commitment to building a blue-water navy stems from several motives. First, ROK leaders recognized that given South Korea's dependence on export markets, it was crucial for the country to build the naval capabilities to protect its maritime commerce. Growing its blue water force allows Seoul to furnish a greater share of its own security while also giving it the capability to join multilateral efforts such as the anti-piracy Combined Task Force (CTF)-151 in the Gulf of Aden.[12]

9 Jin Dae-woong, "Lee backs plan for blue-water Navy," *Korea Herald*, March 19, 2008, http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/archives.

10 International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance*, (London: IISS, 2007): 339.

11 See Bruce W. Bennett, "The Korean Defense Reform 307 Plan," Issue Brief No. 8, *Asan Institute for Policy Studies*, April 2011, and Han Nack Hoon, "South Korea's Defence Reforms: Impact on the Navy," *Rajaratnam School of International Studies*, Commentary 183 (December 14, 2011).

12 See Terence Roehrig, "South Korea's Counter-Piracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden," forthcoming with the Council on Foreign Relations, Fall 2012.

Second, an increasing number of challenges to global security are occurring in the maritime domain. Illegal fishing, island and maritime boundary disputes, limiting the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, HADR, and ballistic missile defense, among others require increased naval capability along with cooperation among maritime states. South Korea's growing and respected naval capabilities allow it to join international efforts to address these problems and make it a sought after partner for security cooperation.

Finally, South Korea's naval development is also intended to address concerns for the uncertain future of the East Asia region. Despite its close economic ties with Beijing, South Korea shares some of the same unease regarding China's rise and its future strategic intentions as do others in the region. In addition, South Korea and China have specific maritime disputes including overlapping EEZ claims, clashes over illegal fishing, and the row over Ieodo, a reef China calls Suyan rock. Many states in the Asia-Pacific, including South Korea, have adopted a hedging strategy regarding China in the face of several possible outcomes. South Korea's rivalry with Japan along with their continued dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima has also contributed to Seoul's desire for a blue water navy. The security environment in East Asia is dominated by water; thus any regional competition is likely to have a significant maritime component. A sizeable and competent ROK Navy is viewed as an important asset for protecting South Korea's interests.

The North Korean provocations of 2010 had an important impact on ROK ambitions to build its blue water navy. The attacks reminded military planners that despite South Korea's global interests and ambitions, there remain crucial defense priorities close to home.[13] The question of whether to focus on coastal defense or a blue water navy does not have an either or answer. As its economic and political power has grown, South Korea has pursued the naval strength of a rising middle power to address regional and global concerns in addition to maintaining a robust local defense to protect against the North Korean threat. Instead, the issue is one of balance, and ROK leaders continue to assess and struggle with where to draw the lines between coastal defense and a blue water navy to achieve the proper balance.

13 Jung Sung-ki, "Navy to focus on littoral warfare," *Korea Times*, September 15, 2010, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/09/205_73102.html.

The ROK Navy

The South Korean fleet consists of 177 ships and submarines with 12 destroyers, a large deck amphibious vessel, 9 frigates, 12 submarines, 109 corvettes and coastal/ patrol vessels, 10 mine warfare ships, and 24 support ships (See table 1). The ROK Navy has 68,000 personnel including 27,000 Marines compared to 522,000 in the South Korean Army and 65,000 in the Air Force.

Table 1: Repubic of Korea Naval Forces

Vessel	Number in Service	Planned for Construction
KDX-I Gwanggaeto the Great class *Gwanggaeto the Great* (DDH 971) *Ulchi Mundok* (DDH 972) *Yang Manchun* (DDH 973)	3	
KDX-II Chungmugong Yi SunShin class *Chungmugong Yi SunShin* (DDH 975) *Munmu the Great* (DDH 976) *Dae Joyeong* (DDH 977) *Wang Geon* (DDH 978) *Kang Gamchan* (DDH 979) *Choi Young* (DDH 981)	6	
KDX-III King Sejong the Great class *King Sejong the Great* (DDG 991) *Yulgok Yi I* (DDG 992) *Seoae Ryu Seong-ryong* (DDG 993)	3	
Dokdo class *Dokdo* (LPH 6111)	1	3
KSS I - Chang Bogo class submarines	9	
KSS II - Son Won-il class submarines	3	6
KSX-III		9
Fast Attack Patrol boats (PKM)	75	
Patrol Killer, Guided Missile (PKG) **Gumdoksuri class**	7	13
New Frigate Program (FFX)		12-30
Frigates (FFG) Ulsan-class	9	
Corvettes (PCC) Pohang-class	23	
Corvettes (PCC) Dong Hae-class	4	
Mine Warfare	10	
Logistics and Support	24	
TOTAL SHIPS AND SUBMARINES	177	

The South Korean blue water navy began with a three phase destroyer program.[14] The first phase was the construction of the KDX-I Gwanggaeto the Great class destroyer, a 3,800 ton ship whose size makes it more of a frigate than a destroyer. The KDX-I is a multi-purpose ship with advanced weapons and sensors, and a helicopter deck configured to conduct strike operations, screening and convoy duty, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and support for amphibious operations. The first ship in this line was commissioned in 1998 with plans to build up to 10 ships in this class. However, the ROKN capped the program at three and began the second phase of the destroyer program with the KDX II Chung Mugong Yi Sunshin class.

The KDX-II is a 4,800 ton ship with advanced combat systems including state-of-the-art air defense and anti-submarine warfare systems. Many of these components were purchased from the U.S. Navy. The class and first vessel are named after Admiral Yi Sunshin, the revered naval hero who defeated the Japanese twice in the 1590s and is credited with designing Korea's famous turtle ship. South Korea has built six KDX-IIs and had plans to possibly build three more. However, it is likely the program will be stopped with funds shifted to building other hulls.

Yi Sunshin destroyers are equipped with advanced combat systems including Harpoon ship-to-ship missiles, RAM MK 31 ship-to-ship guided missiles, advanced air defense and ASW capabilities, SM-2 air defense missiles, and the Goalkeeper system for anti-ship torpedoes and missiles. The KDX-II has a stealth hull design licensed from the German company IABG that is capable of deflecting radar and has other anti-detection features. The vessel is also equipped to function as the lead in a combat task force. The ship has been the backbone of ROK participation in CTF-151 where since March 2009 South Korea has deployed the *Cheonghae* unit to the Gulf of Aden consisting of one KDX-II, 30 ROK SEALS, and a Lynx helicopter. Since that time, Seoul has maintained a KDX-II vessel in the region and has been in command of CTF-151 on two separate occasions. The CTF-151 commitment requires three KDX-II destroyers to account for rotations and maintenance leaving the remaining three for other duties.[15]

The third phase of the destroyer program began with the construction of the 7,600-ton Aegis-class destroyer, King Sejong the Great (DDG-991). The name-sake for the entire KDX-III class, the ship was built by Hyundai and commissioned in 2008.

14 Terence Roehrig, "ROK-U.S. Maritime Cooperation: A Growing Dimension of the Alliance," *International Journal of Korean Studies*, XIV, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2010): 91-124.

15 Roehrig, "South Korea's Counter-Piracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden."

South Korea built two more ships in this class, the latest the ROKS *Seoae Ryu Seongryong* (DDG-993), which is set to be commissioned in September 2012. The most technically advanced ship in the ROKN, the KDX-III has SPY-1D radar that can track up to 1,000 targets and engage close to 20 of them simultaneously, and the Phalanx Close-In Weapons System. The KDX-III is a multipurpose vessel designed with land attack, ship-to-ship, air defense, and ASW capabilities. The ship is also designed to include ballistic missile defense, but is not outfitted with Aegis BMD modifications or SM-3 missiles necessary for a BMD mission.[16] Similar to earlier KDX destroyers, the KDX-III utilizes a large share of combat systems purchased from the U.S. Navy, an important benefit for the interoperability of ROK and U.S. naval forces.

The ROKN also has plans to build a modified version of this ship, the KDX-IIa. The vessel is projected to be a 5,600 ton ship, larger than the KDX-II but not as large as the KDX-III though equipped with Aegis technology, SPY radar, SM-2 interceptors, and other advanced weapons systems. Construction of these ships is scheduled to occur from 2019 to 2026, and the ship is targeted as a possible export item for other navies.[17]

In 2007, South Korea commissioned the ROKS Dokdo (LPH-6111), its first amphibious assault ship. The 14,000 ton vessel has a helicopter flight deck and a flooding well deck to launch landing craft and air cushion hover craft. The Dokdo has modern command and control systems that allow the ship to operate as a task force flag ship capable of coordinating combat, peacekeeping, or HADR operations. South Korea has plans to build three more Dokdo-class ships but construction plans are unclear, in part due to tightening budgets. ROK plans for two or three strategic mobile fleets included an LPH as the center piece for each. In February 2010, the ROK Navy formed its first mobile fleet, Mobile Task Flotilla 7, a smaller version of an envisioned strategic mobile fleet. The flotilla will be composed of two squadrons with each squadron consisting of one KDX-III and supplemented with KDX-II destroyers, submarines, and frigates.[18]

16 "Korea's KDX-III AEGIS Destroyers," *Defense Industry Daily*, July 18, 2012, http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/drs-wins-multiplexing-contract-for-korean-aegis-destroyers-0431/.

17 Jung Sung-ki, "S. Korea Navy to Build 6 Mini-Aegis Destroyers," *Korea Times*, October 13, 2009, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/08/113_53441.html.

18 Jung Sung-ki, "Navy Activates 1st strategic Mobile Fleet," *Korea Times*, February 1, 2010, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/07/205_60079.html.

In addition to its blue-water surface vessels, South Korea has also devoted considerable effort and resources to maintain its coastal defense capability. The ROKN has 75 170-ton fast attack patrol boats (PKM – Patrol Killer Medium) that make up a large share of its brown water navy. In 2008, Seoul commissioned the first *Gumdoksuri*-class high-speed patrol boat (PKG—Guided Missile Patrol Killer), the first of a new class of patrol vessels designed specifically for coastal duties. Development of the ship began in 2003 after a ROK patrol craft was sunk in a clash with North Korea along the Northern Limit Line. These vessels are 440-ton boats with guided missile and integrated combat systems similar to an Aegis ship. The PKG can detect and track 100 air and surface targets while its automated weapons system can engage multiple targets simultaneously. South Korea also has plans to build a smaller, 200-ton version of the PKG sometime in the future. Currently, the ROKN has commissioned seven of these vessels with plans to build an additional 20 to 25 in the years ahead.

The remaining initiative for modernizing its coastal defense is construction of a new line of frigates (FFX class). The plan calls for building 12 to 30, 3,200 ton multirole, modular frigates for coastal patrol, ASW, and convoy transport. The FFX and the two versions of the PKGs are intended to replace the aging Ulsan-class destroyers, the PKM fast attack patrol boats, and the Pohang and Dong Hae-class corvettes.

Finally, South Korea has also made strides to improve its submarine force. The ROKN has a fleet of nine Type 209 submarines, the Chang Bogo class, constructed initially with help from the German company Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW). Instead of building more Type 209 submarines, South Korea worked again with its German partner HDW to build the Type 214, Son Won-il class (KSS-2) submarine. Type 214 boats are equipped with more advanced systems including the air-independent propulsion (AIP) system that allows submarines to remain submerged for longer periods of time. South Korea currently has three Type 214 submarines with plans to build another six. The ROKN also intends to develop its own indigenous KSX-III submarine. However, due to budget shortfalls, the program has been delayed, possibly until after 2022.

ROK-Sino Maritime Disputes

While China is only part of South Korea's motivation to develop a blue water navy, there are several specific maritime disputes that have aggravated ROK-Sino ties over the past decade or so and have fueled arguments for continued growth of South Korea's ocean-going navy. Three chief issues have been a problem: overlapping and disputed EEZ claims; illegal fishing; and the Ieodo/Suyan reef dispute. Though

these issues are addressed separately here, they are also interrelated and impact each other. Moreover, responding to these issues often falls immediately to the ROK Coast Guard and the ministry in charge of fishing, but these concerns also spill over to affect broader naval planning and strategy.

(1) Overlapping and Disputed Exclusive Economic Zones. The starting point for ROK-Sino maritime disputes is the overlapping claims for each country's EEZ. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the international law guide to these issues, provides that each state can claim a 200 nautical mile (nm) zone (approximately 370 km) from its coast wherein the state controls access to fishing and resources.[19] Both South Korea and China ratified UNCLOS in 1996 and promptly declared their 200 nm EEZs which entailed considerable overlap since the Yellow Sea is approximately 378 nm at its widest part. If states with adjacent or opposite coastlines have EEZs that overlap, they are expected to arrive at a negotiated agreement for delimitation and in the meantime, "make every effort to enter into provisional arrangements of a practical nature and, during this transitional period, not to jeopardize or hamper the reaching of the final agreement."[20] Seoul and Beijing have held 16 meetings to settle the EEZ question but have been unable to arrive at a resolution. A common solution to settling overlapping claims is to use a median line that is drawn equidistant from the coastline of the disputing states but Beijing and Seoul have been unable to settle on this or any other solution.

South Korea has also given indications that it will submit claims for an extended continental shelf to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf with a claim that continues to the Okinawa Trough in the East China Sea.[21] In 2009, South Korea filed a similar claim as preliminary information to the commission. However, in July 2012, ROK officials announced that despite earlier reports that the submission was coming soon, the foreign ministry had decided to postpone the move but would do so sometime within the year.[22] China has disputed the claim and has sub-

19 See UNCLOS, Part V, at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part5.htm.

20 UNCLOS, Article 74.

21 "South Korea aims to extend maritime claims," *UPI*, July 10, 2012, http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Energy-Resources/2012/07/10/S-Korea-aims-to-extend-maritime-claims/UPI-90471341931798/.

22 "Korea delays submitting claim on East China Sea shelf to UN," *Korea Times*, July 6, 2012, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www.news/nations/2012/07/113_114595.html.

mitted its own extended shelf declaration. Japan has also been unhappy with South Korea's position on this matter. This dimension of the dispute adds further difficulty to a final resolution of the EEZs.

(2) Illegal Fishing. Another problem that is tied to the lack of a delimitation of the EEZ is illegal fishing. Managing fishing stocks and ensuring that aquatic food sources remain a viable and renewable resource is a crucial transnational issue globally as well as in Asia. For China, it has become a particularly difficult problem. As the Chinese population has grown and become more urbanized, consumption of maritime products has risen as well with per capita levels increasing from 5 kg in 1970 to 25 kg in 2010.[23] As a result, Chinese boats have increasingly overfished local waters and have had to venture farther and farther out to sea, sometimes encroaching on the EEZs of other countries to satisfy the demand. Coastal pollution has also depleted local fishing stocks. In addition, China exports large volumes of maritime products with total sales approaching $17.8 billion, close to 30 percent of the country's total agricultural exports.[24]

While both sides worked to conclude a final delimitation agreement, managing the fishing activities in these waters remained a serious problem. In 2001, Seoul and Beijing signed a fishing agreement for the next five years as a temporary measure until a final EEZ agreement could be reached. Since this has not come to pass, the agreement has been renewed on an annual basis. The agreement provides for fishing zones, licensing procedures to fish in each other's zone, catch limits, and quotas for the number of boats allowed in each country's area. Despite the agreement, illegal fishing, almost exclusively Chinese boats encroaching on South Korean waters, has remained a problem. According to one report, from 2006 to 2011, over 2,600 Chinese boats and 800 fishermen have been caught fishing illegally in South Korean waters.[25]

During the past two years, matters have become decidedly worse. In December 2010, two Chinese fishermen died when their boat capsized in a collision with a

23 Zhang Hongzhou, "China's Growing Fishing Industry and Regional Maritime Security," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Commentaries*, June 2, 2012, http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS0912012.pdf.

24 "Group Formed To Aid Fisheries," *China Daily*, May 30, 2012, http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/30/content_15418377.htm.

25 "Eradicate illegal fishing by Chinese boats in Korean EEZ," *Yonhap News Agency*, December 5, 2011.

South Korean Coast Guard vessel. China protested the handling of the affair and called for compensation. The following October, three Chinese fishing boats along with 27 crew members operating illegally in the ROK EEZ were seized by the ROK Coast Guard.

Tensions escalated further in December 2011 when a crew member on a ROK Coast Guard vessel was killed and another injured while boarding a Chinese fishing boat believed to be fishing illegally in the Yellow (West) Sea. When attempting to board the vessel, two ROK coast guard crewmembers were stabbed by the Chinese captain with a piece of broken glass. This was the second Coast Guard fatality in the area since 2008. The Chinese ship, captain, and crew of eight were seized, and the men were convicted by the local court in Incheon. ROK prosecutors had been seeking the death penalty for the Chinese captain but the court gave him a 30-year prison sentence and a fine of $17,600. The other crew members received sentences of 18 months to two years in prison.

China's response to the stabbing was muted. A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry noted "The Chinese side regrets that the relevant incident caused the death of an ROK coast guard, which is an unfortunate event. Currently the relevant authorities in China and South Korea are in close communication on investigating this situation. China is ready to work closely with South Korea to properly settle the issue."[26] However, following the April 19th verdict, Chinese authorities made known their displeasure with the decision. In disputing the judgment, Liu Weimin, spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry maintained "Beijing and Seoul have not achieved an agreement on the definition of related exclusive economic zones, and China does not accept the unilateral resort to the law of exclusive economic zones. Beijing will keep a close watch on the case's development and provide necessary assistance to the Chinese citizens involved in the case to ensure their justified and legal rights."[27] The Incheon court's decision was grounded in South Korea's jurisdiction within its EEZ and ROK domestic law; China's concerns appear to be based on the court's use of the disputed EEZ as a foundation for the decision. Had the court placed its decision solely in the context of ROK domestic law, the Chinese reaction may have been different.

