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Challenges and Opportunities in the South China Sea

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ROC Armed Forces Complete the Annual Han Kuang Exercise

The Han Kuang No. 31 Exercise of the Armed Forces of the Republic of China was carried out from September 7 to 11 throughout Taiwan and the offshore island of Kinmen. Han Kuang is the ROC Armed Forces' biggest and most important annual military exercise, and is divided into two parts: a command post exercise (CPX) and a live exercise. The CPX was conducted in May, during which the red force (opposing force), which were played by instructors of National Defense University, engaged online with the blue force (defense force) played by the joint staff of the three services. The live exercise determined how the blue force's tactics in the CPX would work in reality.

On its 31st year, the Han Kuang Exercise seeks to give the ROC Armed Forces practice in countering different forms of attacks by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Based on potential threats from the PLA, this exercise consists of the four phases of contingency operations, joint air defense, joint interdiction, and homeland defense, which are carried out sequentially during the five days of the exercise, and seeks to validate the services' ability to counter the enemy.

During the contingency operations on Day 1, the Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion on Kinmen, an offshore island closer to Mainland China than to Taiwan, simulated attacking the enemy's naval radar stations from the sea. Force preservation is a critical part of contingency operations. In view of the possibility of PLA missile strikes against airfields and aircraft in western Taiwan, the ROC Air Force performed force preservation by dispersing its aircraft to a base in Hualian in eastern Taiwan. The aircraft were then moved to hardened shelters to stand by for subsequent counterstrikes.

In particular, it should be noted that the ROC's P-3C anti-submarine patrol aircraft, which are still in transitional training, took part in the exercise for the first time. Two P-3Cs, along with a C-130HE electronic warfare aircraft and an E-2K early warning aircraft, successfully performed emergency dispersion to Hualian in adverse weather conditions. In another facet of force preservation, in a scenario in which the main runway of the ROCAF base in Chiayi in central Taiwan was destroyed by PLA



The 333rd Brigade of the ROCA drives the indigenously-made CM-33 Cloud Leopard eight-wheeled armored vehicles to counter-attack landing enemy troops. (Source: Military News Agency)



The ROCA artillery troops conduct live-fire exercise in anti-boat wave operations to stop enemy craft from landing on the beach. (Source: Military News Agency)

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An AH-1W of the ROCA Aviation and Special Force Operations Command launches an attack against enemy craft. (Source: Military News Agency)

Apache attack helicopter and OH-58D scout helicopter. Making its first debut in the Han Kuang Exercise, the Apache completed emergency landing and refueling without shutting down its engine, and ground troops also took advantage of this time to reload the helicopter's ammunition for a rapid return to engage.

Meanwhile, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of joint operations involving the ROC Army and Navy, the Kinmen Defense Command of the ROCA simulated a situation in which ROCN supply ships were attacked by enemy ships. To provide fire cover for the supply ships, ROCA artillery troops fired a total of 208 rounds from 28 guns in five different categories, including 8" howitzers, 155mm cannons, 105mm howitzers, 120mm cannons and 42mm mortars. As planned, all projectiles precisely hit their targets.

For the joint interdiction exercise on Day 3, the ROCAF and ROCN performed joint air and naval interdiction. Considering that the PLA Air Force and Navy are now capable of seizing critical harbors on both western and eastern coasts of Taiwan with their airborne and landing troops, the ROCAF and ROCN practiced closing off Taichung Harbor (western coast) by destroying harbor facilities with bombs and deploying obstacles to delay the enemy from landing replenishments. To secure harbors on the eastern coast of Taiwan, the two services deployed mines in coastal waters around Hualian and Taitung to stop enemy ships from approaching.

An anti-boat wave operation, which was conducted on Day 4, was a key part of the joint interdiction phase. In this operation, the ROCA deployed 38 M109 and M110 guns, which fired 304 rounds against enemy ships attempting to launch an amphibious landing from the sea. The ROCA also dispatched indigenously-made CM-33 Cloud Leopard eight-wheeled armored vehicles to beachheads for the first time in order to strike enemy ships concentrating in coastal waters. Army Aviation and Special Force Operations Command also sent AH-1W attack helicopters to destroy enemy ships from the air.

On Day 5, the ROC Armed Forces acted out a scenario in which, despite the defense efforts in the previous three phases, enemy troops actually set foot on the homeland and pushed toward major cities. During this phase of homeland defense, the ROC Armed Forces engaged with enemy troops in ground operations. Details of this part of exercise were not revealed due to their sensitivity. The five-day drills comprised this year's Han Kuang Exercise, which once again verified the ROC Armed Forces' mobilization and defense capabilities.

missiles, both active and reserve forces were mobilized to carry out rapid runway repairs. Following standard operating procedures, the work crews filled bomb craters on the runway, which allowed military aircraft to take off again.

During the joint air defense exercise on Day 2, the Army Aviation and Special Operations Command performed force preservation with helicopters, including the recently-commissioned AH-64E



ROCA work crews perform an emergency refueling for an AH-64E with its engine still on. (Source: Military News Agency)

The Flaws of Abandoning Taiwan

Wang Yuan-kang

Should the United States end its security commitment to Taiwan in order to avoid war with an increasingly powerful China? If, as some believe, Taiwan is the single issue most likely to trigger a US-China war, will an American accommodation of China on Taiwan make for a more peaceful Asia? A growing number of commentators think so. They consider Taiwan as a strategic liability to the United States and as an unnecessary provocation to China. To avoid war, Washington should accommodate China by terminating its quasi-alliance with Taiwan, repealing the *Taiwan Relations Act*, or at least reducing arms sales. Once the thorny issue of Taiwan is removed, so the argument goes, both the US and China can engage in cooperative activities and build mutual trust.¹

This argument is flawed. The central error in the “abandoning Taiwan” argument is misidentification of the true cause of US-China bilateral problems. Many mistakenly assume that Taiwan is the root cause of US-China tensions and inability to cooperate, but what is causing tensions in US-China relations is structural, not issue-specific. The power transition between the ruling hegemon and the rising state generates structural pressures that push them toward an intensifying security competition. The structural pressures operate independently of Taiwan. Conceding Taiwan to China would not eliminate the structural cause of US-China rivalry, nor would it substantially improve US-China relations. The second error is the assumption that Chinese foreign policy is driven by limited aims. Advocates of abandoning Taiwan optimistically hold that China desires nothing beyond Taiwan. This is misguided. The foreign policy goals of a state are inherently difficult to ascertain with confidence.