26 Zhang Yunbi and Liu Ce, "China regrets ROK coast guard's death," *People's Daily*, December 14, 2011, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90883/7675506.html.

27 Zhang Yunbi, "ROK's verdict on captain rejected," *China Daily*, April 20, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-04/20/content_15094575.htm.

Before the verdict was announced, ROK officials from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries met with China's Fisheries Law Enforcement Command to address the issue and settle on tougher measures to combat the problem.[28] Two weeks later, four ROK fishing inspectors were wounded attempting to board a Chinese fishing boat. Inspectors hailed the ship but it failed to stop. The following month, ROK officials increased the penalties for illegal fishing, doubling the fine from 100 million won ($86,800) to 200 million won ($173,000) and any boat that failed to stop when hailed could be fined 100 million won.[29] On June 26, 2012, Seoul and Beijing held the first meeting of the "Korea-China Fisheries Cooperation Committee," a new consulting mechanism to address the problems of illegal fishing. ROK officials proposed convening the committee following the December 12 stabbing, and the group intends to hold regular meetings between foreign ministry officials and maritime police from both sides. The two countries have already established a hotline for these types of incidents, a positive measure by both sides to manage the issue.[30]

Despite these efforts, many ROK officials and analysts remain skeptical that China is doing all that it can to address the problem of illegal fishing. South Koreans are tired of the level of illegal activities and officials have demonstrated they are ready to crack down. Chinese leaders are also concerned about fishing but fear South Korean enforcement is too heavy-handed. Moreover, Beijing is likely reluctant to impose significant restrictions on its fishing fleet for fear of the domestic backlash that would occur. Should the problem escalate, calls in South Korea for more robust enforcement of fishing regulations may include increased cooperation between the ROK fishing ministry, the Coast Guard, and the Navy.

(3) Ieodo/Suyan Reef Dispute. The third issue is the ROK-Sino dispute over a reef in the East China Sea. The international name for the reef is Socotra Rock named after the British vessel that found the submerged rock in 1900. Despite the South Korean name—"do" means island in Korean—both sides agree that the reef is not an island since it is submerged 4 to 5 meters at low tide. Under UNCLOS, these are not islands and do not qualify as a territorial dispute. The reef is located approximately

28 "China, S Korea agree on tackling illegal fishing," *China Daily*, April 17, 2012.

29 "S. Korea toughens penalties for EEZ violation," *Korea Herald*, May 15, 2012, http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120515000698.

30 "Seoul, Beijing begin talks to deter illegal Chinese fishing," *Yonhap News Agency*, June 26, 2012 http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/06/26/15/0301000000AEN20120626005500315F.HTML.

80 nm (149 km) from the closest ROK territory, the island of Mara-do and 155 nm (287 km) from the nearest Chinese island of Tongdao. In 1938 when Korea was under Japanese occupation (1910-1945), Tokyo conducted a survey of the area and had planned on building a research station there. However, plans were dropped as the start of World War II approached.

In 1951, the ROK Navy and the Korea Mountain Climbing Association fixed a bronze marker to the reef with the words "Ieodo, Territory of the Republic of Korea," and the following year, South Korean President Syngman Rhee declared a ROK line of jurisdiction that included Ieodo. After several decades of relative calm on the issue, South Korea built the Ieodo Ocean Research Station on the rock in 2003 that included a helicopter pad and scientific research facilities. ROK authorities indicated the station was constructed to collect data on ocean currents, weather, fishing, and climate change. Despite the disputed EEZ, ROK officials maintained the station was justified since the reef was part of its continental shelf making the facility permissible. Proponents argue that UNCLOS Articles 60 and 80 provide South Korea with the justification to construct artificial islands, installations, and structures in areas within the EEZ or on the continental shelf.[31]

Chinese authorities have regularly filed protests maintaining this area was disputed based on overlapping EEZs, and until the disagreement was settled, South Korea should refrain from placing a structure on the rocks. In 2006, China began to periodically make more determined arguments for jurisdiction but little came from its protests. That year, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang objected to South Korea's "unilateral" actions, a reference to the research station and described the action as "illegal."[32] In July 2011, Beijing dispatched three patrol boats to the reef to demand that South Korea cease work on a salvage operation to raise a commercial vessel that had sunk the previous April. In December 2011, China also announced that it would send a maritime monitoring ship to the region to help demonstrate its claim to jurisdiction over the area.[33]

31 "No territorial dispute," *Korea Herald*, March 13, 2012, http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120313000457&cpv=0.

32 "China Chafes at Koran Observatory on Reef Island," *Chosun Ilbo*, September 14, 2006, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2006/09/14/2006091461017.html.

33 "China renews territorial … claim to Ieodo waters," *Korea Herald*, March 11, 2012, http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120311000369&cpv=0.

Tension escalated further on March 3, 2012 when the Director of China's State Oceanic Administration, Liu Xiqui reasserted China's claim that Ieodo/Suyan was in China's "jurisdictional waters," and Beijing would increase patrols and enforcement of Chinese law over this area. A South Korean foreign ministry official responded "we cannot accept any attempt by China to formally exercise jurisdictional control."[34] In a news conference President Lee remarked that while the issue was not a territorial matter since the reef was submerged, once Seoul and Beijing could settle their overlapping EEZs, Ieodo would "fall naturally into South Korean-controlled areas," since the reef is much closer to South Korea than to China.[35] The issue has since calmed down but it remains a concern for both sides and an important motivation for some in South Korea to continue developing its blue water navy.

For South Koreans, there are largely two reasons why they believe Ieodo falls under ROK jurisdiction. First, as President Lee noted, the reef is closer to South Korea than to China. As a result, when the two sides settle their EEZ delimitation claims, presumably using the median line approach that draws the line midway between the Chinese and South Korean coasts, Ieodo will be on Seoul's side of that line. According to the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Administration website, "Since Ieodo is located within waters closer to Korea than other neighboring countries, it will be under Korea's maritime jurisdiction according to the Middle Line principle which is applied to the determination of the EEZ."[36] Second, officials argue that South Korean jurisdiction over Ieodo is further strengthened by being part of Korea's continental shelf.

A key issue connected to the dispute over Ieodo is the ROK construction of the Jeju-do Naval Base. Jeju is an island off South Korea's southwest coast that provides ready access to important shipping lanes in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea. The port will also provide a base of operations for the ROKN to protect its maritime interests in this area including maintaining jurisdiction over the Ieodo reef. Discussions to construct a base on Jeju began in the early 1990s and plans moved forward in 2003 under President Roh Moo-hyun. The location was finalized in 2007 and

34 Jeremy Page, "China, South Korea in Row Over Submerged Rock," *Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 2012.

35 Chang Jae-soon, "Lee: Ieodo will remain under S. Korea's control," *Yonhap News*, March 12, 2012, http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/fullstory/2012/03/12/75/4500000000AEN20120312007551315F.HTML.

36 Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Administration, "Ieodo," http://ieodo.khoa.go.kr/eng/open_content/introduce/introduction.asp.

construction began in January 2011.[37] The facility covers 125 acres and is expected to cost $970 million to build with completion anticipated sometime in 2014. The port facilities can accommodate 20 warships and submarines and will be a stop for cruise ships as Jeju's scenery, beaches, and tropical climate make it an outstanding destination for visitors.

Opponents of the base fear the environmental damage that will occur during construction. Others are also convinced the facility will eventually become a U.S. Navy base and be an area similar to U.S. bases on Okinawa, an arrangement that will do much to antagonize China. Protests against the project have occurred often and several have been violent. However, the courts have ruled the protests illegal and the project has continued. Though base construction presses forward, it has been a divisive issue in South Korea. Yet, the row over Ieodo has provided considerable fodder for those who support the base. On March 13, 2012, an editorial in the conservative *Chosun Ilbo* entitled "Naval Base Protesters Are Dangerously Naïve," referred to Ieodo and the soon-to-be presence of China's first aircraft carrier in the region and noted sarcastically that "maybe the protesters would like to gift-wrap the rocks when that happens and hand them over to China."[38]

Addressing Future Challenges

ROK-Sino maritime relations and the ROK Navy's response to China are all part of a broader relationship that, like others in the region, struggles with the uncertainty accompanying China's rise. South Korea will not be able to match China's naval strength and has many reasons to maintain good ties with Beijing. Indeed, Seoul has been reluctant to join the U.S.-led BMD system in East Asia for fear of alienating China and has proposed an intelligence sharing agreement similar to the ROK-Japan pact that collapsed in July.[39] The South Korean Navy has not undertaken any specific operational measures in response to Chinese actions, but its shipbuilding program and the construction of the naval base on Jeju Island are occurring in part with an eye toward China's future strategic direction. Similar to oth-

37 Jaeyeon Woo, "Jeju Naval Base Faces Strong Protest," *Wall Street Journal*, March 7, 2012, http://blogs.wsj.com/korearealtime/2012/03/07/jeju-naval-base-faces-strong-protest/.

38 "Naval Base Protesters Are Dangerously Naïve," *Chosun Ilbo*, March 13, 2012, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/03/13/2012031301525.html.

39 Chung Min-uck, "Seoul proposes military pact with Beijing," *Korea Times*, July 13, 2012, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/07/116_115054.html.

ers in the region, South Korea is hedging and maintaining an important economic relationship with Beijing while also keeping a close watch on the future.

As South Korea continues forward in what will be an increasingly complex and uncertain security environment, two key areas will need attention. First, South Korea and China need to resolve their outstanding maritime disputes. Most important on the list is a final agreement on the demarcation of their overlapping EEZs. Though complicated by extended continental shelf claims, the most common solution for these types of disputes is to settle on a median line that is drawn midway between the baselines of South Korea and China. Settling the EEZ issue would resolve the Ieodo/Suyan dispute and help the fishing problem. Yet, given the pressure of overfishing and declining fish stocks, the challenge of managing the fishing issue is likely to remain. Continued efforts by Seoul and Beijing as well as others in the region will be necessary to improve cooperation and enforcement. Improving ROK-Sino dialogue on this issue is a good start but more will need to be done, especially by Chinese authorities. Moreover, this is not only an issue of regional concern but is also part of a broader, global problem to manage the maritime commons. All of these maritime issues—EEZ, illegal fishing, and Ieodo/Suyan—could be pesky irritants for ROK-Sino relations and pose a danger of escalating into larger clashes. Settling these issues would go a long way to ensuring that these concerns do not jeopardize the larger relationship and regional stability. In addition, a settlement could also be a model for solving other maritime disputes. In the meantime, both sides need to be careful to avoid any provocative actions until these issues can be settled, and to continue work on dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with conflict when it does arise.

The second challenge South Korea faces is achieving the proper balance of various military capabilities in the face of several competing security priorities. Seoul confronts a daunting ground threat across the DMZ that necessitates significant resources. These requirements will continue to grow as South Korea moves forward with the transition to assume wartime operational control scheduled for December 2015 and the necessary capabilities that will require. The sinking of the *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeonpyeong-do were grim reminders of weaknesses in ROK ASW and coastal defense. Improving these capabilities will require continued attention. Finally, South Korean defense planners remain committed to the goal of a blue water navy. ROK leaders see the need to protect the country's maritime interests beyond the coast, develop sufficient naval strength to hedge for an uncertain future, and maintain the ability to contribute to security in the global commons, a responsibility that comes with South Korea's climb into the ranks of the world's middle powers;

all of these call for the continued development of its blue water fleet. ROK defense planners must contend with several competing priorities and must carefully consider the balance they need to strike between these demands on its armed forces. Yet, it will be important to maintain continued growth of its naval capabilities, both blue water and coastal while also beginning to shift from a long held ground-centric focus to its defense planning. The North Korean threat remains but so too do a growing set of interests that draws South Korea into a more active role in maintaining international peace and security in the maritime domain.

Conclusion

South Korea faces some difficult challenges in achieving the proper balance between several competing security priorities. Despite the pressures to remain a ground-centric military and focus on coastal defense, the continued development of a blue water ROK Navy is an important initiative to continue, not only for South Korea to directly protect its interests but also to allow Seoul to participate in HADR, anti-piracy operations, protection of trade routes, and contributing to the overall stability and security of the global maritime commons. Apprehension for the future direction of China's rise is part of South Korea's motivation to develop a blue water fleet but other issues are factors as well. Continuing budget challenges that remain from the global economic crisis and the demands of other security challenges may lengthen the time line but a blue water naval capability remains an important component of building a capable military that can protect ROK interests and contribute to international security.

Russian Maritime Interests in Asia

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Threat perceptions

Russian naval activities are regulated by four basic documents: the Russian National Security Concept, the Russian Military Doctrine, the Russian Naval Doctrine, and the Basis for Russian Naval Activity. Russian naval doctrine states that the main maritime threats to Russia include:

- the rise of naval activity by foreign powers, both near Russian borders and in the open seas;
- the development by foreign states of naval forces more powerful than Russia's own;
- illegal economic activity (e.g., poaching) in territorial waters; and
- the unclear legal status of Russian territorial waters, including in the Caspian Sea and the Arctic and Pacific oceans.

Based on these threats, maritime policy-makers have formulated three general goals for naval activity:

- defending national interests and security in the open seas;
- maintaining Russia's status as a "global naval power"; and
- developing and effectively using naval potential.

The Russian Federal Navy (RFN) currently interprets the clause "defending national interests and security" as ensuring the protection of Russian sea-based economic activity. Close to home, this means naval protection of economic resources, including Russian fishing fleets and offshore oil- and gas-drilling platforms. Russian Coast Guard vessels have several times seized Japanese fishing vessels in disputed waters off the Kuril Islands. While to date the Russian Navy has not been involved

in these activities, the Pacific Fleet is based nearby and could provide support for such actions in the future.

Russia does not think about "power projection" in the way that the United States does—i.e., being ready at home to rush to distant contingencies that may arise. Given Russia's long and vulnerable borders, especially to the south and east, it has been more concerned with its own defense. Since the late 1980s, the primary mission of the Pacific Fleet has been the defense of littoral waters. This mission is driven both by the recognition that the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan could be used as invasion routes and by the need to protect the exploitation of Russian seabed natural resources and fishing activities in the area. The main goal of the Russian Navy in the Pacific is thus to present a deterrent against foreign aggression and to localize any conflicts that may break out.[1] This is a return to the Navy's traditional mission in the area, after a period of much more grandiose objectives in the second half of the Gorshkov period.

Restoring Russia's international standing is one of President Putin's top foreign policy goals. Since the beginning of his presidency, Putin has stated that he sees the Russian Navy as playing an important role in this revival. Navies are uniquely suited for "showing the flag" around the world, and the Russian Navy is no exception. In recent years, naval strategy documents have increasingly focused on naval presence in various seas and oceans as an important strategic goal in and of itself. The most recent Concept for the Use of Naval Forces states that the Russian Navy's main role in peacetime is to be present in strategically important regions in order to ensure maritime security.[2]

While terrorism and WMD proliferation are seen as the main military threats facing Russia today, the other threats described in the so-called "Putin's Plan" have more to do with interaction between Russia and the Soviet Union's erstwhile Cold War opponents. These include the potential for a new arms race; the continued presence of old stereotypes, leading to "bloc" thinking among other major powers; and the potential for foreign countries to apply pressure on Russia.[3] Naval commanders believe that the navy is one of Russia's best means of deterring these threats—though in reality, most of them are land based and the solutions lie in the diplomatic realm.

1 Greg Austin and Alexey D. Muraviev, *The Armed Forces of Russia in Asia* (I.B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 211-212.

2 "Morskaia kollegiia pri pravitelstve Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Morskoi Sbornik*, February 2008.

3 Igor Plugatarev, "Plan Putina. Voennye aspekty," *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, October 26, 2007.

Since the end of the Cold War, Russian admirals have often touted cooperation with foreign navies as a prime role of the Russian Navy. While the Russian Navy has a strong record of participating in multi-national cooperative activities in Europe, this record can be contrasted with Russia's experience in the Pacific Fleet AOR, where there are no maritime collective security organizations. Instead, there has been a recent history of conflicts and tensions with neighbors, especially with Japan over fishing rights and with North Korea over its nuclear ambitions. In this region, Russia has been focused on pursuing bilateral cooperation with Japan, South Korea, and China. At the same time, the Russian Navy is content to exercise and work with more distant partners in distant waters. As part of its regular series of deployments to the Indian Ocean, it has participated in a regular series of exercises with the Indian Navy. Russia sees these exercises, like its exercises with local partners, as important both for bolstering its political relationships and for improving its navy's operational capabilities through training with highly qualified navies.

These stated threats (terrorism and WMD proliferation) and goal (cooperation with foreign navies) are nebulous at best, and say little about how the navy will actually evolve over the coming decade. To determine the likely trajectory of developments in Russia's Pacific naval plans over the coming 10-20 years, it is best to turn to a review of the fleet's current assets and, especially, its declared shipbuilding plans. Compared to vague doctrinal statements, these plans do a better job of showing the ways in which Russian planners expect to use their naval assets in the medium to long term.

Current force structure

In its current configuration, the Russian Navy is divided into four fleets and one flotilla.[4] As table 1 shows, most of the navy's current ships were built in Soviet times, or finished in the two years following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since 1994, only 12 new ships have been commissioned; the construction of most of them started back in Soviet days. As of July 2012, the table shows 28 new ships and submarines under construction (UC). The order of battle includes 23 large surface combatants (12 operational), 13 strategic nuclear submarines (10 operational), 45

4 In addition to the Pacific Fleet, these include the Northern Fleet, based in Severomorsk; the Black Sea Fleet, based in Sevastopol and Novorossiisk; the Baltic Fleet, based in Kaliningrad; and the Caspian Flotilla, based in Astrakhan. Information for this section is primarily from warfare.ru with additional information from "Ves' Rossiiskii Flot," *Kommersant-Vlast'*, February 25, 2008.

general-purpose submarines (fewer than 38 operational), and 19 amphibious landing craft (operational status of some is unclear). As the table reveals, of the 131 ships listed, at least 22 are non-operational.

Table 1: Russian Navy ship years in commission

	CV/CG	DD	FFG	FFL	Amphib	SSBN	SSGN	SSN	SS
1966					1				
1968					1				
1969		1							
1974	1				1				
1975					1				
1976					2				
1978			1		1				
1979						1			
1980	1*		1			2			
1981		1	1		1				1
1982	1			2	1	1			
1983				1	1				1
1984	1*			1	1	1			1
1985		2			2	1*			
1986	1*	1*		2	1	1*			1
1987		1		3	1	1		2*	
1988	1*	4**		2	1	2*	1*	2*	3
1989	1	2*		6		1	1	1	
1990	1	1*		5	1	1	2**	5	4
1991		3**		3	2			1	2
1992		1					2	3**	
1993		1	1	1				2	1
1994				1					1
1995								2*	
1996							2		
1997									
1998	1								
1999		1							
2000									
2001								1	
2002									
2003				1					
2004									
2005									
2006				1					
2007									
2008				1					
2009			1						
2010									1
2011				1					
2012				2		1			
Future			(7 UC)	(9 UC)	(3 UC)	(3 UC)		(2 UC)	(4 UC)
Total	1/8	9	5	33	19	13	8	19	16

*=not in service UC=under construction

The Pacific Fleet includes 49 operational ships and submarines, with an average age of over 20 years. This makes it the second largest fleet in the Russian Navy; it is only slightly smaller than the Northern Fleet, which has 50 ships and submarines. Its headquarters are in Vladivostok, and it also has a base in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. The fleet consists of 10 first-class surface ships (6 of which are operational); 3 strategic submarines (2 operational); and 11 other nuclear submarines (of which only 3 are operational). (See tables 2-4.) It also lists 8 Kilo-class diesel submarines (5 operational); 4 amphibious landing craft (all operational); and approximately 29 third-class ships, including 8 small ASW ships (Grisha), 12 small missile ships (8 Tarantul and 4 Nanuchka), and 9 minesweepers, all of unknown operational status.

Table 2: Pacific Fleet first-class surface ships

Name	Type	Year launched	Status
Admiral Lazarev	Kirov CGN	1984	Mothballed
Varyag	Slava CG	1989	Operational
Bystryi	Sovremennyi DDG	1989	Operational
Burnyi	Sovremennyi DDG	1988	Under repair
Bezboyaznennyi	Sovremennyi DDG	1990	Under repair
Boyevoi	Sovremennyi DDG	1986	Mothballed
Admiral Vinogradov	Udaloy DDE	1988	Operational
Admiral Panteleyev	Udaloy DDE	1991	Operational
Admiral Tributs	Udaloy DDE	1986	Operational
Marshal Shaposhnikov	Udaloy DDE	1985	Operational

Table 3: Pacific Fleet strategic submarines

Name	Type	Year launched	Status
Ryazan	Delta III	1982	Operational
Podolsk	Delta III	1980	Operational
St. Georgiy Pobedonosets	Delta III	1980	Operational

Table 4: Pacific Fleet non-strategic nuclear submarines

Name	Type	Year launched	Status
Tomsk	Oscar II	1996	Awaiting repair
Omsk	Oscar II	1993	Operational
Chelyabinsk	Oscar II	1990	Mothballed
Irkutsk	Oscar II	1988	Awaiting repair
Vilyuchinsk	Oscar II	1992	Operational
Samara	Akula	1995	Operational
Magadan	Akula	1990	Awaiting repair
Barnaul	Akula	1987	Awaiting repair
Kashalot	Akula	1988	Awaiting repair
Bratsk	Akula	1989	Under repair
Kuzbass	Akula	1992	Awaiting repair

Shipbuilding plans

The Russian Navy is planning an ambitious 10-year shipbuilding program. If fully realized according to the announced timetable, the plan would restore Russia's position as one of the world's preeminent naval powers. According to recent announcements, the submarine program includes the construction of eight Borei-class strategic nuclear submarines, eight Yasen-class nuclear multipurpose submarines, and six improved Kilo-class and 14 Lada-class diesel-electric submarines. The surface combat ship fleet is to be augmented with eight Admiral Gorshkov-class frigates and six Krivak-class frigates, as well as 20-25 Steregushchiy-class corvettes and 12-15 Buyan-class corvettes. Amphibious forces will receive four Mistral ships and one domestically designed Ivan Gren-class LST. A decision should be made soon on building five additional Ivan Gren-class ships.[5]

While the Russian Navy rarely comments on the basing of ships before they are launched, there is some information available on how this shipbuilding program will affect the Pacific Fleet. Most significantly, at least the first four Borei-class SSBNs will be sent to the Pacific Fleet, to replace its remaining aged Delta III submarines. The first Mistral ship will also be sent to the Pacific Fleet, and some reports indicate that the second will be based there as well. Finally, three to seven Steregushchiy-class corvettes and an unknown number of Admiral Gorshkov-class frigates are slated to be assigned to the Pacific Fleet.[6]

If carried out, these ship-building plans would fully restore the Russian Navy's coastal protection and nuclear deterrence missions. However, the navy's lack of specific plans for new destroyers, combined with the aging and eventual retirement of its few remaining large combat ships, will lead to a further reduction of its blue-water capabilities. It appears that while restoring these capabilities is a long-term objective, concrete steps to this end will not be taken until the next decade.

Furthermore, it is doubtful that the Russian shipbuilding industry could build even relatively small ships at the pace indicated in the current State Armaments Program. The most likely outcome would be significant delays, with the number of new ships indicated above only being reached by 2030.

5 Ruslan Pukhov, "Strengthening the Russian Navy: A priority of the State Armament Program," *http://valdaiclub.com*, August 7, 2012; and Ivan Safronov, "Gosprogramma vooruzhenii prirosla Iaseniami i Boreiami," *Kommersant*, February 7, 2012.

6 The State of the Russian Navy database, http://warfare.ru.

Likely future missions

The shift in focus away from large surface combatants and nuclear attack submarines towards frigates, corvettes, and diesel submarines shows that Russia no longer sees NATO and the United States as realistic potential maritime opponents. Whereas the Soviet navy was focused on building ships designed to take on aircraft carrier groups, the "new" Russian navy will be focused on defending against smaller adversaries closer to home.

In the next two decades, the Russian Navy is likely to focus on three primary missions: coastal defense, participation in multinational operations, and "showing the flag" operations. The coastal protection mission will focus on offshore energy platforms and undersea pipelines, as well as Russian fishing fleets in areas where maritime borders are still disputed. This mission will be carried out primarily by the new corvettes and by older ships such as the Udaloy-class destroyers. Over time, the Udaloys will be replaced by the Admiral Gorshkov-class frigates that will begin entering the fleet in the next five years.

While the navy's global missions have been and will be sharply reduced compared to the Soviet period, it will continue to pursue some objectives around the globe. Most significantly, these will include participation in multinational counter-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean. Russian ships, primarily from the Pacific Fleet, have maintained an almost constant presence off the coast of Somalia for several years; these deployments are likely to continue. The fleet will also continue its current cycle of bilateral exercises with India, as well as exercises with the Chinese Navy. It may also initiate a series of bilateral exercises with Vietnam, which has purchased frigates and patrol craft from Russia in recent years. At the same time, given the political environment in East Asia, it is highly unlikely that the Pacific Fleet will participate in multinational exercises or operations anytime soon. There are simply no regional security organizations that could plausibly organize such events in the near to medium term. Finally, while it is plausible that ships from the Pacific Fleet could engage in a show-of-force exercise—such as that recently conducted by a number of ships from the Northern and Black Sea fleets in the Mediterranean—Russia is likely to act much more cautiously in the Pacific theater, given the extent to which Moscow worries about the continuing rise of Chinese power in Asia.

In addition, the navy will send ships to visit states that are existing or potential arms industry customers. In recent years, Russian Navy ships have visited Venezuela and India, and these visits are seen as having helped Russia secure several new contracts.

Future trips may include states such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Brazil. These visits do not reflect a desire to build up a truly global naval presence; rather, they represent the defense industry's commercial priorities.

Going forward, the Russian Navy will gradually shift away from the Northern Fleet, which was traditionally its mainstay. The emerging consensus that NATO is no longer Russia's primary potential adversary will result in a drawdown of Northern Fleet capabilities, and a shift towards eastern and southern threats. The Black Sea and Pacific fleets are expected to receive most of the newest ships and submarines. Both the Baltic Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla will focus on coastal defense missions, including protecting offshore energy infrastructure, and the Caspian Flotilla will also be used against poachers and smugglers. The Northern Fleet is now viewed as largely unnecessary as a major war-fighting force. However, until the Borei construction program is complete, it will remain the primary home of Russia's strategic submarines, including all the Delta IVs. Its conventional missions will be limited to protecting Arctic fisheries; maintaining the security of facilities built to extract undersea hydrocarbon deposits in the Arctic; ensuring control of northern sea lanes; and sending larger ships on long cruises to promote political and military partnerships abroad in areas such as Latin America and the Mediterranean.

Over time, the Pacific Fleet will become the most important fleet in Russia. It will receive most (if not all) of the newest Borei-class strategic submarines, to replace its aging Delta III fleet. It will also receive the first of the Mistrals. The fleet's missions will include countering the rapidly modernizing Chinese navy, ensuring Russian sovereignty over the disputed Kuril Islands, protecting offshore energy infrastructure off the Sakhalin coast, and showing the flag in South and Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

Despite its recent revival, the Russian Navy—especially its Pacific Fleet—is still primarily a coastal defense force, rather than a major blue-water navy. While some of its ships can certainly sail to distant shores on occasion, these occasions are relatively rare. Furthermore, the ships that are capable of such cruises were, without exception, built in the Soviet period and will soon be reaching the end of their lifespans. The navy does not have plans to build replacements for these ships. Even though its shipbuilding program has been revitalized since the 1990s, it is focused on replacing Russia's aging submarines and building relatively small frigates, rather than building cruisers and destroyers to replace the Sovremenny- and Slava-class ships, which are currently the mainstay of what remains of Russia's blue-water navy.

The current state of the Pacific Fleet, however, is not exceptional in Russian naval history. In fact, it is much more the norm than the situation that prevailed in the late Soviet period. Russia has always perceived itself as primarily a land power, and its navy has mostly played a supporting role to the ground forces. The circumstances of the Cold War led to a temporary change in this dynamic, as the global nature of the confrontation with the United States increased the value of naval forces for the military. With the end of the Cold War, the relative importance of the military branches has now reverted to form. The Russian Navy's role is seen primarily in terms of coastal defense and showing the flag in various ports around the world. These are laudable missions, to be sure, but they are never going to be seen as critical for Russian security in the way that the counter-insurgency and land defense missions of the ground forces are.

Vietnamese and Philippine Naval Modernization

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Introduction

China's military modernization is raising wariness among Indo-Pacific nations, especially because of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) acquisition of aircraft carriers, modern amphibious ships, and other improvements. The South China Sea is the maritime arena of most concern. Beijing claims land features—and possibly ocean areas—also claimed by Vietnam and the Philippines, in addition to Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. These states are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and have been trying for nearly two decades to use that forum to resolve regional territorial disputes. These efforts have met with little success, especially since China is a claimant to all the disputed land features and waters in the South China Sea.

Incidents, sometimes involving gunfire and deaths, have involved nearly all of these nations, but the past few years of conflict in the South China Sea have been dominated by clashes between civilian and uniformed personnel of China and Vietnam, and China and the Philippines. Disputed sovereignty of various land features is the primary cause of these clashes; more practical disputes concern fisheries and potential sea bed energy reserves.

Partially in fear of China's increasingly capable navy and actions in the South China Sea, both Vietnam and the Philippines are engaged in naval modernization, to improve their capability to defend vital national maritime interests. This paper will examine Philippine and Vietnamese naval modernization efforts.

Both countries are also seeking closer relationships with the United States to balance China's increasing weight in the South China Sea, called the East Sea by Hanoi and the West Philippine Sea by Manila. Manila is dangling returned basing rights as an inducement for Washington to take an active role, under the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty, in defending its claims in the South China Sea. Hanoi has

also pursued increased contact with U.S. naval forces, while increasing diplomatic interaction, both bilaterally and at multilateral meetings such as meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Republic of the Philippines

The Philippines' primary national security threats always have been domestic, since it achieved independence in 1946. The Hukbalahap (Huks), New People's Army (NPA), various Islamic groups, and Philippine Army officer cliques have all threatened to overturn the government.[1] To quote one Philippine senior military officer, "[we always have insurgencies] in the Philippines."[2]

The foundation of Philippine international defense has been the Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States, signed in 1951, although even at the height of the Cold War, there have been no existential foreign threats to the Philippine nation. Currently, the United States is assisting the Philippines in suppressing current insurgencies by the NPA and various Islamic and terrorist groups, but has not committed to defense of the Spratly Islands claimed by the Philippines. These land features, called the Kalayaan Islands by Manila, were first claimed in 1956, five years after the mutual defense treaty was signed by Manila and Washington.[3]

1 The Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon (Hukbalahap, or Huks) was the military arm of the Philippine Communist Party and fought an insurgency against Manila from 1946-1954, until defeated by General Ramon Magsaysay, with the advice of U.S.A.F. Major Edwin Lansdale, who instituted a land reform program that eventually isolated the Huks from the population.

2 My conversation with the Commandant of the Philippine Marine Corps, 2003.

3 While Philippine officials believe that the treaty obligates the United States to defend the Philippine claims in the South China Sea, Article IV of the treaty states that "Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes," while Article V notes that "for the purpose of Article IV, an armed attack on either of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific." See "Manila: The US Obliged to Defend Filipinos in Spratlys," *Seattle Times* (22 June 2011), at: http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2015389170_apassouthchinaseadispute.html (accessed 01 June 2012).

A robust U.S. Navy relationship exists with the Philippine military, however, through an active advisory role, mutual training events, and U.S. ship port visits to the Philippines—more than 100 in 2011. A particularly significant annual exercise is named Balikatan, conducted most recently in March 2012. The field phase occurred on the island of Palawan, close to the disputed Spratly Islands.[4] The Ministry of Defense in Manila even announced that U.S forces could use former bases in the Philippines "provided they have prior coordination from the government."[5]

UNCLOS

The Philippines signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in1982 and ratified it in 1984. When doing so, Manila issued eight "understandings." These included the statement that "signing shall not in any manner impair or prejudice the sovereignty of the Republic of the Philippines over any territory over which it exercises sovereign authority, such as the Kalayaan Islands, and the waters appurtenant thereto."

Philippine Navy (PN)

The Philippines includes more than 7,000 islands and has the world's third longest coastline, but its navy is incapable of defending its extensive maritime territory. The navy has sought to improve its maritime capabilities under its "Sail Plan 2020," aiming to build a navy "strong and credible that the Philippines as a maritime nation can be proud of." [6]

4 "The U.S.-Philippines: Fact Sheet," Department of State PRN: 2012/667 (30 April 2012), at: http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/04/201204304823.html#axzz1wZc7mjGs (accessed 01 June 2012); Matikas Santos, "6,000 US Troops to Arrive in PH for Balikatan 2012," *Inquirer* (07 March 2012), at: http://globalnation.inquirer.net/27471/6000-us-troops-to-arrive-in-ph-for-Balikatan-2012 (accessed 07 June 2012). Also see "U.S., Philippine Navies Join for 17th CARAT Exercise in Palawan," *NavyNews*, NNS110628-04 (28 June 2011), at: http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=61298 (accessed 01 June 2012).

5 Quoted in Jaime Laude, "US Troops Can Use Clark, Subic Bases," *Philippine Star* (06 June 2012), at: http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=814442&publicationSubCategoryId=63 (accessed 06 June 2012).

6 PN commander, Rear Admiral Alexander P. Pama, quoted in Edgard A. Arevalo, "Navy Chief Affirms Commitment to the Defense of Country," *Philippine Navy Today* (23 September 2009), at: http://navyspeak.blogspot.com/2009/09/navy-chief-affirms-commitment-to.html (accessed 28 July 2012).

The Philippine Navy (PN) nominally deploys two frigates, eleven corvettes, and fifty-eight patrol craft. The only capable ships are two newly acquired ex-U.S. Coast Guard cutters, which represent a significant increase in force to the PN, despite being more than forty years old.[7] The average age of the corvettes is fifty-seven. In May 2012, the PN commissioned the second Hamilton-class cutter from the US Coast Guard (USCG).