Whether or not China harbors limited aims is private information that Chinese leaders have incentives to conceal or misrepresent. More importantly, present goals can change in the future as new situations arise. A territorial accommodation of China on Taiwan—appeasement, if you will—risks creating a more dangerous Asia in the future. Rather than moderating its foreign policy ambitions, China would likely expand them, making the region prone to conflict.

In lieu of driving Taiwan apart, the international structure of power is bringing Taiwan and the US closer in security cooperation. The strategic imperatives imposed by the balance of power will lead Washington to elevate the role of Taiwan in US policy toward Asia. For its part, Taiwan’s vibrant party politics is a manifestation of democratic progress, but the polarization of domestic politics may weaken the effectiveness of its response to China’s rising power. Below I analyze the flaws in the “abandoning Taiwan” argument and discuss Taiwan’s geostrategic importance and challenges.

Structural Cause of US-China Rivalry

The current international system is witnessing a power transition between the US and China. Historically, power transitions between an established hegemon and a rising challenger have brought instability to the system, often resulting in war.² One estimate shows that in the past five hundred years when a rising power challenged a ruling hegemon, twelve out of sixteen cases (75%) have resulted in war.³ The structural stress is such that both the rising power’s dissatisfaction with the current system and the existing hegemon’s fear of

* For clarity, this article uses “China” when referring to Mainland China, and “Taiwan” when referring to the Republic of China.



Between the US and China, there lies fundamental distrust, and the South China Sea issue is one of the manifestations of that distrust. This picture shows aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen sail in formation through the South China Sea. (Source: US Navy)

being overtaken significantly increase the likelihood of war. In his classic account of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides famously explains: “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.”⁴ Thucydides’ choice of the word “inevitable” may be too strong, but China’s rising power and America’s fear of being overtaken have put the current international system in flux.

The root cause of US-China security competition lies in the anarchic structure of the international system. Anarchy, defined as the lack of a central authority above states, compels states to pursue power at the expense of others. Every state has some offensive capabilities that can be used to harm others. The intentions of states are difficult to know, and even if known, present intentions can still change in the future. To be secure in an anarchic world in which each state can hurt one

another, rational states will compete for power in order to become substantially stronger than the others. Uncertainty about intentions—an enduring feature of the anarchic system—pushes states to aim for domination. The ideal situation is to become a hegemon—the only great power in the system. Since global hegemony is extremely difficult to achieve due to geographical barriers, the best a state can hope for is to become the hegemon in its own region.⁵ The US currently enjoys regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere and enforces the Monroe Doctrine to exclude external powers from meddling in its backyard. It has built a network of alliances in Europe and Asia to preserve its favorable power position.

The same strategic logic applies to China. As power brings security, the pursuit of power has been the top priority of Chinese statecraft. The Chinese people know very well about the



“century of humiliation” when Qing China suffered disgraceful defeat at the hands of technologically superior European powers in the 19th century. The lesson? Weakness invites aggression; strength begets security. Henceforth, a recurrent theme in Chinese politics is how to build a strong country. Today, the Communist Party’s sloganeering of the China Dream and the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” reflects this long-held aspiration. To be secure, China needs to be powerful and return to its past preeminence in Asia. The ideal outcome is a maximization of its power advantage over neighbors, as exemplified by the “era of strength and prosperity” (*shengshi*) during the Han, Tang, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Those were the days when China was the regional hegemon and enjoyed plentiful security. If present China’s military and economic power continues to grow, it is on the path to becoming the most powerful state in Asia.

China’s rise, however, challenges US dominance. As a regional hegemon, the US believes that its security interests will be best served by not allowing another power to dominate Asia (or Europe). “The interest of the United States of America,” declared President John F. Kennedy in 1963, “is best served by preserving and protecting a world of diversity in which no one power or no one combination of powers can threaten the security of the US.”⁶ Simply put, the US does not want a peer competitor. Joseph S. Nye, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, argues that maintaining regional stability and “detering the rise of hegemonic forces” constitutes the rationale for stationing American troops in East Asia.⁷ There is consensus among policymakers and commentators that it is in US interest to prevent any power from dominating Asia and Europe. Washington should maintain a regional balance of power to preserve US preeminence in international affairs.

It should be clear that the two structural factors—China’s rising power and US dominance—are not compatible. This structural contradiction foretells a competitive dynamic in the years ahead. Given that Taiwan is not a direct cause of US-China

security competition, abandoning Taiwan to China will not lead to a more cooperative relationship. The structural tension remains. Aside from Taiwan, other issues could also ignite a conflict, such as flare-ups in the Korean Peninsula, the South China Sea, or the East China Sea. It is worth noting that the US has not fought a war against China over Taiwan; the only war between them was over Korea in 1950-53.

It is dangerous to assume that, once Washington abandons Taiwan, Beijing would restrain its foreign policy ambitions or be a status quo power. On the contrary, China’s capabilities to project power would be substantially enhanced should Taiwan fall into Beijing’s orbit.

Does China Have Limited Aims?

Another error in the “abandoning Taiwan” argument is that China has limited aims in its foreign policy. “From the United States’ perspective,” writes Charles Glaser, “there is broad agreement on Taiwan—China’s goal of unification makes China a limited-aims expansionist state.”⁸ Chas W. Freeman, Jr., avers that “China does not...have a history of global power projection, seek to export an ideology, or propose to expand beyond its traditional frontiers.”⁹ In this view, China’s security objective is defense of the homeland, not expansionism. China does not seek regional hegemony, nor does it want to push the US out of Asia. If China does not desire beyond Taiwan, abandoning Taiwan would not risk creating a more dangerous China. Once this source of bilateral tension is removed, both Beijing and Washington could then proceed to build a more cooperative relationship. Bruce Gilley goes even further by saying that “Beijing has no interest in occupying or ruling Taiwan; it simply wants a sphere of influence that increases its global clout

and in which Taiwan is a neutral state, not a client state.”¹⁰ Since China is motivated by the limited aims of defending the mainland, Gilley proposes that Washington should stop antagonizing China by ending its security commitment to Taiwan and letting the island become a Finlandized neutral state.

The claim of a limited-aims China, however, is not backed up by logic and evidence. To begin with, whether or not a state has limited aims is private information that outsiders cannot discern with confidence. States also have incentives to conceal or misrepresent their true aims to mislead others and to gain advantages. More importantly, present aims can change in the future as a state’s power increases. A state that professes status quo aims may shift to an expansionist stance in the future when it has developed the capabilities to alter the existing territorial arrangements and alignment patterns among states. Thus, claiming that China is motivated by limited aims is not logically persuasive. We simply cannot tell.

In addition, there is no conclusive evidence to support a limited-aims China. There is no agreement, let alone consensus, among analysts when it comes to China’s foreign policy goals. Some view China as a conservative, defensive power intent on protecting its territory, while others see China as an aggressive, expansionist state seeking to dominate Asia.¹¹ To complicate matters further, there are no widely accepted guidelines for determining a state’s foreign policy goals. After a conflict has occurred, scholars often find themselves debating whether the initiator was motivated by security or by greed. For instance, one hundred years after the outbreak of World War I, there is still no consensus among scholars about whether Germany was driven by limited aims of insecurity or by a desire for hegemony. As Sebastian Rosato notes, “If scholars armed with definitions and the documentary record cannot agree about what states wanted long after the fact, it is unlikely that great powers can do so in real time.”¹²

Since we face uncertainty about China’s foreign policy goals, abandoning Taiwan to China is highly risky and dangerous. It would not convince Beijing

that Washington harbors benign intentions toward China and seek cooperative relations. Instead, Beijing is likely to see such a concession as a sign of US growing weakness and as a vindication of China’s successful pursuit of power. US concession on Taiwan would also likely fuel Chinese nationalism.¹³ It is dangerous to assume that, once Washington abandons Taiwan, Beijing would restrain its foreign policy ambitions or be a status quo power. On the contrary, China’s capabilities to project power would be substantially enhanced should Taiwan fall into Beijing’s orbit. Rather than limiting its aims, Beijing would likely push for more concessions on other issues. As international relations theorist John Mearsheimer points out, “appeasement is likely to make a dangerous rival more, not less, dangerous.”¹⁴

During Cold War, Gen. Douglas MacArthur famously referred to Taiwan as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier." Today, China's strategic planners see Taiwan as an integral part of its future naval power, as a way to break out of the encirclement of the First Island Chain.

The outbreak of World War II in Europe exemplifies the danger of appeasement as well as the inherent difficulty of discerning an adversary’s foreign policy goals. Before the war, many European leaders and analysts considered Nazi Germany a limited-aims state driven by its security needs. They found excuses for Hitler’s demands and proposed appeasement. Winston Churchill, who turned out to be correct in warning about Hitler, was considered alarmist. In the midst of the Munich Crisis, Sir Neville Henderson, the British ambassador in Berlin, rationalized Hitler’s action in this way: “One must also try to understand the German point of view. If we were in Germany’s place what would we, in the midst of all this war psychosis, be doing: exactly what I think the Germans are today doing.”¹⁵

In hindsight, policymakers misread Germany's foreign policy goals and chose the disastrous policy of appeasement.

Taiwan's Geostrategic Importance

Given the structural stress in the US-China power transition and the uncertainty about China's foreign policy goals, how does Taiwan fit into this? As noted above, US security objective in Asia is to maintain a balance of power and to prevent any country from dominating the region. In this strategic context, Taiwan's geographical location is of particular importance to the US. The island controls the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) extending from Japan to Southeast Asia and serves as a check on China's maritime expansions into the East and the South China Seas. As China rises, Taiwan's strategic value to the US will rise as well. The imperatives of the balance of power will prompt Washington to give more thought to Taiwan's defense needs. Taiwan has substantial economic and military resources to contribute to America's balancing efforts. For their own strategic interests, "[US policy makers] will be inclined to back Taiwan no matter what."¹⁶

Far from being a strategic liability, as advocates of abandoning Taiwan believes, Taiwan is a strategic asset for the US and its allies. During Cold War, Gen. Douglas MacArthur famously referred to Taiwan as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier." Today, China's strategic planners see Taiwan as an integral part of its future naval power, as a way to break out of the encirclement of the First Island Chain. Beijing's acquisition of Taiwan would enhance China's naval capabilities and give the PLA Navy greater strategic depth. It would adversely affect Japan's maritime security, making it more difficult for the US to defend its ally. Taiwan's close location to the Philippine Sea and the Luzon Strait would also provide the PLA Navy easy access to the South China Sea, an area fraught with territorial disputes.