The Philippine president earlier this year warned China of "an arms race" in the South China Sea and authorized a significant increase in the navy's budget.[8] Despite this announced increase, however, Philippine defense spending actually declined to 0.8 percent of GDP in 2009, less than half of the average spent by Southeast Asian nations.[9] This is typical of Philippine difficulty funding defense requirements. Indeed, the Defense Secretary recently complained that "until such time that we can upgrade our [military], we can't do anything but protest and protest," describing the condition of the navy as "deplorable but plain reality." One Philippine analyst describes the PN as "one of the most ill-equipped navies in the world." [10]

7 Hrvoje Hranjski, "U.S. Okays Transfer of Second Warship, *Asian Journal* (10 February 2012), at: http://asianjournal.com/dateline-philippines/headlines/14831-us-oks-transfer-of-2nd-warship-to-philippines-.html (accessed 14 February 2012); Mritunjoy Mazumdar and Jon Rosamond, "Philippines Eyes US Cutter Amid Wider Buying Plan, *Jane's Defense Weekly* (11 May 2011), 15. The sad state of the Philippine Navy is addressed in Koh Swee Lean Collin, "The Philippines' Navy Challenge," *The Diplomat* (27 December 2011), at: http://the-diplomat.com/flashpoints-blog/2011/12/27/the-philippines'-navy-challenge/ (accessed 07 June 2012).

8 Norman Bodadora, "Aquino Warns of Arms Race," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (25 May 2011), at: http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/8968/aquino-warns-of-arms-race, and "Philippines Ups Spending to Guard South China Sea," *AFP* (07 September 2011), at: http://www.defensenews.com/article/20110907/DEFSECT04/109070309/Philippines-Ups-Spending-Guard-South-China-Sea; Michela P. Del Callar, "Noy to Seek US Reassurance of Support in Spratlys Conflict," *Daily Tribune* (Manila), 14 November 2011, at: http://www.tribuneonline.org/headlines/20111114hed5.html (all accessed 01 June 2012).

9 "Military Expenditure Data Base," 2011, *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI), at: http://milexdata.sipri.org.

10 Voltaire Gazmin, quoted in "Philippine Defense Chief Says Military Too Weak," *Honolulu Star Adviser* (24 May 2011), at: http://www.staradvertiser.com/news/breaking/122506473.html?id=122506473 (accessed 01 July 2012); Rommel S. Banlaoil, "Philippine Naval Modernization: Current State and Continuing Challenges" (Quezon City: Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and TerrorismResearch, 2012): 4, at: http://pipvtr.academia.edu/RommelBanlaoi/Papers/1464465/Philippine_Naval_Modernization_by_Rommel_Banlaoi (accessed 28 July 2012). Also see Renato De Castro and Walter Lohman, "U.S.–Philippines Partnership in the Cause of Maritime Defense," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder No. 93* (Washington, D.C., 08 August 2011).

This seriously constrains defense of Philippine sovereignty claims in the South China Sea or even to secure even its own archipelagic sea lines of communication (SLOCs). Without the support of the United States, Manila has little hope of prevailing against Chinese sovereignty claims in the South China Sea. Instead, it likely will use its 2002 agreement with Beijing as a first step in accommodating Chinese demands.[11]

The most recent significant clash between the Philippines and China occurred in April 2012 at the Panatag Shoal (Scarborough Reef), about 200 km from the main Philippine island of Luzon. The impasse was triggered on 08 April when BRP *Gregorio del Pilar* was deployed to monitor eight Chinese fishing vessels which were suspected of operating illegally in the area. Two days later, two China Marine Surveillance (CMS) vessels intervened to prevent their detention. This incident ended peacefully, but with Chinese vessels present and Philippine ships absent from the reef.

Such incidents have exacerbated Manila's concerns over a more assertive and muscular China. Beijing also views with suspicion the renewed military and diplomatic ties between the Philippines and the US, and their bilateral military drills. A Philippine-US governmental 2+2 meeting in 2012 signaled increased military assistance funding, greater access for US forces to Philippine bases, and the sharing of US-acquired real-time data on the South China Sea, presumably to enhance Philippine maritime domain awareness.

Vietnam

Vietnam has not issued a maritime strategy, but Hanoi published a *Defense White Paper* in 2009, in which the navy's responsibility was described as strictly managing and controlling "the waters and islands in the East Sea under Vietnam's sovereignty" to include maintaining maritime security, sovereignty and sovereign rights, jurisdiction, and national interests at sea. This *White Paper* drew on a 2007 resolution by the fourth plenum of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Com-

11 See, for instance, Bernie Cahiles-Magkilat, "Rp-China Joint Exploration Okayed," *Manila Bulletin* (26 August 2011), at: http://www.mb.com.ph/artcles/332229/rpchina-joint-exploration-okayed, and "Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of the Philippines," Beijing (01 September 2011), at: http://www.gov.ph/2011/09/01/joint-statement-of-the-philippines-and-the-peoples-republic-of-china-september-1-2011/ (both accessed 01 June 2012).

mittee, mandating development of a comprehensive national "Maritime Strategy Towards the Year 2020," to fully integrate economic development and maritime national defense measures.

Hanoi is attempting to defend its maritime interests, particularly as contested by China, while also reducing the chances of conflict. It has been only partially successful, since Beijing has maintained a rigid policy with respect to fishing boat incursions and drilling for energy in contested waters.[12] Vietnam asserts "undisputed sovereignty over [Paracel and Spratly] archipelagos," but engages diplomatically with China to resolve these disputed islands. Furthermore, the two nations have since 2005 conducted a series of joint patrols and repeatedly hold discussions which consistently end with statements of peaceful resolution, while accomplishing little at sea.[13]

Vietnam feels a good deal of historic enmity toward China, despite that country's assistance during wars against France and the United States. China is accused of threatening behavior, "bullying" its neighbors, and unjustifiably "showing groundless demands against international law."[14] Hanoi in the past decade has moved to

12 An example of the belligerent side of Hanoi's policy is reported in Sajbal Dasgupta, "Vietnamese Threat to China, From the Sea?," *Times of India* (12 June 2011), at: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-12/china/29649924_1_south-china-sea-chinese-fishermen-ammunition-drill (accessed 02 June 2012). Also see Lucio Blanco Pitlo, "Vietnam's Exploration and Production Contracts: Using Energy Interests to Strengthen Maritime Claims," *RSIS Commentaries No. 106/2012* (21 June 2012), at: http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS1062012.pdf (accessed 01 July 2012).

13 "Vietnam, China Look to Sign Agreement on Resolving Sea Disputes," *Thanh Nien News* (13 May 2011), at: http://www.thanhniennews.com/2010/pages/20110513171316.aspx; "Vietnam Affirms Sovereignty Over Hoang Sa, Truong Sa," *Vietnam News Agency* (23 February 2012), at: http://english.vietnamnet.vn/en//vn/politics/19214/vn-affirms-sovereignty-over-hoang-sa--truong-sa.html. The two nations have resolved maritime boundary disputes in the Gulf of Tonkin/Beibu Gulf. See, "Vietnam, China Hold Joint Naval Patrol Despite Ongoing Spat Over Disputed Territory," *Washington Post* (20 June 2011), at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/checkpoint-washington/post/in-south-china-sea-every-side-has-its-say/2011/06/20/AGhGRIdH_blog.html?wprss=checkpoint-washington (all accessed 02 June 2012).

14 Viet Long, "China's Strategy of Widening Disputed Areas in East Sea," *Quan Doi Nhan Dan Online* (Hanoi) 18 June 2011, in OSC-SEP20110708178001.

establish closer relationships with non-regional powers, particularly the United States and India. South Korea also has joined Vietnam in an "overall joint proposed plan."[15]

Vietnamese Minister of Defense Phung Quang Thanh and then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates agreed to address maritime security in October 2010. U.S. Navy ships since have made several port visits. Then, Assistant Secretary of State Andrew Shapiro and Vietnam's Deputy Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh discussed "shared interests in working toward a strategic partnership" as well as developments in the South China Sea.

UNCLOS

When Vietnam signed the UNCLOS, it claimed straight baselines in excess of common practice; it also stipulated that warships obtain authorization "at least 30 days prior to passage" through its 24 nm contiguous zone. Hanoi further claims extension of the UNCLOS restriction on warship operations for the 12 nm territorial waters to apply throughout the contiguous zone.

More seriously, Vietnam places restrictions on the number and activities of visiting military vessels that are unlawful, even in its territorial sea. [16] The UNCLOS was ratified in 1994, with a note claiming Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands.[17]

15 For instance, see Juan Pinalez, "Vietnam Representatives Visit USS *George Washington*," *Navy News Service*, NNS110309-12 (09 March 2011), at: http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=58986; Patrick Barta, "U.S., Vietnam in Exercises Amid Tensions With China," *Wall Street Journal* (16 July 2011), at: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304223804576447412748465574.html; and "India, Vietnam: Testing China's Patience," *IRGA* (26 September 2011), at: http://www.irgamag.com/?page=Stories_26092011; and Donald Kirk, "Seoul and Hanoi Eye a Glowing Partnership," *Asia Times Online* (10 November 2011), at: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/korea/mk10dg01.html (all accessed 02 June 2012).

16 Kaye, 36; Mark J. Valencia and Jon M. Van Dyke, "Vietnam's National Interests and the Law of the Sea," *Ocean Development and International Law* 25, no. 2 (1994), 219-229, discusses Vietnam's positions on the UNCLOS and conflicts with neighbors.

17 Vietnamese representative, "Maritime Security and Vietnamese Perspective," a paper presented at the SCA Join-Project Workshop on Ocean Security in Asia, in Hanoi, Vietnam, May 2005, at: http://www.scj.go.jp/en/sca/pdf/5thsecuritythao.pdf (accessed 07 June 2012).

Vietnam Navy

The Vietnam Navy (VN) has a complement of 43,000, including 27,000 naval infantry organized into two brigades. Its annual naval procurement budget increased by 150 per cent since 2008 to USD276 million in 2011 and is expected to grow to USD400 million by 2015, according to *IHS Jane's Defense Budgets*.

The VN is a modernizing force, led by six Kilo-class submarines being acquired from Russia; seven frigates, with two more building; nine corvettes, with as many as nine more planned. Russia has also agreed to modernize Vietnamese shipbuilding facilities and to transfer the applicable technology. The VPN also operates in co-ordination with the Vietnamese Coast Guard, People's Public Security Force, Customs, Border Guard Force and Maritime Police.

Conclusion

Competition between China and the United States contributes to the political, economic, and military environment in Southeast Asia. India's Look East Policy interjects a third maritime power's interests into Southeast Asia, while Japan may be on the verge of increasing its presence in the region's waters. [18]

The Philippines and Vietnam welcome increased outside involvement in Southeast Asia, as possible counterweights to China.[19] China and the United States are the two elephants of the region; the Philippines and Vietnam want to balance both and offend neither. They are backing this aim by attempting to improve their naval deterrent capability by deploying modernized fleets.

The Philippine Navy has neither the ship nor personnel numbers nor financial support from the central government to defend the Philippines' maritime interests. Manila is confronted by serious domestic challenges, including terrorist and insurgent threats, which pose its most important national security issue. In confronting China and other claimants to those land features, the Philippines has no option other than accommodating those nations' demands or relying on the United States for protection.

18 My conversation with senior U.S. Navy officer.

19 See, David Pilling, "Asia's Quiet Anger With 'Big, Bad' China," *Financial Times* (01 June 2011), at: http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/da3396b6-8c81-11e0-883f-00144feab49a.html#axzz1zPMRz4ta (accessed 01 July 2012).

Vietnam's territorial disputes in the South China/East Sea are more complex than the Philippines, since Hanoi claims both the Spratly and Paracel Island groups. The VN is much more capable than that of the Philippines, including Kilo-class submarines and modern anti-ship cruise missiles acquired from Russia, but can not match the PLAN.

Hanoi is moving in significant ways to strengthen its maritime position. First, it is welcoming an increased U.S., Indian, and Japanese naval presence in the region. Second, it is acquiring modern weapons from Russia, including additional Kilo-class submarines. Third, it is establishing an indigenous ship building infrastructure capable of producing modern warships. Fourth and associated with the foregoing, it is establishing a ship maintenance infrastructure to support both its own and foreign naval vessels.

An unquantifiable but important factor affecting and perhaps inspiring responses to China's increasing maritime presence in Southeast Asia is the national resolve and national command authority (NCA) coherence of the regional states. These characteristics may still be discerned in current naval modernization efforts by the two countries. Democratic Philippines is struggling with internal unrest in widely separate areas of its huge geographic expanses that demands maximum defense efforts from the military. Vietnam, on the other hand, has a strongly autocratic government with firm control over a discrete geographic country and a history of strong national coherence.

The South China Sea disputes carry the most dangerous potential for conflict in Southeast Asia. The primary obstacle for settlement is all claimants' rigidity on both their own claims and unwillingness to negotiate on anything more than a time-delay basis. Time is in Beijing's favor, given its steadily increasing economic and naval strength.

The Role of China's Civil Maritime Forces in the South China Sea

George P. Vance
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The rise in competition over maritime sovereignty rights in the South China Sea has taken on new characteristics. China's assertiveness of maritime sovereignty claims previously dominated by military actions of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is now primarily conducted through non-military means. For the foreseeable future China will safeguard sovereignty claims through the use of civil maritime forces and persistent presence.

Six countries boast conflicting coastal maritime rights and territorial sovereignty claims extending from islands and reefs. China, Vietnam, Philippians, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia are in competition over regional maritime natural resources. The scope and content of these claims are primarily driven by fisheries rights and the exploration of hydrocarbon energy reserves. In the past, China's neighboring countries did not have the economic development driving discernible maritime needs so China maintained a relatively peaceful regional existence by following a principle of maritime stability. Increased economic development in the region created a growing demand for maritime resources yielding associated sovereignty disputes.[1] There has been a shift in the characteristics of maritime confrontations in the South China Sea and East China Sea since 2009. Prior to 2009, 71% of the confrontations involved China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). More recently the majority of confrontations, 60%, involve Chinese civil maritime forces from China Maritime Surveillance or China Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (CFLEC).[2] This shift in the defense of maritime claims in the South China Sea can be attributed to improved civil maritime enforcement capability and China's deliberate strategy of avoiding deployment of more confrontational naval forces.

1 "China Shifts Maritime Strategy," *People's Daily Online*, July 16, 2012.

2 FlashPoints, Center for a New American Security, www.cnas.org/flashpoints.

China's increased activity in the South China Sea has created regional security concerns throughout East Asia with increased scrutiny from western observers. A comprehensive assessment of China's activities in the South China Sea must draw upon awareness of the political mechanism and bureaucratic complexities in China, an understanding of South China Sea sovereignty claims and associated territorial disputes, and familiarity with China's civil maritime organizations.

Political Mechanism and Bureaucratic Complexities

It is difficult for western society to grasp the complexities of China's Marxist based Communist Party led political system. The Chinese Communist Party is structured to have direct influence over the state, military and society in China. The political system basically consists of the Party, Central Military Commission, the State apparatus, various committees or departments, and an influential Provincial governance structure. There is tremendous bureaucratic competition in this heavily "stove-piped" system. Niwa Uichiro, Japan Ambassador to China describes China as the world's most bureaucratic state. Each element within China political system is managed vertically, with an absence of horizontal cooperation across divisions and organizations. There is very little if any information sharing. This creates inconsistencies and contradictions in government policies, and practices. As a result, China's official views and actions can change several times and appear confusing or non-responsive. Provincial leaders are powerful players in certain circumstances having approval authority over select State activities.[3]

The Chinese Communist Party is committed to maintaining leadership control over the state and society, as defined in the preamble to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. The predominant challenge to control does not originate from an external threat but resides in the internal vulnerability emerging from the growing socio-economic trifurcation of China's society. China's central and local governments will spend $111.4 billion on domestic security to contain potential civil unrest in 2012, up 11.5% from 2011.[4] A Party strategy to mitigate internal unrest is continued economic growth, targeted at 8.7% for 2012, as a means to maintain (a perception of) an improving quality of life for all Chinese people. Three maritime contributors to sustained economic growth and quality of life are: availability of living marine resources, access to oil and gas energy reserves, and freedom of

3 "Avoid a Clash between Japan and China at All Costs," *Voice*, March 2012, pp 44-51.

4 "China Domestic Security Spending Rises to $11 bullion," *Reuters*, March 5, 2012.

navigation. Freedom of navigation is the foundation of a maritime transportation system that is the primary means of delivering Chinese manufactured goods to the global market.

China's South China Sea sovereignty claims have been labeled a "core interest". However, no senior official has ever publically described the South China Sea as such.[5]

Sovereignty Claims in the South China Sea

China's sovereignty claims in the South China Sea are delineated by the "nine-dashed line". The original "eleven-dashed line" appeared in a Republic of China atlas in 1947. In 1955 the PRC removed two dashes in the Gulf of Tonkin creating today's "nine-dash line". The line was never officially defined and remains officially undefined today.[6] Other claimants of the South China Sea have attempted to justify their claims based on the coastlines and the provisions of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLS). China continues to rely on a mix of historic rights and legal claims, while remaining deliberately ambiguous about the meaning of the "nine-dashed line" around the sea that is drawn on Chinese maps.[7] At the same time China claims indisputable sovereignty in the South China Sea. (see map next page.)