The changing international structure will push Washington and Taipei into closer defense cooperation. The security interests of both countries

are compatible. It makes good strategic sense for the US to help strengthen Taiwan's defense capabilities to deter a Chinese attack. US arms sales to Taiwan, rather than being an unnecessary provocation to China, as those in favor of abandoning Taiwan believe, actually strengthen regional stability. A basic requirement for effective deterrence in the Taiwan Strait is that Taiwan should at least have the capabilities to withstand an initial Chinese attack until the US has sufficient time to respond. The arms sales not only fulfill a legal obligation under the *Taiwan Relations Act* but also serve US strategic interests. A robust defense makes Taiwan less vulnerable to China's military coercion and helps preserve regional peace. China is opposed to US arms sales for the simple reason that a militarily weak Taiwan will be more compliant to Beijing's demands. But a weakly defended Taiwan could tempt Chinese leadership to use the implied threat of force to coerce the island into negotiations for unification. Once this process is started, it would be difficult for the US to stay on the sideline and watch a democracy being forced to accommodate an authoritarian state under duress. For their part, the Chinese leaders would find it difficult to back down without losing domestic legitimacy. A spiral of escalation would generate perilous dynamics and threaten regional peace. Conversely, a well-defended Taiwan would reduce this source of dangerous miscalculation, which counterintuitively is also in China's interest.¹⁷

The international structure, however, fortells a deepening of US-Taiwan security cooperation in the near future. Taiwan may take comfort that accommodating China on Taiwan is mainly an academic discussion, not a change in US policy, but it must take measures consistent with the international structure.

Taiwan's Challenges

Taiwan faces both domestic and international challenges. Taiwan's defense spending has been struggling to stay on the 3% of GDP level for years. Calls for strengthening the military and increasing arms purchases often fall into the accusation of benefiting the military-industrial complex. Taiwan's increasing military disadvantage against China remains an issue, which the Ministry of National Defense is striving to address. In addition to that, the functioning of Taiwan's democratic system is encountering challenges. As vibrant a democracy as it is, Taiwan's political system faces structural problems that hamper effective policy-making. Its semi-presidentialism (a mix of presidential and parliamentary systems) has hindered accountability at the risk of leading to policy paralysis.¹⁸ Although China poses the biggest threat to Taiwan's survival, a coherent China policy has yet to emerge due to the polarization between the two major political camps in Taiwan's party politics.

Taiwan's international status is another challenge. Only twenty-two countries have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Most countries defer to China when it comes to Taiwan's participation in international organizations and other activities. Beijing denies that Taiwan is a sovereign entity and prefers to impose the "one country, two systems" formula on Taiwan, as it does in Hong Kong and Macao. Taiwan fears that without meaningful international participation, its sovereignty would be diluted and the Republic of China would cease to exist. The "abandoning Taiwan" argument plays into this fear and is seen as a warning sign that time is not on Taiwan's side.

The international structure, however, foretells a deepening of US-Taiwan security cooperation in the near future. Taiwan may take comfort that accommodating China on Taiwan is mainly an academic discussion, not a change in US policy, but it must take measures consistent with the international

structure. To reduce its vulnerability to China's military coercion, Taiwan needs to strengthen itself and maintain positive ties with the US. It also needs to reform its political system in order to mount an effective response to the China challenge.

Conclusion

Cutting US security commitment to Taiwan would not make for a more cooperative relationship between the US and China. Neither would it make the region more peaceful. Abandoning Taiwan would not remove the root cause of US-China security competition, which is international anarchy. Appeasing China by giving up Taiwan would likely increase, not reduce, China's foreign policy ambitions. Failing to come to Taiwan's defense would jeopardize US credibility in protecting its Asian allies. Notably, these strategic considerations are consistent with America's democratic values: Abandoning a democracy to an authoritarian government would undercut Washington's stated interests in supporting democracy and freedom around the world.¹⁹ It is risky to assume that China's foreign policy is guided by limited aims and will remain unchanged as its power grows. There is no credible way to discern China's current foreign policy goals, let alone future ones. States have incentives to misrepresent their intentions, and there is no guarantee that their future intentions will remain the same. Rising states tend to expand,²⁰ and we have no good reason to expect China to behave otherwise.

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- 2 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982).
- 3 Graham T. Allison, "Opening Statement by Dr. Graham T. Allison before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services at a Hearing Convened to Discuss 'China, the US, and the Asia-Pacific,'" April 14, 2015, <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Allison_04-14-15.pdf>.
- 4 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), Book 1.23.
- 5 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).
- 6 Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 201.
- 7 Joseph S. Nye, "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 74, No. 4 (July/August 1995): 90-102 at 91.
- 8 Glaser, "A US-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation," 64.
- 9 Freeman, "Beijing, Washington, and the Shifting Balance of Prestige: Remarks to the China Maritime Studies Institute," May 10, 2011.
- 10 Gilley, "Not So Dire Straits: How the Finlandization of Taiwan Benefits U.S. Security," 51.
- 11 For a contrasting view, see Michael D. Swaine, *America's Challenge: Engaging a Rising China in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011); Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2011).
- 12 Sebastian Rosato, "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers," *International Security* 39, No. 3 (Winter 2014/15): 48-88 at 59.
- 13 Nancy Bernkopf Tucker and Bonnie Glaser, "Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?," *The Washington Quarterly* 24, No. 4 (Fall 2011): 23-37 at 25; Shelley Rigger, "Why Giving up Taiwan Will Not Help Us with China," *AEI Asian Outlook*, no. 3 (November 2011): 1-9.
- 14 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 164.
- 15 Quoted in Richard K. Betts, "Realism Is an Attitude, Not a Doctrine," *The National Interest* (September/October 2015), <<http://nationalinterest.org/print/feature/realism-attitude-not-doctrine-13659>>.
- 16 John J. Mearsheimer, "Taiwan's Dire Straits," *The National Interest*, No. 130 (March/April 2014): 29-39 at 35. Mearsheimer is often mistakenly categorized in the "abandoning Taiwan" camp. His view is actually more nuanced. He holds that before China reaches power parity with the United States, Washington will go out of its way to support Taiwan, not abandon it. It is only when China becomes as powerful as the United States (which may not happen) that Washington, no longer capable of protecting Taiwan, would be reluctantly forced to give it up.
- 17 Steve Tsang, "The US Military and American Commitment to Taiwan's Security," *Asian Survey* 52, No. 4 (2012): 777-797.
- 18 Richard C. Bush, *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 182-183.
- 19 Tucker and Glaser, "Should the United States Abandon Taiwan? "; Rigger, "Why Giving up Taiwan Will Not Help Us with China."
- 20 Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

Evolving Strategic Dynamics in the South China Sea: Deliberating India's Role and Presence

Monika Chansoria

China v.s. The Philippines at the International Arbitration Tribunal

Having exhausted almost all political and diplomatic avenues to resolve the maritime dispute with China over the South China Sea, the Philippines filed for an arbitration case against China in 2013 by moving to the International Arbitration Tribunal at the Hague under the 1982 United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which both nations are signatories. UNCLOS and its signatories are obliged to go through an arbitration process in the event of a dispute with another party and to accept the resulting settlement. Given China's expansionist claims to nearly all of the South China Sea — being contested by Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, Taiwan and Vietnam, the brawny approach undertaken by China has been the primary driver for the Philippines to file a legal case unilaterally against Beijing, notwithstanding that China has declared that it would not accept or participate in international arbitration under any circumstance. The Chinese claims that span almost 90% of the South China Sea's 3.5 million km² (1.35 million mile²) waters, with the sea providing 10% of the global fisheries catch and carrying \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade annually.¹

In a significant twist to the ongoing tussle, India's Ambassador to the Philippines, Lalduthlana Ralte in a discussion with *The Manila Times* publication group for a roundtable interview, spoke on the Indian position on Manila's territorial dispute with China over the South China Sea. Ralte said

New Delhi, like the Philippines, believes that the only viable and effective way to resolve the dispute is by subjecting the issue to international arbitration. In fact, South Asia's use of international tribunals to settle maritime disputes, according to Ralte, should be emulated in resolving the South China Sea dispute. "Our view with such kind of disputes [is that], the claimant countries should observe international law and norms that disputes are to be settled peacefully. We should allow ourselves to be subjected to international law," Ralte averred. Citing the much-known case of July 2014, when the Permanent Court of Arbitration gave a ruling on the Bay of Bengal dispute between India and Bangladesh and resultantly awarded 19,467 km² of the total disputed area of 25,602 km² to Bangladesh. India accepted the tribunal's judgment and hailed the court's decision for bringing to closure its long-standing dispute with Bangladesh. Ralte furthered this by stating, "I think that's diplomacy all about. Even if we are [the] stronger country, politically or economically, we should abide by internationally accepted principles."²

On the other hand, China's Foreign Ministry has repetitively reiterated its position of neither accepting, nor participating, in the arbitral proceeding on the South China Sea issue at the PCA at the Hague. The UNCLOS gives no country the legal right to extend its exclusive economic zone to other country's territories, and China does not believe that the arbitration court has any jurisdiction, and as a member of UNCLOS, China is entitled to exclude any third-party compulsory settlement.³

10 * For clarity, this article uses "China" when referring to Mainland China, and "Taiwan" when referring to the Republic of China.

China further argues that Manila's move breaches the agreement that has repeatedly been reaffirmed with China as well as the Philippines' undertakings in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).⁴ Often attempting to band together the issue of territorial and maritime disputes with the larger concept of sovereignty, China appears to be steering the debate on arbitration away from the focal point. The Chinese position is that the essence of the case is territorial sovereignty over several maritime features in the South China Sea, which is beyond the scope of the UNCLOS under which Manila has initiated the arbitration.⁵

In a circuitous attempt to usurp the onus of the arbitration debate, the Chinese Foreign Ministry released an official "Position Paper of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of the Philippines" on December 7, 2014. According to the International Tribunal procedural process, China was required to present its counter-memorial to the case filed by the Philippines, latest by December 15, 2014. Given that the Chinese Foreign Ministry officially enunciated its position on March 31, 2014 of not accepting and/or participating in the arbitration, the act of releasing an official position paper on the eve of the December deadline was apparently effectual in two ways: 1) it expounded on why the tribunal does not have jurisdiction over this case; and 2) reiterated China's position of not participating in the case.⁶ However, the Position Paper fails to clarify the heavily debated "nine-dash line" claim. That the meaning of the "nine-dash line" needs to be clarified unambiguously is almost universally acknowledged by countries other than China. The Foreign Ministry and state-controlled media in China deliberately seems to be omitting clarification of the "nine-dash line" claim, which primarily encompasses most of the South China Sea. This line was first published officially on a map by the then Nationalists Government in 1946; it was then adopted and modified by China, and continued to appear on China's official maps. Ever since, Beijing



Under the "Act East" policy, the Modi Administration is increasingly engaged in Asia-Pacific affairs. This picture shows Prime Minister Modi on the 13th ASEAN-India Summit. (Source: Office of Prime Minister of India)

has acted in the most obstinate manner by refusing to clarify/define what exactly does the line denote/include? The official explanation does not go beyond stating that the first official map on the nine-dash line claim was published in 1948. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China suggested in a meandering way that the line possibly indicates a claim to the islands and reefs lying within it. It is expected of Beijing to elucidate its position, now, that the matter has reached the international arbitration tribunal. The onus is on China to furnish a basis for the alignment of its nine-dash line that complies with international law. The line is instead an expedient tool wielded opportunistically — and at times illegally — to reprimand other claimants' presumed non-neighbourly activities in these contested waters.⁷

Taiwan, a party to the sovereignty and maritime disputes in the South China Sea, has kept a close watch on the development of the arbitration case. As a matter of fact, President Ma Ying-jeou has positioned Taiwan as a peaceful actor in the region through his proposed South China Sea Peace Initiative announced in May 2015, calling upon all parties to embrace the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation, exercise restraint, safeguard peace and stability and refrain from taking any unilateral action that might escalate tensions. The South China Sea Peace Initiative calls for respecting the

principles and spirit of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and UNCLOS, uphold the freedom and safety of navigation and over-flight. President Ma has urged by means of this Initiative that all concerned parties should participate in maritime cooperation and shared codes of conduct to enhance peace and prosperity, shelve sovereignty disputes and establish a regional cooperation mechanism for the development of resources under integrated planning.⁸

The Chinese military backed by its political leadership under Xi Jinping is keen to replicate the trend of attempting to create a fresh status quo in all its existing territorial disputes, both on land and at sea, and simultaneously wants to test the tenacity and credibility of the existing security alliances in the Asia-Pacific region.