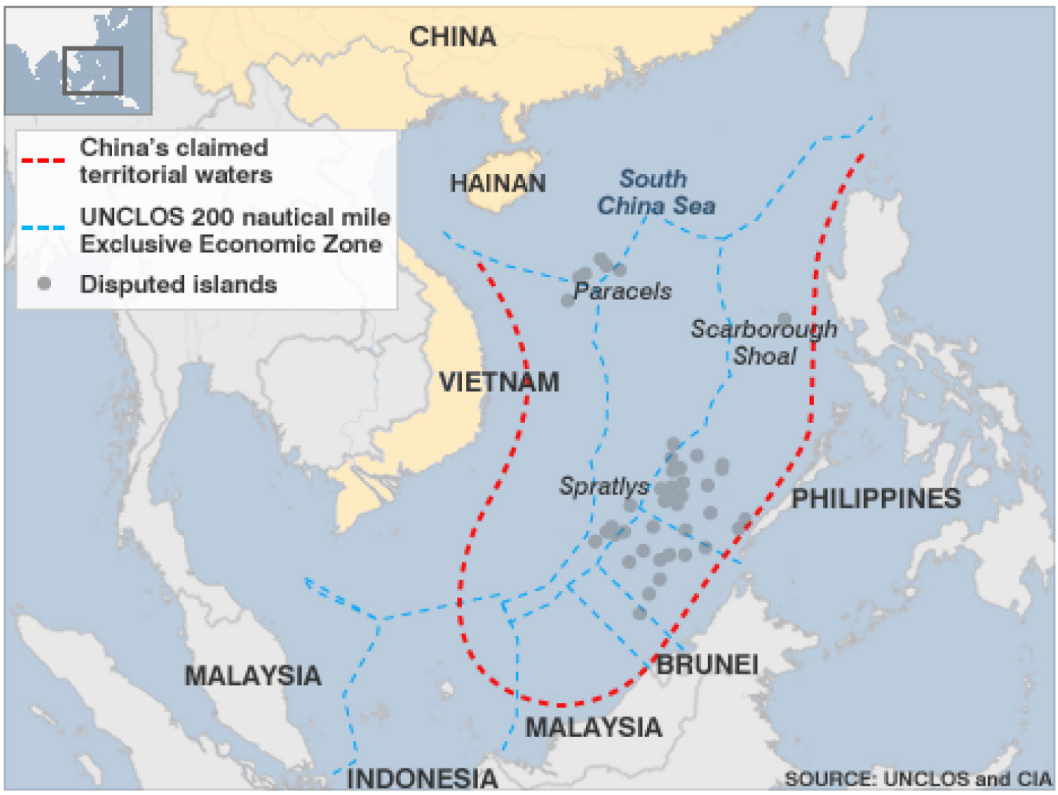
China's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claims originating from its coast in the areas adjacent to Guangdong and Hainan Provinces are largely accepted within the context of UNCLOS. However, China's claim to islands and coral reefs in the southern portion of the sea in the areas of the Paracels, Spratlys and Scarborough Shoal are heavily contested. The Paracels present a bilateral dispute between China and Vietnam as does Scarborough Shoal with Philippines. The Spratlys, a conglomeration of approximately 230 islands, shoals, and reefs presents a broader multilateral dispute. Vietnam and China claim "indisputable sovereignty" over the entire area while Philippines and Malaysia stipulate partial claims.[8]

5 "China-Philipines Cooperation Depends on Proper Settlement of Maritime Disputes", Xinhua News Agency, August 2011.

6 China's Ocean Frontier: International Law, Military Force, and National Development", Greg Austin, Camberra, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

7 "Armed Clash in the South China Sea", Bonnie S. Galser, Council on Foreign Relations Center for Preventive Action, April 2012.

Figure 1: South China Sea maritime disputes



Recent South China Sea Confrontations

Beyond nationalistic pride, three economic contributors associated with EEZ and continental shelf claims dominate the maritime sovereignty competition in the South China Sea. Southeast Asia fishery is a multibillion dollar business and a primary protein source in the region. Fishing incursions into disputed territories have been a primary source of conflict for many years. A growing dimension of the sovereignty competition is driven by offshore hydrocarbon exploration and development rights. The demand for energy security and the potential reserves in the South China Sea have raised the stakes of this competition. To a lesser extent freedom of navigation and security of sea lanes of communications play a factor in the regional competition. With nearly ninety percent of goods and products mov-

8 China's Ocean Frontier: International Law, Military Force, and National Development", Greg Austin, Camberra, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

ing through the maritime transportation system, freedom of navigation is a global economic and national security concern.

Fisheries incursions are a regular occurrence throughout the world. Domestic fisheries agencies regularly enforce EEZ living marine resource rights. These activities are particularly sensitive in the South China Sea due to conflicting territorial claims. In May 2009 China announced a unilateral there-month moratorium on fishing in the South China Sea. The stated purpose of the ban was to preserve fish stocks, prevent illegal fishing and protect Chinese fisherman. This ban was imposed during the height of the Vietnamese fishing season. Vietnamese official vehemently opposed this unilateral suspension. During this same time China Fisheries Law Enforcement vessels commenced regular extended deployments into the South China Sea to protect Chinese fishing operations and safeguard China's claimed rights. These deployments provided a relatively persistent CFLEC presence within contested areas increasing confrontations and tension. In 2009 China expelled more than 145 foreign fishing boats from contested areas, detaining or seizing 33 boats and 433 fishermen.[9] In one instance a Chinese fishery vessel rammed and sank a Vietnamese boat.[10] In 2010 and 2011, China once again announced a unilateral fishing ban in the South China Sea conducting a practice of heavy handed enforcement. This trend heightened confrontations.

Increased offshore hydrocarbon exploration has escalated maritime confrontations. In March 2011 two Chinese patrol boats forced the Philippine *MV Veritas Voyager,* a Forum Energy Plc survey vessel to curtail operation in the Reed Bank area off Palawan Island, in Philippine claimed EEZ (Spratlys).[11] Three times in early 2011, China Maritime Surveillance vessels and a Chinese fishing boat curtailed seismic survey ships operations in designated blocks of Vietnam's claimed EEZ cutting the cables towing seismic monitoring equipment.[12] In May three China Maritime Surveillance ships confronted the *Binh Minh 02*, a Vietnamese seismic survey ship operating in a designated exploration block. The CMS ships threatened the *Binh Minh*

9 2009 : China Fisheries Yearbook, "China seizes Vietnamese Fishing Boat", Deutsche Presse-Agentur, April 19, 2010.

10 "Controversial Chinese ban affects more Vietnamese fishing vessels," *Thanh Nien News*, June 5, 2009.

11 BBC Asia-Pacific, March 8, 2011.

12 "Vietnam Condemns Chinese Intrusion", Vietnam News Agency, May 28, 2011 and Bloomberg *Businessweek*, June 9, 2011.

02 ultimately cutting the cable towing seismic monitoring equipment.[13] The *Binh Minh 02* returned to port for repairs and resumed oil exploitation activities with an escort of eight additional ships.[14] In June, according to Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "a premeditated and carefully calculated" incident occurred when a Chinese fishing boat equipped with a "cable cutting device" snared the cable of a seismic survey ship operating in a designated survey block in the vicinity of Vanguard Bank.[15] Later that month a similar attempt to once again disrupt operations of *Binh Minh 02* was thwarted by security escort vessels.[16]

These activities were quite similar to the 2009 *USNS IMPECCABLE* confrontation with a Chinese fishing vessel off the coast of Hainan Island. A Chinese "fishing boat" with CFLEC and CMS vessels in the area came dangerously close to damaging the towed array of the USN special mission ship. The *USNS IMPECCABLE* defended its position with nonlethal force avoiding an international incident.

Civil Maritime Organization

China's civil maritime organizations, those entities with U.S. Coast Guard-like functions, are dispersed across various Ministries with oversight and controlled at the State as well as Provincial level. Civil maritime authorities and responsibilities associated with law enforcement, search and rescue, maritime safety and security, management of natural resources, environmental protection, and scientific research reside in five Ministries and multiple agencies. Not all of these agencies possess operational capabilities. Regulatory and operational enforcement authorities and responsibilities frequently reside within different organizations. (see chart top of next page.)

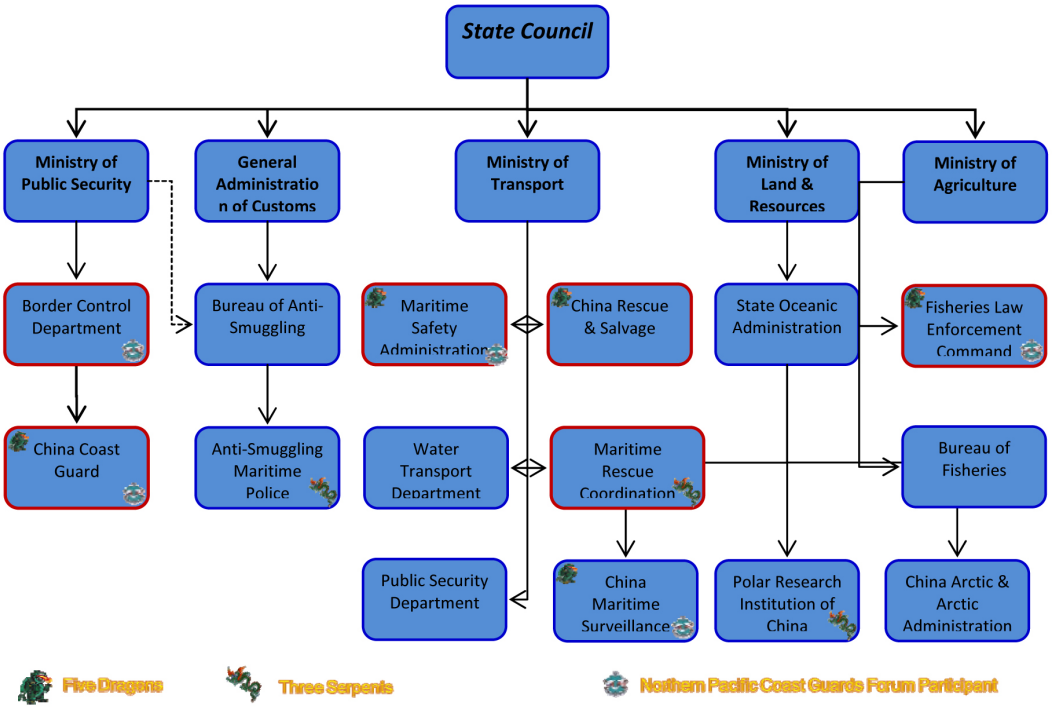
13 "Vietnam says Chinese Boat Harassed PetroVietnam Survey Ship," Reuter, May 27, 2011.

14 "Vietnam stands ground in sea dispute, survey ship takes up work," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, June 6, 2011.

15 "Vietnam accuses China of Harassing Another Boat," Reuters, June 9, 2011.

16 "East Sea Undercurrents," *Thanh Nien News*, June 10, 2011.

Figure 2: China's Civil Maritime Organization



Ministry of Transport

Within the Ministry of Transport the Maritime Safety Administration, China Rescue and Salvage and the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center conduct a wide range of government interactions with the maritime community.

China Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) is the most broad reaching and engaging of China's civil maritime organizations. MSA's primary missions include search & rescue, marine traffic control, port state control, flag state control, prevention of pollution from ships, ship survey, safety management of shipping companies, training-examination-certification of seafarers, safe carriage of dangerous goods, hydrographic survey, marine accident investigation, international cooperation and aids to navigation. MSA is also China's executive representative to the International Maritime Organization.

MSA meets its mission objectives through 20 Regional Offices, 97 Branch Locations, 19 Vessel Traffic Service Centers, Hydrographic Survey Centers and 1,880 navigational aids. MSA force strength exceeds 25,000 personnel with a fleet of

210 vessels of 20 meters or larger and approximately 1,100 fast response and utility boast.

China Rescue & Salvage (CRS) is China's national professional rescue & salvage organization. CRS missions include emergency response to accidents at sea, life-saving, salvage of vessels and property, wreck-removal, clearance of navigational waterways, fire-fighting, and elimination of oil spills. CRS is a unique hybrid government-commercial organization. The rescue operations fall under the government organizational structure while salvage operations are conducted as a commercial enterprise. China Rescue & Salvage also fulfills national obligations under international conventions and bilateral maritime agreements on behalf of Chinas government.

CRS has three regional Rescue Bureaus: Beihai, Donghai, Nanhai; four Flying Services: Behai, No. 1 & No. 2 Donghai, and Nanhai; three Salvage Bureaus: Yantai, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and two engineering centers. CRS's force strength exceeds 10,000 personnel, with an impressive fleet of 180 very well maintained and operated vessels, 17 aviation assets, 21 rescue stations, and 18 emergency response teams. CRS is the most competent and well equipped of China's civil maritime organizations.

The China Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC) is located in the Ministry of Transport Headquarters Building in Beijing. The primary responsibilities of the MRCC are; organization and coordination of serious search and rescue operations and marine pollution responses; maintaining national search and rescue and marine pollution response communication & information system; international maritime search and rescue and Oil Pollution Preparedness/Response (OPPR) cooperation and information exchange; receiving and responding to piracy activity notifications; inter-ministry search and rescue coordination and cooperation.

The MRCC is staffed by Maritime Safety Administration personnel and serves as the inter-ministry coordination center for not only maritime but the full spectrum of national disaster response activities. The center brings together State, Military, Provincial, commercial, and other social resources in time of a national disaster. The MRCC was the focal point for coordinating domestic and international response to the devastating 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Coastal and primary inland waterway maritime situational awareness is maintained at the MRCC through the consolidation of domain awareness information and operational activities of 13 Provincial rescue coordination centers. The MRCC consolidates information feeds

from various communications systems, China Ship Reporting System (CHISREP), 29 Vessel Traffic Centers, 87 radar stations, 100 Automatic Identification System stations, 140 monitoring stations with 244 CCTV cameras, and China Long Range Identification and Tracking System data center located in Beijing Maritime Satellite Terrestrial Station.

Ministry of Public Security

The China Coast Guard (CCG) is traditionally referred to as the Maritime Division of the Public Security Bureau or Maritime Police. The Border Control Department maintains a military rank structure functioning as a paramilitary police force under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). The CCG is manned by active service personnel of the People's Armed Police (PAP). CCG's primary responsibilities are maritime security and law enforcement to include counter terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and illegal migration. CCG does not have fishery law enforcement authority.

The CCG meets its mission objectives through 20 CCG Branches, which are regimental-level unit in China's military administrative hierarchy, and 65 Marine Groups. CCG force strength is approximately 10,000 personnel, with 126 vessels greater than 50 tons. CCG desires to acquire the competence and capabilities to interdict maritime transnational crime out to the second island chain. Currently CCG rarely operates beyond 200 miles.

Ministry of Agriculture

The Bureau of Fisheries and Fisheries Law Enforcement Command are within the Ministry of Agriculture. The Bureau of Fishery has regulatory and outreach responsibilities while the Fisheries Law Enforcement Command has operational enforcement authorities and capabilities.

The Bureau of Fishery has the authority and responsibility to regulate China fishery, promulgate fishery policy and promote international cooperation.

The China Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC) is responsible for the enforcement of laws concerning fishing and maritime resources management within PRC's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). FLEC's responsibili-

ties include protecting Chinese fishing vessels and personnel, resolving disputes in fishing activities, preventing illegal fishing, and protecting maritime resources.

FLEC has three regional headquarters in Yantai, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to carry out law enforcement patrols in the Boahi Sea/Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea respectively. Each coastal province and city also has local fishery law enforcement agencies to perform similar functions at the local level. FLEC has approximately 1,000 personnel, and 18 vessels over 1,000 tons.

Ministry of Land and Resources

China Maritime Surveillance is within the State Oceanic Administration of the Ministry of Land and Resources. China Maritime Surveillance has the authority and responsibility to "protect China's maritime interests". The organization is responsible for enforcing law and order within China's territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and coastal zone, protecting maritime environment, natural resources, and carrying out maritime surveys. In time of emergency, CMS maritime assets can also be deployed for other missions

CMS has three regional headquarters in Qingdao (covering the Bohai Sea and Yellow Sea), Shanghai (cover the East China Sea), and Guangzhou (covering the South China Sea). Each regional headquarters has three marine surveillance flotillas, an aviation unit, as well as a number of communications and logistics support units. There are also eleven provincial marine surveillance headquarters, 50 municipal marine surveillance headquarters, and 170 county marine surveillance units across the coastal region.

As of 2011, CMS's force strength was 9,000 personnel equipped with 300 patrol vessels and 10 aircraft. In the past six years CMS has more than tripled the size of its surface fleet and nearly tripled the number of aviation assets. By 2020 CMS plans on increasing it's end strength to 15,000 personnel, 520 vessels and 16 aircraft.[17]

Administration of Customs

The primary mission of the Anti-Smuggling Maritime Police within the General Administration of Customs is revenue collection. The Anti-Smuggling Maritime

17 "China to Strengthen Maritime Forces Amid Disputes," China Daily, June 17, 2011.

Police principally operate in coastal waters with an emphasis in the area between Guangdong Province and Hong Kong. Although the Customs anti-smuggling police is frequently assessed with 212 vessels this number appears to be inflated or a target end state. According to U.S. Customs, other China civil maritime officials and Hong Kong maritime police Anti-Smuggling maritime police assets are seldom seen operationally deployed.