China's Increasing Naval Presence and Activity in the South China Sea

In April 2012, government vessels from China and the Philippines faced off for several weeks at the Scarborough Shoal when Chinese vessels prevented Filipino Navy ships from arresting Chinese poachers at the Scarborough Shoal off Zambales. The poachers were allowed to leave with their illegal catch, however, Chinese maritime surveillance ships never left the area and remain there till date. The Chinese military managed to seize control of the Shoal in July 2012 from the Philippines without having to resort to war. Ever since, having found success in redefining the status quo, the Chinese leadership has become heavily inclined towards upstaging the rule-based international order and altering the status quo. The Chinese military backed by its political leadership under Xi Jinping is keen to replicate the trend of attempting to create a fresh status quo in all

its existing territorial disputes, both on land and at sea, and simultaneously wants to test the tenacity and credibility of the existing security alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, namely the United States' equation with Japan and the Philippines.⁹ In this reference, the US and Japan conducted separate military drills with the Philippines in the South China Sea in June 2015 – in what can be read as a clear signal of their allegiance to Manila on this issue.

That said Beijing, however, does appear equally wary of the decision taken by the Philippines to move the case to the International Arbitration Tribunal, despite the fact that any final ruling by the court on the dispute cannot be enforced. This is primarily because the ruling shall provide credence and become instrumental in moulding international opinion on the dispute. It is evidently clear that Beijing is strictly averse to the dispute being internationalised, with the internal discourse in China seemingly acknowledging that even a slight tacit acceptance of international intervention shall prove detrimental to Chinese territorial claims which it contests with other countries in the region.¹⁰ The decision to release the Position Paper is a “pre-emptive” move aimed to hassock the international fallout from an unfavourable decision at the Tribunal. Du Jifeng at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was in agreement with this line of thought, stating that Beijing expected that a verdict arising from international arbitration would bring upon it more “international moral pressure...and [China] may find itself more isolated internationally as the convention is still endorsed by a majority of countries, even though Beijing does not accept the arbitration.”¹¹

Beijing's construction of an artificial island in the South China Sea over the course of 2014 in the Fiery Cross Reef (part of the Spratly Islands) that was virtually untouched by man-made structures until March 2014 has further fuelled tensions in the South China Sea. The facilities created by China can be put to use for out-and-out military operations, with the People's Liberation Army being able to project its air and naval power through these

facilities to achieve coercive outcomes territorially, and simultaneously attempt at marginalising the apprehension of being overwhelmed by any regional mechanism that works outside the periphery of Chinese dominance and influence. A flotilla of Chinese vessels have been tasked with land-dredging activities, creating ports and battlements in the region — amounting to it becoming, perhaps, the biggest “reclamation project” — a reported 800 hectares of submerged reef converted into dry land.¹² The momentum and extent of land reclamation undertaken by China around rock reefs in South China Sea’s Spratly Islands have caused strategic reverberations across Asia — casting an ominous shadow on the existential stability of the region. During a visit to the US earlier in the year, General Fan Changlong, vice chairman of China’s most powerful military and defence body, the Central Military Commission, chose to trivialise concerns raised by US Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, when he urged Beijing to stop building artificial islands in the disputed waters of the South China Sea. The Chinese argument has always targeted US’ involvement in the South China Sea with Fan stating that “...South China Sea issue is but an interlude in Sino-US relations.” Arguing that China had the “right to establish military facilities on its sovereign territories,” Fan circumvented and deftly chose to link the entire issue to “Chinese sovereignty” — much in sync with President Xi Jinping’s affirmation of remaining “...strongly committed to safeguarding the country’s sovereignty and defending territorial integrity.”¹³

Almost as prescribed, in July 2015, the PLA Navy started a 10-day military exercise drill in east of the Hainan Province. Justifying the Chinese military maneuvers, Major General Xu Guangyu, senior consultant at China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, stated, “Unlike US military forces that can be trained in wars, Chinese navy strength, which lags behind ground forces, needs to be enhanced via regular drills.” By means of these drills, the PLA Navy is preparing to respond to incidents while fully testing its weapons

and tactics.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Wang Xiaopeng at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences noted that the speculation around China’s military exercises was primarily intended to “internationalise” the South China Sea issue and “hype the China threat theory.”¹⁵ It has been proven in time that great power diplomacy has not always been soft-sided and is a deft mix of hard tactics rolled up in yielding policy pronouncements. Stemming from this construct, China’s approach and take on the South China Sea is gradually, yet firmly, becoming far more inflexible.