Shift in Maritime Strategy

"China's maritime strategy is turning from maintaining stability to safeguarding sovereignty."[18]

On November 4, 2002 the ten ASEAN member States and the People's Republic of China signed a "Declaration of Conduct on Parties in the South China Sea". The declaration reaffirmed peace, stability, cooperation and economic growth in the region with a commitment to the purpose and principles of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Parties agreed to a commitment of exploring ways for building trust and confidence, a respect for the freedom of navigation, and to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means consistent with UNCLOS.[19] Ten years later at the ASEAN Summit meeting, with the principals of the Declaration of Conduct in complete disregard, Cambodia, again the host nation but now clearly following China's lead, claimed "technical glitches" prevented ASEAN Secretary-General Suron Pitsuwam and Philippine Foreign Minister Albert del Rosario from raising the sensitive issue of the South China Sea. China's 2011 foreign direct investment in Cambodia was $1.2 billion. This was the first time in 45 years that the ASEAN nations failed to agree on a concluding summit statement. It was said to be the most heated and unproductive meeting in the history of ASEAN. There is strong opinion that China has breached ASEAN solidarity manipulating intra-ASEAN divisions.[20]

Just two weeks before the annual meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) quietly announced that nine new blocks in the South China Sea were now open to foreign oil companies for exploration and development. The western edge of some blocks are charted less

18 Jin Canrong, Associate Dean of International Studies' at Renmin University of China.

19 "Declaration of Conduct on Parties in the South China Sea," Official ASEAN website, http://www.aseansec.org/13163.htm.

20 "ASEAN way flounders in South China Sea storm," Reuters, July 17, 2012.

than 80 nautical miles from Vietnam's coast, well within the country's claimed Exclusive Economic Zone. The blocks partially overlap areas where PetroVietnam is conducting joint exploration activities with foreign oil companies.[21]

Building upon the approach of safeguarding sovereignty:

On July 16, 2012, a fleet of 30 fishing vessels from China's Hainan Island arrived at Nansha Islands for an extended fishing expedition near Yongshu Reef, in a contested area with Vietnam. A Fishery Law Enforcement Command patrol vessel, Zhongguo Yuzheng 310, was deployed accompaning the fleet to protect the fishing activities.[22]

On Tuesday, July 17, 2012, the Standing Committee of the Hainan Provincial People's Congress formally established a prefectural-level city of Sansha on Yongxing Island to administer the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha islands and the surrounding 2 million square kilometers of waters in the South China Sea. Officials stated that Sansha city will improve China's management of the region and help coordinate efforts to develop the islands and protect the marine environment, oil-gas, fishery and tourism resources in the South China Sea.[23]

Moving Forward

Southeast Asian coastal nations, including China will continue to claim, assert, exercise and enforce competing sovereignty claims to maritime rights in the South China Sea. Although some observers focus on China as the primary antagonist, it can be debated that regional economic development and the associated energy demands has increased the willingness of all claimants to assert and defend their perceived sovereignty right fueling this escalating maritime competition.[24] China will continue to strategically safe guard national interests in the South China Sea. China Maritime Surveillance and Fisheries Law Enforcement Command will continue to

21 "The South China Sea Oil Card", M. Taylor Farvel, June 27, 2012.

22 "30-vessel China fishing fleet arrives at Nansha Islands", Xinhua News.

23 "China's Sansha starts forming government", China Focus July 17,2012.

24 "Maritime Security in the South China Sea and the Competition Over Maritime Rights," M. Taylor Fravel, January 2012.

protect maritime natural resources and commercial interests in regions of China's claimed national sovereignty, within the "nine-dash line".

Although recent actions can be perceived as regionally hegemonic, China's official position is to avoid provoking disputes and attempt to win the support of surrounding countries.[25] In early June, General Ma Xiaotian, a Deputy Chief of the General Staff in the People's Liberation Army responded to the question of China's strategy in the South China Sea, with emphasis on avoiding militarization of the disputes. Ma commented, "We have the ability to defend our waters, but at the moment we have still not prepared to use military force. If we were to do so, it would be as a last resort. We are still conducting bilateral talks, using diplomatic means and civilian [law enforcement] means to resolve the conflict. This way is the best." The emphasis on using maritime law enforcement agencies to maintain a presence in disputed areas suggests a deliberate effort to cap the potential for escalation while asserting China's claims.[26] The question at hand is will the Southeast Asian coastal nations be successful in settling their sovereignty disputes and diffusing tensions through diplomatic means or will these conflicts escalate to the use of military force. China's government agency, State Owned Enterprise activities and public policy statements appear contradictory creating confusion and uneasiness among regional neighbors and global observers.

China is exercising an expanded maritime strategy of safeguarding sovereignty by means of occupation. This strategy is similar to the long-term approach taken to manage ethnic separatism in China's western Xinjiang Provence. The indigenous Uihgur population of Xinjiang Provence is ethnically, culturally and politically differentiated from China's majority Han population. Ethnic Han Chinese populate the country's western regions settling amongst and attempting to integrate into Uihgur communities with the objective of diluting the regional ethnic stronghold. This is a long-term strategy which may not find success in the dynamic South China Sea.

Sending substantial fishing fleets into disputed areas, auctioning offshore blocks for oil and gas exploration in contentious zones with the intent of establishing tangible commercial interests, developing small islands and atolls, and creating city government administrations at these South China Sea outposts creates a greater Chinese presence with the potential of intensifying competition and conflict. A greater Chinese population occupying, working and living within these far reaching areas

25 "China Shifts its Maritime Strategy," People's Daily Online, July 16, 2012.

26 "The PLA in the South China Sea," *The Diplomat*, June 2012.

of the South China Sea can drive an expanded demand for maritime safety and security services beyond those provided by CMS and FLEC. A growing domestic presence in the area brings a demand for the full spectrum of maritime services provided by agencies such as the China Coast Guard, Maritime Safety Administration and China Rescue and Salvage. Currently these agencies do not regularly operate in the far reaches of the South China Sea.

It is reported that the Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration will expand (has expanded) their traditional monitoring of coastal areas into the Exclusive Economic Zone out to 200 nautical miles, to include disputed area of the East China Sea. According to reports an air patrol detachment was established in 2011 by Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration in Zhoushan, Zhejiang.[27] However, close evaluation of the airfield indicates China Maritime Surveillance aircraft at this location. Reports of China's civil maritime activities and operational capability frequently misrepresent the various government maritime organizations leading to erroneous analysis and presumptions. If in fact the Maritime Safety Administration is involved in expanded surveillance of the East China Sea this may be an indication of the agency's role in China's defense of maritime sovereignty claims not only in the East China Sea but potentially into the South China Sea as well.

For several years, Chinese academics and maritime think tanks, in particular Luo Yuan a researcher with the Academy of Military Science, have postulated and debated the creation of an "integrated" China Coast Guard.[28] The concept encompasses consolidating the various civil maritime organizations in to a single government agency to achieved increased coordination, improved efficiencies and expanded capabilities. The United States and Japanese Coast Guards are frequently used as example organizations. However, bureaucratic obstacles; the unwillingness of any organization to relinquish current authorities, responsibilities or status, the independent success of each agency, and the argument that competing priorities and mission objectives will in fact inhibit effectiveness not improve operations has prevented substantial restructuring of China's civil maritime organization. Organizational change will only occur as a mandate from the highest Party authority. As with any large bureaucratic organization change is difficult. A crisis or catalyzing event is frequently necessary to stimulate change. The South China Sea sovereignty competition may be significant enough to stimulate this change. Change will more likely occur in the form of "functional" or "operational integration" in like mission

27 "China to Monitor Disputed East China Sea Region," Ocean-fortune, January 26, 2012.

28 "New Chinese Coast Guard," China Daily, March 6, 2012.

areas at the regional or provincial level versus a national organizational consolidation. The creation of a large capable civil maritime force raises numerous questions beyond maritime sovereignty. A consolidated civil maritime force may compete with the PLAN for resources and prestige. Expanded civil maritime capabilities could alter or expand the roles and objectives of the PLAN.

In the near term China will continue to test the waters of the South China Sea with a variety of measures aimed at reinforcing maritime sovereignty claims. The effectiveness of actions ranging from direct and dangerous interference with vessel operations as in the case of the *USNS IMPECCABLE* and *MV Veritas Voyager* to escorting large Chinese fishing fleets to contested fishing grounds and developing naturally uninhabitable shoals, atolls and commercial assets will be evaluated from a domestic as well as international perspective. A wide range of activities and political posturing will be tried and tested leaving military interdiction as a last resort.

Chinese Views of the Air-Sea Battle Concept: A Preliminary Assessment

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In February 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense announced in its *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) that the Air Force and Navy were jointly developing a new "air-sea battle concept." This concept would, among other objectives, solidify U.S. military superiority over "adversaries equipped with sophisticated anti-access and area denial capabilities."[1]

As U.S. defense officials elaborated upon this concept, Chinese analysts began to take notice. In mid 2010, commentaries began emerging in Chinese media on how the new concept could affect security in the Western Pacific, and what implications this could hold for China. Since then, the large volume of Chinese writing on the air-sea battle (ASB) concept has presented an opportunity for review and analysis.

This paper examines how the concept is perceived by strategists and analysts within China's defense establishment, and how this perception may shape China's response to U.S. implementation of the ASB concept. This study is not a definitive analysis of Chinese views of the ASB concept. Much more work needs to be done in order to fully understand these views.

Chinese views on the ASB concept are still evolving. However, our preliminary review of select Chinese articles since 2010 reveals some common perceptions, including that the ASB concept:

- is primarily aimed at containing China and combatting what the United States perceives as China's emerging anti-access/area denial (A2AD) strategy;

1 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2010), p. 32.

- will likely be hampered in its implementation by a shrinking U.S. military budget and continuing competition among U.S. services;
- will require the United States to increasingly rely on regional allies, especially Japan and Australia; and
- provides additional justification for China to continue expanding and developing asymmetrical strategies targeting what it perceives to be the U.S. military's weak points.

Approach

At the outset of this project, we sought to compile a dataset of Chinese commentary that, although limited, would provide insight into current Chinese thinking on the ASB concept. Our approach was as follows:

- We reviewed PRC military periodicals published since 2010. These provided valuable information on how the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is explaining the ASB concept to its own service personnel.
- We also reviewed recent commentaries on the ASB concept in civilian Chinese-language scholarly journals. These provided a window into discussions of the concept taking place at the academic level.
- Finally, we surveyed reporting on the ASB concept in major civilian news outlets such as Xinhua, *People's Daily*, and *Global Times*, using these outlets' websites as well online databases of Chinese media articles. This allowed us to explore how the ASB concept is being discussed in state-directed civilian media, which may indicate how China's government and Communist Party leaders would like the Chinese public to perceive and understand the ASB concept.

As we analyzed this dataset, we sought to gain an initial understanding of the following:

- Who in China is providing commentary on the ASB concept?
- What are the common themes and arguments in Chinese writing about the ASB concept?

- What implications do these themes and arguments present for the United States as it implements the ASB concept?

Background

In May 2010, three months after the Department of Defense introduced the ASB concept in the QDR, the U.S. Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), an independent policy institute, produced a paper entitled *AirSea Battle: A Point of Departure Concept*. This paper provided the most in-depth analysis to date of the implications of the ASB concept, and contained numerous mentions of China as a motivating factor.[2] The number of subsequent Chinese commentaries citing this paper and describing its main points indicates that (1) the CSBA paper was widely read within China's defense establishment, and (2) it has generated much discussion about the ASB concept and its implications for China.[3]

From mid 2010 to late 2011, while there were numerous references to the ASB concept in Chinese civilian media, major discussion of the concept generally took place within military affairs publications. Starting in late 2011, state-owned mass media, including outlets such as *People's Daily*, Xinhua, *Global Times*, and *China Youth Daily*, began to greatly expand their reporting on the ASB concept, a trend that has continued well into 2012.[4] A diverse set of authors, affiliated with a wide array of institutions in the Chinese defense establishment, have commented on the ASB concept.

It is difficult to tie this media push to any single event, but two developments in November 2011 were widely cited in Chinese reporting on the ASB concept:

- The establishment of an Air-Sea Battle Office at the Pentagon

2 Jan van Tol, Mark Gunzinger, Andrew F. Krepinevich, and Jim Thomas, *AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Concept* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, May 2010). Multiple reports in Chinese media state that the CSBA report mentions China more than 300 times.

3 The CSBA report is specifically cited in five of the nine articles we reviewed in depth for this paper. One article we reviewed states that the report "provides a detailed elaboration of the definition, importance, and specific implementation channels of 'Air-Sea Battle.'"

4 That month, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, the *People's Daily* published 32 articles mentioning ASB (including 7 with ASB in the headline), more than it had in the previous 18 months combined. Our surveys of other state- and Party-run media outlets showed similar spikes in coverage, and that trend has continued well into 2012.

- The announcement by President Obama of a plan to station U.S. Marines in Darwin, Australia.[5]

Through an initial review of articles from Chinese journals and newspapers, we identified about 60 that appear to contain substantive discussion of the ASB concept.[6] Of these, we chose nine articles to review in depth. (See the appendix.) We made our selections based on:

- **The authors' affiliations.** Seven of the nine articles were written by authors with clear ties to high-level PLA universities and research institute. Some of these articles were written by individuals who are viewed within China as leading military strategists, such as Maj. Gen. Peng Guangqian and Sr. Capt. Li Jie.[7] Though these articles cannot be said to represent the official position of the authors' institutions, they may provide insight into the types of discussions taking place within them.

- **The relevance of the content.** Two articles, from the Chinese journals *Ordnance Knowledge* and *World Affairs*, provided a sufficient depth of discussion and insight into Chinese views of the ASB concept to warrant inclusion.[8]

5 Numerous Chinese commentaries, including several that we included in our dataset, have linked this Darwin deployment to the ASB concept. For instance, an essay in *China Youth Daily* by two scholars from China's National Defense University described the Darwin deployment as "a practical step for implementing the 'Air-Sea Battle' concept and also an important link for building the 'Air-Sea Battle' framework." Dang Encheng and Li Wei, "At Whom Is the Spearhead of the U.S. Military's Air-Sea Battle Pointed?" *China Youth Daily*, 18 November 2011.

6 "Substantive" is used here to refer to articles that contain at least a few paragraphs discussing ASB and its implications, and excludes the many articles we found that contain only one or more passing references to the concept without elaboration. The 60 articles are only an initial sampling and are not comprehensive; in the future, larger research efforts may identify many more useful articles within this dataset.

7 Peng Guangqian is a leading Chinese military strategist, formerly with the Academy of Military Science. He is the editor of the *Science of Military Strategy*. Li Jie is a military strategist with the PLA Naval Research Institute.

8 *Ordnance Knowledge* is a publication of the China Ordnance Society, affiliated with the State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense. *World Affairs* is affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

What are the common themes and arguments in Chinese writing about the ASB concept?

Chinese analysts assert that the ASB concept represents a significant shift in terms of geography and forces but preserves the "Cold War mentality" of previous U.S. strategic concepts. Several articles compare the ASB concept to the U.S. Cold War-era "Air-Land Battle" concept.[9] Since the end of the Cold War, the Chinese authors note, the U.S. military has sought to adapt to the changing world situation and has found that Air-Land Battle is no longer sufficient to address current strategic challenges.[10] A lecturer in the political department of the PLAN Dalian Vessel Academy notes that although the United States has employed some aspects of Air-Land Battle in post-Cold War conflicts such as the Gulf War, from 1990 to 2010 it emphasized narrower operational concepts such as "no-contact operations" and "net-centric warfare."[11]

Chinese analysts assert that the ASB concept marks a significant shift away from the U.S. Air-Land Battle concept in terms of geography (from Europe, to the Western Pacific) and main forces (from the Army and Marine Corps, to the Navy and Air Force). However, they believe that, at its core, the ASB concept is a return to Air-Land Battle's "Cold War mentality." Like Air-Land Battle, the ASB concept:

- identifies a primary enemy and devotes immense resources to containing that enemy;
- relies on state-of-the-art weapons and equipment to be deployed through intricate networks of regional alliances; and

9 Air-Land Battle was the foundation for the U.S. anti-Soviet warfighting doctrine in the European theater during the late Cold War period, and eventually became the U.S. Army's main operational concept for that period.

10 Hu Jiemin, Guo Meichu, and Yang Bin, "An Analysis of 'Air-Sea Battle,'" *Journal of Defense Technology*, February 2011; Li Jie, "The U.S.' New Military Strategy Is A Signal: The Beginning of an Official Response to China," *People's Daily*, 12 January 2012; Peng Guangqian and Peng Kuang, "US 'Air-Sea Battle' Ideology Runs Counter to Reality," *Liaowang*, 12 March 2012; Wang Xiubai, "Considerations Triggered by the US 'Air-Sea Battle,'" *China Youth Daily*, 22 April 2011; Yang Yi, "'Air-Sea Battle' Goes against World Trends," *People's Daily*, 10 December 2011.

11 Jiang Guoping, "How To Understand the U.S. Military's 'Air-Sea Battle,'" *Journal of Political Work*, no. 2, 2012.

- undermines the enemy from within while drawing that enemy into an arms race it cannot win.[12]

Chinese analysts assess that China is the main target of the ASB concept. Most Chinese articles reviewed for this report directly asserted or strongly implied that the ASB concept is designed primarily to contain China, which the United States views as its greatest emerging strategic threat.[13] The U.S., several authors highlight, is particularly concerned that China's military growth and modernization threatens to limit the U.S. military's freedom to conduct operations and project power in the Western Pacific. [14]

Some Chinese analysts view the ASB concept's chief objective as countering what the United States perceives as China's increasing A2AD capabilities. Though U.S. concern about China's ability to limit access to the Western Pacific is not new, Chinese authors note that the ASB concept explicitly makes this concern a central focus of U.S. regional military strategy. According to these analysts, U.S. military strategists believe that China's A2AD capabilities include anti-satellite weaponry, cyber-warfare, anti-ship weapons, submarine warfare, air defense systems, and ballistic missiles.[15]

The ASB response to China's perceived A2AD, some articles note, is likely to begin with "blinding" attacks aimed at China's ISR networks, anti-aircraft bases, reconnaissance and early warning systems, and anti-satellite weapons. It will then move on to "long-range blockade" operations.[16] According to an article by scholars from the National University of Defense Technology, recent U.S. exercises in the region have focused on ensuring a "safe operational zone" for the delivery of U.S. forces.[17]

12 Li Jie, "U.S.' New Military Strategy"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB.'"

13 Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'."

14 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB,'"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Peng and Peng, "U.S. 'ASB' Ideology; Yang Yi, "'ASB' Goes Against World Trends"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB.'"

15 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology."

16 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB'"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology"; Sun Fei, "Deciphering the U.S. 'Air-Sea Battle Concept,'" *Ordnance Knowledge,* no. 4, 2011. Sun asserts that the United States views China's ISR as its "Achilles Heel."

17 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB.'"

These commentaries demonstrate that the authors are persuaded that the ASB concept is directly aimed at China, despite U.S. statements that it is not aimed at any particular country. The writings reviewed for this study indicate that Chinese analysts believe that actions by the United States to operationalize the ASB concept are further attempts to contain China, and that they view the integration of the ASB concept with other countries' military activities as attempts to build anti-China coalitions.

Chinese analysts adjudge that the ASB concept's ultimate implementation will be hampered by a shrinking U.S. military budget and resource competition among U.S. military services. Several articles note that U.S. military resources were greatly depleted by the last decade's "quagmires" of economic crisis and war. The depletion of those resources and the inevitable shrinking of the military budget, they argue, will make it difficult for the United States to meet the aspirations of the ASB concept, which require moving expensive new technologies to a distant region involving long supply chains.[18]

Chinese analysts also assert that the United States is playing up the danger posed by Chinese A2AD to justify the need for absolute superiority in the cutting-edge weapons systems and technologies needed to implement the ASB concept. According to Chinese authors, these include space warfare, electronic and cyber-warfare, C4ISR, long-range strike platforms, littoral combat ships, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and directed energy weapons.[19]

Chinese analysts also point out that implementation of the ASB concept is meant to strengthen systems integration between the U.S. Navy and Air Force.[20] However, they argue, competition and parochialism among the U.S. military services will make it difficult to achieve effective integration.[21] For the ASB concept to be effective against A2AD operations, these two "heretofore deeply estranged services" will

18 Ibid; Sun, "Deciphering U.S. 'ASB Concept'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology"; Gao Junyang, "Air-Sea Battle: A New Round of Strategic Adjustment?" *World Affairs*, No. 24, 2011.

19 Yang Yi, "'ASB' Goes Against World Trends"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB'"; Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Li Jie, "U.S.' New Military Strategy."

20 Gao, "ASB: A New Round?"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Li Jie, "U.S.' New Military Strategy"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB'"; Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"

21 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB'"; Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Gao, "ASB: A New Round?"; Peng and Peng, "U.S. 'ASB' Ideology."

need to consolidate their resources and develop "highly integrated joint operations capabilities," a task that may take more than a decade to accomplish.[22]

Chinese analysts assess that the ASB concept will require the United States to rely heavily on its regional allies, mainly Japan and Australia. Many articles note that the U.S. will have to rely on the support of regional allies to implement the ASB concept. The U.S. military will need to develop a large network of bases for ASB assets, including planes, anti-ship missiles, and littoral combat ships, and will need to draw on allied military forces for operational and logistical support.[23]

Chinese analysts pointed out that the United States is steadily increasing its combined military exercises and military-to-military diplomacy with many Asian countries, in part to advance ASB.[24] However, several articles asserted, not all allies are of equal importance; two countries in particular will be instrumental to ASB—Japan and Australia:[25]

- Authors whose articles we reviewed noted that the United States has established strong cooperation with Japan in the areas of missile defense, anti-aircraft warfare, anti-submarine warfare, and reconnaissance and early warning.[26] As the United States implements the ASB concept, they point out, it is likely to call on Japan to take on more and more of the burden.[27]

22 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB'"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB.'"

23 Yang Yi, "'ASB' Goes Against World Trends"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB'"; Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Li Jie, "U.S.' New Military Strategy."

24 Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology."

25 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "Analysis of 'ASB'"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB'"; Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Sun, "Deciphering U.S. 'ASB Concept'"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology."

26 Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB'"; Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology."

27 Sun, "Deciphering U.S. 'ASB Concept'"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB.'"

- The recent announcement by the United States that it will station U.S. Marines in Australia is seen by some authors as the formation of a key link in ASB, one that will provide valuable operational support for U.S. sea control operations. [28] The United States hopes to base assets in Australia, including anti-ship missiles and radars, that could be integral to ASB operations.[29]

Several authors described potential pitfalls to the United States' reinvigorated alliance-building in the Western Pacific. One such pitfall is that countries in the region may provide differing levels of support to the United States, possibly causing friction, suspicion, and misunderstanding between the United States and its allies.[30]

Additionally, Chinese analysts note, the United States may be overconfident about the reliability of its chief allies. PLA military strategist Maj. Gen. Peng Guangqian asserts that U.S. strategists are concerned that Japan, an important partner in implementing the ASB concept, may choose to downplay its duties within the alliance or even to remain neutral.[31] Other authors point out that Australia may be wary of antagonizing China, its largest trading partner.[32] U.S. allies and friends in the region will suffer hardship, another author notes, if the U.S. carries out blockade operations against China as part of ASB.[33]

Chinese analysts view the ASB concept as additional justification for continuing China's military expansion and pursuit of asymmetrical warfare capabilities. In reviewing these articles, we looked into options that Chinese strategists are encouraging leaders to consider in response to the ASB concept. Only a small number of articles discussed specific responses.

Some of the articles use the ASB concept as further justification for China's continued pursuit of asymmetrical war-fighting capabilities. For example:

- Some scholars at the National Defense Technology University caution China against over-reacting to the ASB concept and entering into a costly arms

28 Dang and Li, "At Whom Is Spearhead Pointed?"; Sun, "Deciphering U.S. 'ASB Concept'"; Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology."

29 Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB.'"

30 Yang Yi, "'ASB' Goes Against World Trends"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB.'"

31 Peng and Peng, "US 'ASB' Ideology."

32 Gao, "ASB: A New Round?"; Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB.'"

33 Sun, "Deciphering U.S. 'ASB' Concept."

race. They call for China to engage in "asymmetrical strategic thinking" and to develop new information-based weapons and equipment. China, they argue, should produce "assassin's mace" weapons, such as counterspace systems, that target weak links and critical nodes in U.S. operational systems. It should also step up the development of information system-of-systems capabilities and increase information-based training within the PLA, in order to strive for information superiority.[34]

- A military strategist at the PLA Naval Research Institute calls for continued observation of U.S. military movements to implement the ASB concept in order to "grasp trends and glean intentions." He also urges China to develop new weapons systems and master new forms of combat based on a determination of the enemy's weaknesses.[35]

Other articles recommend that in response to the ASB concept, China should expand general strategies that it is already pursuing, such as increasing the size of the PLA, speeding up the development of military technology, increasing joint exercises between the Chinese military services, improving "real-war" preparedness and long-range operational capabilities, strengthening diplomacy, and boosting the Chinese people's sense of national pride and preparation for hardship.[36]

The articles we reviewed for this study indicate that the PLA has not yet settled on a counter-ASB doctrine but is still debating its parameters. The articles indicate some ongoing debates, one of which concerns whether the ASB concept represents a tactical or a strategic shift. An article in the journal *Ordnance Knowledge* argues that the ASB concept should be seen as a U.S. tactical approach to be used in specific situations. ASB is not meant to guide the entire course of a war, the author asserts, but rather to gain the advantage in a war's initial stages. It is not meant to force the enemy to surrender, but rather to minimize the enemy's ability to resist U.S. military intervention.[37] However, another author, PLA Naval Research Institute military strategist Li Jie, argues that viewing the ASB concept as merely a "tactic" akin to "net-centric warfare" is a misreading that understates the important strategic shift the ASB concept represents.[38]

34 Hu, Guo, and Yang, "An Analysis of 'ASB.'"

35 Li Jie, "U.S.' New Military Strategy."

36 Jiang, "How To Understand 'ASB'"; Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB.'"

37 Sun, "Deciphering U.S. 'ASB Concept.'"

38 Li Jie, "U.S.' New Military Strategy."

Another difference of opinion concerns the widespread view among Chinese analysts that U.S. military power is fated to decline due to economic factors, greatly complicating the implementation of the ASB concept. One author from the Air Force Command Academy warns against pegging Chinese military strategy to such an expectation of U.S. decline, pointing out that the United States has "sung the decline song" many times since World War II, only to reform itself and increase its military strength.[39]

Conclusion

Based on this preliminary assessment of select Chinese writings on the ASB concept, the following observations can be made.

First, a wide range of individuals from institutions at many levels of the PLA are thinking and writing about the ASB concept.

Second, commentary on the ASB concept has expanded beyond military affairs publications and is now appearing more frequently in state-owned mass media. This may indicate that Chinese reporting on the ASB concept is moving beyond a military audience and is increasingly aimed at informing and influencing the views of the broader Chinese public.

Third, this preliminary assessment of Chinese views on the ASB concept has identified a number of common themes. Further analysis is warranted to understand better how these themes may evolve and affect Chinese military thoughts and actions.

39 Wang, "Considerations Triggered by 'ASB.'"

Chinese Views on Naval Developments by its Near Neighbors: Two Case Studies

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Frictions have been continuously rising around China's periphery, especially along its maritime frontier, where territorial disputes are the norm rather than the exception. 2010 witnessed major new tensions both in the Yellow Sea and also in the East China Sea. However, in the South China Sea, during 2009-2011, new anxieties over maritime disputes have been most acute. In contrast to the "charm offensive" that characterized much China-ASEAN interaction during 2000-2010, major crises have erupted in the last few years between Beijing, on the one hand, with both Hanoi and Manila in particular. Much has been written about China's "new assertiveness" and also the role of the U.S. "pivot to Asia" and this author has weighed in on the major strategic questions and related debates,[1] but this paper will be considerably narrower in scope, focusing on Chinese perceptions of the naval developments of its nearby neighbors.

A complete survey of Chinese writings related to naval development along its maritime periphery could be extremely useful. Such a survey would usefully concentrate on the most potent regional navies, both close at hand, such as Japan, but also at greater distance, for example concerning the maritime forces of Australia and perhaps India as well. And yet given the enormous quantity of writings on foreign naval affairs in China—part of a dynamic flowering of Chinese writings on military and strategic affairs more generally—this would be difficult to accomplish in a book, let alone a short paper. With a sense that generalizations about Chinese strategic perceptions need to be accompanied by clear and specific evidence (with appropriate citations from Chinese literature), this paper will narrow the scope of the research problem considerably in an effort to yield results that are both valid and significant.

1 See, for example, Lyle Goldstein, "Chinese Naval Strategy in the South China Sea: An Abundance of Noise and Smoke, but Little Fire," Contemporary Southeast Asia 33 (December 2011), pp. 320-347; and Lyle Goldstein, "Resetting the U.S.-China Security Relationship" IISS Survival 53 (April/May 2011), pp. 89-116.

Specifically, the paper will explore in some detail Chinese perceptions of both the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy and also the development of the Vietnam Navy. Among the dozen or so countries that could be examined in such an effort, these two states and the sensitive nature of their maritime interactions with Beijing may be considered to be of great importance to the future of East Asian security. These relationship are also somewhat less commonly discussed. Perhaps the most important maritime relationship in Asia, of course, is that between China and Japan. That topic, no doubt, deserves systematic study. It seems the topic is of such great importance in Beijing that it is a theme of very regular discussion on Chinese newscasts and in Chinese newspapers and journals. An overall appraisal of that voluminous literature is that it generally has a tone of strong moralistic condemnation of Japanese practices, but also contains ample respect and even admiration for Japan's maritime capabilities, including the Japan Coast Guard, as well as the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force. The other regional maritime forces receiving very ample attention these days in the Chinese press is that of the Philippines. Here, by contrast, the thrust of the analysis is on the weaknesses of Manila's maritime forces. However, Chinese coverage shows a major interest in ways that foreign powers, including for example Japan but also the United States, might try to radically improve the maritime capabilities of the Philippines.[2]

The above conclusions regarding Beijing's perceptions of Tokyo and Manila reflect conventional wisdom. The issue of Beijing's perceptions regarding the ROK Navy and Vietnam Navy are likely a greater mystery and thus are the focus of this particular paper. In general, Chinese perceptions of the ROK Navy are somewhat akin to coverage of Japanese maritime forces in that a clear sense of admiration is quite apparent, though this literature is notably lacking in moral judgments with respect to ROK maritime policies. The tone of the Chinese writings regarding Vietnam's Navy is quite disturbing in that implies that naval combat could be likely with Vietnam in the near term, and also that Beijing believes it would enjoy substantial superiority if such a conflict were to erupt. The two cases follow, beginning with Chinese perceptions of maritime security and forces on the Korean Peninsula.

2 See, for example, reporting on CCTV 13 News, 10 November 2011 and 10 November 2012.

Case 1: Chinese Perceptions of the ROK Navy

In examining Chinese writings with regard to the ROK Navy, it will be appropriate to begin with Chinese reflections on the sinking of the ROK frigate Cheonan on 26 March 2010. That event marked the beginning of new tensions in the Seoul-Beijing relationship that had previously been steadily warming for more than a decade. Beijing's apparent sympathy with Pyongyang in the Cheonan incident is evident in the writings of Chinese naval analysts. For example, a detailed geopolitical analysis from 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships] notes that the so-called Northern Limit Line (NLL) was unilaterally demarcated by United States in 1953 and never recognized by Pyongyang. The analysis emphasizes the preceding naval skirmishes in both 1999 and 2002 incidents, wherein the North Korean Navy suffered extensive casualties. The analysis implies that the balance of power is beginning to shift again in and around the Korean Peninsula: "At the time of the Korean War, the U.S. …controlled the air and also…had the advantage at sea…Today, the U.S. and ROK superiority in naval and air forces has already declined…" It is noted that employment of U.S. Navy submarines in the Yellow Sea presents major difficulties because of their large size. The analysis ends rather optimistically, suggesting that historically China's strength is conducive to peace on the Korean Peninsula and also that China, Japan, and South Korea are all focused on common trade interests during the course of financial troubles in the West. [3]

While Beijing has never officially endorsed the conclusion that Pyongyang perpetrated the sinking of the Cheonan—incurring the wrath of most South Koreans in the process—Chinese naval analysts do conclude: "DPRK submarine technical personnel have quite a deep understanding with respect to submarine propulsion and operating technology."[4] A column written by Yan Baoxing, an Institute 701 researcher responsible for PLA Navy frigate design, appeared among several articles published in the June 2010 issue of 现代舰船 [Modern Ships], just a couple months after the incident. Instead of criticizing the ROK Navy for deficiencies in ASW, Yan emphasized the major difficulties for surface ships in confronting torpedo and mine threats. Prompted by the question of whether the ROK Navy had been negligent, Yan responded by asserting that the situation on the Korean Peninsula

3 No author, "'天安' 号事件与中国周边安全" [The Cheonan Incident and Security Around China's Periphery] 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships] (July 2010), pp. 22-25.

4 No author, "浅析朝鲜小型潜艇技术" [Brief Analysis of DPRK Small Submarine Technology] sims.

demands extreme vigilance from all naval crews even in peace time. He concludes with praise for the South Korean Navy, betraying not a little admiration: "ROK surface warships, after a long period of operations, have experienced accelerated building especially over the last 20 years, resulting in astonishing progress."[5]

Indeed, Chinese perceptions of the South Korean Navy tend toward this favorable tone more generally. There is a sense that the ROK Navy has achieved rapid maritime capabilities that fully place it in the ranks of the world's middle powers. Chinese researchers seem to study the ROK Navy not simply because it is a proximate state in a complicated neighborhood, but perhaps more particularly as a state quite like China with a dynamic shipbuilding industry that is undertaking rapid naval development—in other words, a model to emulate. This sentiment is amply evident in a pair of analyses of the ROK Navy published in the naval journal 舰载武器 [Shipborne Weapons]. Thus, an extremely detailed survey of ROK fast attack craft concludes: "…ROK missile boats…are overwhelmingly superior to DPRK Navy missile boats…Clearly, there is an enormous gap separating the two navies across the 38th parallel."[6] Another similarly detailed article notes that Seoul may build its next generation frigate at the brisk pace of 2-3 vessels per year through 2020, though it also describes certain possible limitations on ROK surface fleet development, as well as various, unique characteristics of the challenge posed by Pyongyang, for example its shore-based artillery.[7] In 2010, Chinese naval analysts pronounced the new ROK Navy submarine as the most advanced diesel boat in the world.[8] The sense that the ROK Navy faces similar challenges in its development as the Chinese Navy may partly explain the very detailed coverage afforded to the ROK Navy in the Chinese military press. For example, in February 2012, 人民海军 [People's Navy] carried a report on Seoul's intent to build a submarine headquarters.[9]

5 严宝兴 [Yan Baoxing] 韩国‘天安’号护卫舰沉没: 引发的思考 [Sinking of the ROK's Frigate Cheonan: Initial Reflections] 现代舰船 [Modern Ships] (June 2010A), p. 23.