All these developments come amidst reports of China’s potential establishment of a “fourth naval fleet” that will have jurisdiction over the Indian Ocean region, joining the existing North Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet, and South Sea Fleet. The reported fourth fleet will supposedly be based on the Hainan Island, facing the South China Sea. The PLA Navy’s presence on the island, especially on the Yalong Bay, near the island’s south-eastern tip, where it has recently constructed its Longpo naval base — a deep-water port complete with submarine piers, an underground submarine facility with tunnel access, and a demagnetising facility to reduce the magnetic residuals on ship hulls. The new nuclear submarine base is expected to serve the PLAN’s new Jin-class SSBNs and features long piers designed for surface combatants, making it a multi-purpose base. The PLAN has an existing base at Yulin, situated west of Longpo, and designed to service PLAN’s conventional submarines.¹⁶ It needs to be underscored that the PLAN’s South Sea Fleet has become the primary recipient of China’s more advanced naval warships, including the Shang-class nuclear attack submarine, conventional submarines (Kilo-, Song- and Yuan-class), the above-mentioned Jin-class SSBN, and a dozen of China’s more advanced guided-missile destroyers and frigates and three new amphibious warfare ships, bringing its total to 29 major surface combatants. Notwithstanding that the South Sea Fleet may be based out of Zhanjiang on the mainland, given the new submarine and surface warship facilities on the Hainan naval complex, it becomes clear the

island plays an increasingly important role in its fleet operations.¹⁷

In what could be described as a very significant statement, former Chief of India Navy, Admiral DK Joshi, stated few years back in December 2012 that while India was not a territorial claimant in the South China Sea, it was prepared to act, if necessary, to protect its maritime and economic interests in the region.

India's Stakes and Role in the Indo-Pacific

The re-orientation of India's strategic focus from a "Look East" to an "Act East" policy, have found manifestation in its approach, by and large, toward the South China Sea issue. During Indian President Pranab Mukherjee's state visit to Vietnam in September 2014, the Strategic Partnership established in 2007 between Hanoi and New Delhi was highlighted, and India reaffirmed that it regards Vietnam as an important pillar in its "Look East" Policy — which has been transformed to an "Act East" Policy. In a significant departure from its traditional stance of maintaining neutrality on the South China Sea issue, New Delhi is seen to be coming out explicitly, although in a guarded manner, primarily since its strategic interests and role in the Indo-Pacific are becoming far more pronounced owing to the string of initiatives launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. While signing the joint strategic vision with the US for the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, India endorsed the above argument by going on record to state:

The Prime Minister and the President reaffirmed their shared interest in preserving regional peace and stability, which are critical to

the Asia-Pacific region's continued prosperity. The leaders expressed concern about rising tensions over maritime territorial disputes, and affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over-flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea. The Prime Minister and President called on all parties to avoid the use, or threat of use, of force in advancing their claims. The two leaders urged the concerned parties to pursue resolution of their territorial and maritime disputes through all peaceful means, in accordance with...international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.¹⁸

In what could be described as a very significant statement, former Chief of Indian Navy, Admiral DK Joshi, stated few years back in December 2012 that while India was not a territorial claimant in the South China Sea, it was prepared to act, if necessary, to protect its maritime and economic interests in the region. Joshi stated that the Indian Navy was ready to deploy naval vessels to the South China Sea to protect its oil-exploration interests there if needed, "...when the requirement is there, for example, in situations where our country's interests are involved, for example ONGC...we will be required to go there and we are prepared for that...are we preparing for it? Are we having exercises of that nature? The short answer is yes..."¹⁹ Further, the measured yet firmly modified stance currently undertaken by India on the South China Sea issue has been well reflected in subsequent Joint Statements with Vietnam at the East Asia Summit and during the 2014 India–ASEAN Summit. Meanwhile, China has repeatedly cautioned India on its cooperation with Vietnam on oil and gas exploration projects in two columns of Vietnamese waters of the South China Sea. The Indo-Vietnamese cooperation in the field of oil and gas exploration stands more than two decades old. However, beginning in 2011, state-controlled Chinese media has been carrying out a virulent campaign against the Indo-Vietnamese partnership. State-owned publications including *China National*

Defense News of the Chinese PLA's General Political Department and the CCP-owned *Global Times* and *China Energy News*, have launched a crusade on the issue.²⁰

Over the last two decades, the Indian Navy has played a leading role in developing cooperative security relationship with the ASEAN member-states bordering the Bay of Bengal/ Andaman Sea, including through conducting joint naval patrols, bilateral exercises and hosting the biennial multi-nation MILAN exercises.

The presence of India's naval forces in Southeast Asia is broadly consistent with the perspectives of most ASEAN states, which mostly see India as a constructively balancing factor in the Southeast Asian balance of power. Over the last two decades, the Indian Navy has played a leading role in developing cooperative security relationship with the ASEAN member-states bordering the Bay of Bengal/Andaman Sea, including through conducting joint naval patrols, bilateral exercises and hosting the biennial multi-nation MILAN exercises — a “gathering” of regional navies at Port Blair in the Andaman Islands. More specifically, the following joint exercises and military drills between the Indian and Southeast Asian navies are significant to note:

- SIMBEX (Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise) is an annual bilateral exercise between the two navies and has been carried out in the South China Sea in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013.
- MILAN is a multi-nation exercise initiated in 1995, with Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines as participating nations. Hosted by the Indian Navy, the navies of Southeast Asian nations practice in the Bay

of Bengal in a biennial gathering.

- Indo-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) began in September 2005 and is conducted along the maritime boundary line.
- IND INDO CORPAT (India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol) took off in 2000, conducted along the International Maritime Boundary Line.