6 No author, "欲速不达: 韩国海军攻击快艇简史" [Haste Does Not Bring Success: A Brief History of the ROK Navy's Fast Attack Craft] 舰载武器 [Shipborne Weapons] (December 2010), p 70.

7 曾晓光, 吴伟 [Zeng Xiaoguang and Wu Wei] "韩国海军FFX护卫舰研制实录" [A Record of the Research and Development for the ROK Navy's FFX Frigate] 舰载武器 [Shipborne Weapons] (October 2010), pp. 47, 50-51.

8 No author, "韩国最先进AIP动力潜艇"安重根"服役 [South Korea's Most Advanced AIP Propulsion Submarine 'Anzhonggen' Enters Service"] 当代海军 [Modern Navy] (January 2010), p. 4.

9 "韩国拟造潜艇司令部" [South Korea Draws Up Plans For a Submarine Command] 人民海军 [People's Navy] 28 February 2012, p. 4.

Though the coverage of the ROK Navy is generally positive, Chinese military analysts have noted that the ROK Navy is wrestling with certain issues. A 人民海军 [People's Navy] article, for example, from spring 2011 noted that the newest ROK submarines were experiencing significant technical difficulties related to propulsion and that the force had been stood down until the problems are fixed.[10] A more in depth analysis published in a Chinese military-related journal in early 2012 suggested that the ROK Navy was in the midst of a major debate about whether to proceed with its "big ocean navy" plan or rather return to its traditional focus on the littoral threat. In addition to the Type 214 problems, the article also raises issues with both the KDX frigate program and also the current FAC program. The analysis concludes: "At this moment, there are some not insignificant quality issues with ROK Navy equipment. Although there are many management (contributing) factors, overreaching in the speed of development is undoubtedly an important factor."[11] It would not be a leap to suggest that such conclusions also may reflect some uncertainty regarding China's own "great leap forward" in the naval domain.

Case 2: Chinese Perceptions of the Vietnam Navy

If South Korea may be seen as a unique case among China's near neighbors in so far as it is viewed simultaneously as a competitor and also as a model in many respects, Vietnam and its naval forces seem to fit into a whole different category within Chinese perceptions. Although the news with respect to Vietnam and its evolving maritime forces is not universally bellicose and there have been a few positive developments in the last decade (e.g. China-Vietnam maritime delimitation of the Gulf of Tonkin or joint fisheries enforcement patrols), this particular relationship is clearly now fraught to a high degree, especially in the maritime domain. The Chinese articles below discuss Vietnam's naval modernization and several also characterize the prospects of a naval clash between China and Vietnam from a Chinese perspective.

10 No author, "韩国三艘最新刑214级潜艇因螺丝问题被禁航" [The Three ROK Most Adanced Type 214 Submarines are Not Permitted to Sail Because of Problems Related to Their Screws] 人民海军 [People's Navy] 24 May 2011, p. 4.

11 李红军 [Li Hongjun] "韩国'大洋海军'之困" [Difficulties with South Korea's Big Ocean Navy] 军事世界 [Military World] (January 2012), p. 49.

The revelation in the spring of 2009 that Vietnam would purchase six Kilo-class conventional submarines from Russia certainly aroused considerable attention among Chinese naval strategists and may have prompted some rethinking concerning Chinese naval strategy in the South China Sea. Indeed, a detailed assessment was published 现代舰船 [Modern Ships] in July 2009. One theme that is quite consistent with other Chinese sources on this issue is that Beijing is reacting to Hanoi's active development strategy for the region. This analysis thus concludes: "It is apparent that Vietnam enjoys a rather decent space for [strategic] maneuver, compared with China which confronts the difficult issue of cross-strait unification, so Vietnam therefore in respect to the South China Sea issue enjoys the initiative." The article also emphasizes that the Vietnamese Navy will not have an easy time integrating the new platforms and that Beijing may have to confront Hanoi's aggressiveness in the South China Sea: "Although Vietnam has been equipped with two submarines…nevertheless, this small force of special submarines did not necessarily confer significant submarine experience or talent…Vietnam has undertaken unilateral military, economic and cultural activities that constitute invasion of the South Sea area by osmosis. Preparations by the Chinese side are inevitable…"[12]

After the frictions surrounding the so-called "Impeccable incident" during 2009, tensions continued to heat up in the South China Sea during 2010. In particular, Chinese naval analysts were especially riled by comments made by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Hanoi during July 2010. In his regular column for 现代舰船 [Modern Ships], he wrote: "Secretary of State Hilary Clinton brazenly ran to Vietnam, declaring that the resolution of the South Sea dispute and freedom of navigation are U.S. 'national interests' and 'foreign policy priorities,' directly confronting China with this intervention and laying bare [the U.S.] determination to adopt a posture that challenges China's 'core interests.'" Regarding his perception of the balance of power in the South China Sea, he concludes, "We completely have sufficient forces and effective military means to offer a resolute counterattack."[13] Taken at his word, Li seems to suggest that the PLA is prepared for direct combat with the U.S. if combat with a near neighbor in the South China Sea (e.g. Vietnam) escalates. While some may dismiss the comment as mere bluster, the tone is disturbing nevertheless.

12 朱伟祺 [Zhu Weiqi] "'基洛'潜艇驶入越南再思考，" [Reevaluating the Arrival of Kilo-class Submarines into Vietnam] 现代舰船 [Modern Ships] July 2009,), pp. 6, 9.

13 李杰 [Li Jie, PLA Navy Sr. Capt], "美国频繁军演习的叵测用心，" [The Inexplicable Motive Behind Frequent U.S. Military Exercises] 现代舰船 [Modern Ships] (October 2010), p. 60.

A more recent study of Vietnam's accelerated naval development that goes well beyond the Kilo purchase was published in mid-2011 in the magazine 军事文摘 [Military Digest]. According to this analysis: "For quite a while, Vietnam's navy building strategy has followed the old strategy of 'air, submarines, and fast boats.'" Of course, there is some substantial irony in this appraisal, since the three character reference "空潜快" (air, submarines, fast attack) is a clear reference to Beijing's initial naval strategy after 1949. The statement perhaps betrays a certain condescending attitude by Chinese analysts toward Vietnam's naval development. It was not so long ago (the 1990s) indeed that Beijing took many of the steps that Hanoi is now taking, including of course, the purchase of quite Kilo-class submarines. The article takes due account of new advances mostly purchased from Russia in Vietnam's naval capabilities, including Cheetah-class frigates and Lightning-class missile boats, as well as more than 20 Su-30 Mk2 aircraft armed with advanced antiship cruise missiles. However, the view of this analysis is that, "Although Vietnam over the last few years has purchased relatively advanced weaponry, it remains an incomplete system. The biggest gap is that there is no broad area targeting system, limiting the [Vietnam Navy's] actual combat power." There is some discussion of Hanoi's possible remedies for such weaknesses, such as a possible purchase of maritime surveillance aircraft from European manufacturers, but this analysis suggests that the costs, to include a logistics and a proper exercise-training regimen for the aircraft—are likely to be too much for Vietnam to bear. The analysis concludes that Vietnam's naval buildup is primarily intended as a 筹码 [bargaining chip] to strengthen Hanoi's position at a future bargaining table concerning the fate of South China Sea claims.[14]

A number of disturbingly bellicose appraisals of the maritime dispute with Vietnam appeared in the summer and fall of 2011. A hawkish viewpoint is amply evident in an interview with Peking University Professor Li Shaoning, published in the July 2011 issue of 军事文摘 [Military Digest]. In Li's assessment, the South China Sea may have untapped energy resources equivalent to one third of the Persian Gulf—no small prize. He suggests that Washington's primary interest is securing the Malacca Strait in order to exert pressure on Beijing, but doubts that Washington would dare to become directly involved in a military conflict in the South China Sea. In the end, he warns: "I think we can give Vietnam a little more time...and hope that

14 No author, "小国寡军: 越南海战力量扫描" [Small Country, Scant Military: A Survey of Vietnam's Naval Combat Forces] 军事文摘 [Military Digest] (August 2011), pp. 24-26.

they slowly come to understand. But if they continue to be confused, then we have the means to cope with their confusion."[15]

As tensions deepened in 2011, these strains were seemingly reflected in Chinese naval opinion. For example, a rather harsh editorial in the official navy journal 当代海军 [Modern Navy], while calling for restraint on both sides, also warned: "We in China cannot have restraint without any limits. If Vietnam believes that it can treat Chinese forbearance like so much salt in the South China Sea with its penchant to say anything, than Hanoi has indeed made a strategic error in judgment."[16] Echoing a common theme, the editor of 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships] offered the following observation in his introduction to the August 2011 issue: "Today, as the South Sea Question is rising up again in billowing waves, behind the curtain of these disturbances is a manipulating hand and this is the United States."[17]

The October 2011 issue o [Modern Ships] ran two lengthy analyses of the Vietnam Navy. One amounted to a detailed analysis of Vietnam's naval bases and contained no fewer than 19 high quality satellite images—an obvious hint that China has an advanced "reconnaissance strike complex" to strike these facilities that are vital to the Vietnamese Navy. The second lengthy article consisted of an interview with Chinese Admiral Chen Weiwen—apparently a hero in the 1988 Spratlys naval engagement with Vietnam. Among other issues raised in the interview, Admiral Chen observes that a major lesson learned for the Chinese Navy concerned the importance of air cover for the fleet: "During the Nansha [Spratlys] Sea Battle, the thing we feared most was not Vietnam's surface vessels, but rather their aircraft… If at that time, China had an aircraft carrier nearby, we would not have had to fear Vietnam's air force. The Chinese aircraft carrier will resolve the problem. We would seize air superiority and the Vietnamese planes would not dare to take off."[18] Introducing this particular edition focused on the South China Sea, the journal's editor

15 新天 [Xin Tian] 破解南海迷局: 李晓宁看南海问题 [Penetrating the Confusing Situation in the South China Sea: Li Xiaoning Views the South China Sea Issue] 军事文摘 [Military Digest] July 2011, p. 9.

16 高卫民 [Gao Weimin] 南海问题: 各方要谨慎应对 [The South China Sea: All Sides Need to React Prudently] 当代海军 [Modern Navy] July 2011, pp. 54-57.

17 蒋华 [Jiang Hua] "南海局势的背后" [Behind the Situation in the South China Sea] 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships] August 2011, p. 2.

18 "6 次海战亲历者: 常胜将军陈伟文访谈录" [From One Who Experienced Sea Combat 6 Times: An Interview Memoir with the Invariably Victorious Admiral Chen Weiwen] 现代舰船 [Modern Ships] (October 2011A), pp. 10-15.

wrote: "[1988] was a great victory… The harsh methods proved an extremely ideal choice. To avoid [the use of force] or to excessively employ it are both unacceptable…"[19] A 2012 article interestingly knits the two case studies outlined above together. The article describes the military production capabilities of a major ROK shipyard, but remarks with concern that Vietnam may soon become a major client of South Korean warship builders.[20]

Conclusions

A few simple policy-relevant conclusions might be drawn from the preliminary research presented here. The high level of attention accorded to nearby naval forces in development suggests a rather acute level of anxiety regarding the evolution of a naval arms race in East Asia. Such fears seem to be concerned primarily with formation of a regional anti-China coalition, on the one hand, but also the possibility that otherwise weak (and harmless) naval forces on China's periphery could, after receiving external assistance, reach a level at which they could threaten Chinese interests. It is obvious, but perhaps worth reiterating that not all nearby states are perceived equally by Beijing. Some are viewed as likely adversaries (e.g. Vietnam), others as models to possibly emulate (e.g ROK) and still others are potential lucrative markets for naval-related exports (e.g. Indonesia). One could generalize that the Chinese Navy intensely admires the naval forces of various states in Northeast Asia, and especially the well-equipped maritime forces of Japan. Southeast Asian navies are not accorded the same level of respect, though Chinese defense analysts are watching their development with close interest.

Many Western defense firms and also Western governments may see opportunity in growing tensions between China and its near neighbors. However, this viewpoint could be shortsighted because if these tensions spiral out of control, the costs for regional and global security could be enormous and even precipitate major power conflict, contrary to U.S. interests. Thus, Washington must carefully avoid fanning the flames of conflict on China's maritime periphery. A rather more subtle approach to these tensions may be to consider how such fissures could benefit international security more generally without requiring active U.S. intervention. For

19 崔轶亮 [Cui Yiliang] "卷首语" [The Volume's First Word] 现代舰船 [Modern Ships] (October 2011A), p. i.

20 "高调亮相，风头正劲: 韩国大宇造船展品简介" [Striking a Pose: A Brief Survey of the ROK Daewoo Shipbuilding Product Line] 兵器 [Ordnance] (June 2012), p. 43.

instance, China-Vietnam frictions could well result in new China-Russia tensions in so far as Moscow is once again becoming a major supplier to Hanoi of strategically significant weapons systems that threaten Chinese interests. Some challenges in China-Russia relations may turn out to be a positive development for U.S. interests and global security more generally.

Workshop Agenda

The maritime environment has become central to the geo-strategic landscape in East Asia. The combination of China's expanding overseas interests and corresponding need for security have created a "demand signal" for a PLA navy that can protect PRC interests abroad. This entails supporting UN-sanctioned missions, assisting PRC citizens who are in jeopardy or require evacuation, protecting sea lines of communication, responding to natural disasters, and demonstrating China's resolve in support of embattled friends in Africa and along the South Asian littoral. Over the last half decade, the PLA Navy, more so than China's other military services, has been seriously involved in integrating distant, prolonged peacetime operations as part of its core mission set.

As the PLA Navy has learned, these new missions require a different mix of naval capabilities than its wartime "offshore active defense strategy" (jinhai jiji fangyu zhanlue). China's military has introduced capabilities over the last 20 years that have expanded the PLA's operational reach farther off-shore beyond the first island chain. In turn, the US Department of Defense has begun to characterize the operational implications of those capabilities as anti-access/area denial. These capabilities are not all resident in the PLA Navy—the PLA Air Force and Second Artillery Corps play major roles. For the PLA Navy, the submarine force and land-based naval aviation arm are the central players in area-denial scenarios.

The PLA Navy's surface force plays second fiddle in these scenarios and, should a conflict over Taiwan erupt, would probably remain inside the first island chain, conducting anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and air-defense roles. This role is reversed during peacetime; then, it is the surface navy that has pride of place, because of its ability to deploy world-wide.

As the PLA Navy demonstrates genuine competence and professionalism on distant sea operations, despite being oriented to peacetime missions, this is, ironically, raising concerns among littoral states of the Indo-Pacific over the security implications of a PLA navy that is becoming more expeditionary. Clearly the introduction of modern amphibious ships, and, shortly, an aircraft carrier force, provides the PLAN with a credible power-projection capability. This emerging capability is, in turn, creating a demand by littoral states for area-denial capabilities such as submarines and land-based aircraft with anti-ship cruise missiles.

This workshop will explore this interaction.

Panel 1: The Evolving Maritime Strategies of China's Neighbors—Northeast Asia

The purpose of this panel is to explore developments in force structure and strategy among China's Northeast Asian neighbors. How are they reacting to China's growing capabilities in the maritime domain? Are America's closest allies in Northeast Asia shaping their maritime strategy and forces to interoperate with the United States—or to address the challenge of a modern PLAN? Are the two synonymous?

Moderator: **LCDR David Wolynski, USN,** Office of Naval Intelligence

Panelists:

Paul Giarra, Global Strategies & Transformation: "Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force"

Terence Roehrig, US Naval War College: "South Korea: Blue Water Aspirations"

Dmitry Gorenburg, CNA: "Russian Naval Developments in the Far East"

Panel 2: Maritime Developments in Southeast Asia

The disputes that Southeast Asian countries have regarding sovereignty of island features seem likely to persist because none of the parties appear to be ready to compromise, if for no other reason than that the economic stakes are high. Sovereignty bestows EEZ rights, which guarantee access to fish and hydrocarbon resources. Because the stakes are high, both Vietnam and the Philippines have embarked on modest naval development programs. China, for its part, has employed ships from its various civil maritime agencies, to police its claimed EEZs throughout the South China Sea (SCS). The PLA Navy has also often deployed to the SCS in order to participate in exercises, show the flag, make port visits, and resupply distant garrisons in the Spratley Islands.

As China's capabilities have grown, and its policies have sometimes been assertive, both Vietnam and the Philippines have indicated a desire for closer relations with the United States. Within the context of the "rebalance to Asia," what is Washington's strategy for Southeast Asia? How is that being made manifest on the ground in the region?

Moderator: **Dr. Tom Bowditch,** CNA

Panelists:

Captain Bud Cole, USN (ret.), National War College: "Vietnamese and Philippine Naval Modernization"

Captain George Vance, USCG (ret.): "The Role of China's Non-Navy Constabulary Maritime Forces in the SCS"

Bronson Percival, CNA: "Southeast Asian Views on the South China Sea"

Panel 3: Chinese Views on Maritime Developments in East Asia

Chinese military doctrine recognizes that "China is located in an area where the geo-strategic interests of big powers meet, and its national security is influenced by the competition of these interests." In assessing the possible strategic environment in the Western Pacific over the next few decades, it is essential to examine not only China's posture but also its views on many of the central issues related to the maritime environment.

Moderator: **Dr. Thomas Bickford**, CNA

Panelists:

Peter Mackenzie, CNA: "Chinese Views of Air-Sea Battle and US Interpretations of A2/AD"

Lyle Goldstein, US Naval War College: "Chinese Views on Naval Developments by its Near Neighbors"

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