Commensurate with its “Act East” policy announcement, the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet ships were on a long overseas operational deployment to the South China Sea and the southern Indian Ocean from May 2015. India dispatched four warships, including a frontline destroyer and a stealth frigate. As part of the deployment, INS Ranvir, a guided missile destroyer and INS Kamorta, an indigenously-built anti-submarine corvette entered Sihanoukville in Cambodia. Similarly, two warships, including INS Satpura, an indigenously-built guided missile stealth frigate and INS Shakti, a fleet tanker and support ship, entered Sattahip, Thailand. On departure from Sihanoukville, INS Ranvir and INS Kamorta exercised with the Cambodian Navy for enhancing inter-operability in maritime operations, which included search and rescue missions. The Indian vessels visited Singapore, Jakarta (Indonesia), Freemantle (Australia), Kuantan (Malaysia), Sattahip (Thailand) and Sihanoukville (Cambodia) during deployment, besides participation in the bilateral exercise SIMBEX-15 with the Royal Singapore Navy from May 20-26, 2015 that included various facets of naval operations ranging from air defence and surface firing to maritime security, search and rescue operations with Singaporean warship RSN Supreme and submarine RSN Archer along with fighters, patrol aircraft and helicopters — thus boosting constructive engagement during peacetime.²¹

These proactive naval initiatives are in addition to the larger engagement between India and the ASEAN through cooperation mechanisms, including the ASEAN Regional Forum, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and

Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and the MILAN exercises are endeavors that reflect the bonhomie—and the argument that India needs to reorient to demonstrate being a consistent security partner for the region. The emerging security architecture model in the Indo-Pacific is also witnessing certain novel developments, including the return of Japan's participation in the annual Indo-US MALABAR Exercises, following a gap of eight years, and the decision by India and Australia to undertake bilateral naval exercises in October 2015. The momentum at which the Indo-Pacific is becoming New Delhi's strategic focal point is unmistakable, both characteristically and substantively. India's regional standing is influencing

its integration with Southeast Asia and the ASEAN—reflecting upon the movement in India's capability in the overall vision of its regional strategic pursuits.

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Japan's New Role in the South China Sea

Fumio Suetsugu



Under the revised Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation and Abe Administration's "proactive contribution to peace" policy, Japan seems to be playing a new role in areas such as the South China Sea. This picture shows Prime Minister Abe's state visit to the US. (Source: US White House)

Preface

Recently the challenges to the world order by forces tend to increase. ISIL terrorist activities in the Middle East, Russia's annexation of Crimea, China's aggressive activities in the East China Sea (ECS) and South China Sea (SCS) are good examples.

Facing this situation, the new security law proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Administration has been receiving attention from not only Japan but also other concerned countries.

Some countries express their expectations while others show their concerns about Japan's activities. Especially, regarding the SCS situation, there is a variety of opinions, including negative ones from China and positive ones from the Philippines. This article tries to clarify a possible role required for Japan to meet the current SCS situation based on the analysis of the intentions and impacts of China's aggressive maritime activities. It should be noted that this article represents personal opinions and is not speaking for the policy of the government or the

* For clarity, this article uses "China" when referring to Mainland China, and "Taiwan" when referring to the Republic of China.

Japan's Self Defense Force.

Situation in the South China Sea

The “nine-dash line” claimed by China covers almost 90% of the South China Sea, and China has been claiming domination of all islands and waters within this line. However, China does not have sufficient power currently to maintain the claim due to a lack of actual military presence. China only had an airfield at Woody Island in the Parcel Islands and limited armed forces deployed at several islands' guard post in the Spratly Islands. Therefore, China would not have actual effects to its claim so far. The situation has changed dramatically between 2013 and 2015 due to China's reclamation activities in the SCS. China has been building port facilities at several islands and constructing a 3,000-meter airstrip and support facilities at Fiery Cross Reef. These port facilities are expected to enable China to maintain more robust naval and maritime law enforcement activities. The 3,000-meter airstrip at Fiery Cross Reef will enable China to forward-deploy various aircraft, including fighters and bombers. If that happens, it may be possible that China will declare “SCS Air Defense Identification Zone” in the near future. In fact, China has stated publicly that the outposts will have a military component to them, and will also be used for maritime search and rescue and so forth. Therefore, expansion of the PLA presence in the whole SCS can be expected in the future. It is estimated that China intends to make the SCS a base for its ballistic missile nuclear submarines (SSBN), thus using the SSBNs for nuclear deterrence against the United States.

Currently, China's aggressive activities in the SCS bear several implications to the international security environment:

- The first is the influence of “an international order challenged by powers.” Russia's annexation of Crimea and China's reclamation activities in the SCS highlights the powerlessness of the global community.
- The second is anxiety regarding the

collapse of the strategic nuclear deterrence mechanism. The global nuclear deterrence has been balanced with various agreements between the US and Russia. However, China's nuclear capability, which has increased to an extent that can no longer be ignored, is not included in any of these nuclear deterrence agreements. China has already possessed a certain numbers of nuclear warheads. If China starts strategic nuclear submarine patrol in the SCS, it may be time for the US and Russia to revise their nuclear deterrence mechanism accordingly.

- The third is the concern over “freedom of navigation.” Although China reiterates that the freedom of navigation is guaranteed, China's so-called “freedom” might be completely different from the “freedom” commonly perceived by the majority of countries, given the way China handles the issues concerning human right groups within its borders. If China establishes control over the entire SCS, it might apply extremely arbitrary rules of freedom of navigation.
- “International order,” “strategic nuclear deterrence system” and “freedom of navigation” are known as global commons, and China's land reclamation activities in the SCS pose a serious challenge to these global commons. Therefore, all countries, whether or not they have direct interests in the SCS, should be seriously concerned by this reality. To deal with China's challenge to the global commons, the international community should firstly deal with the image of powerlessness.

In view of this, this article proposes two approaches: engagement and hedge. Engagement focuses on making China understand the benefits of following the global standard in the international framework. Hedge is to pressure China whenever it tries to challenge the global commons. Vietnam's

approach can be seen as an example of hedge. Last year, China deployed an oil rig with escort of the PLA Navy and Coast Guard ships at the south of Triton Island. Vietnam brought the matter of China's forcible resource exploration to the international community and sent its own Coast Guard ships to stop China. Vietnam continued to send its ships regardless of the possibility of a collision. After almost two months of confrontation, China finally withdrew the oil rig, saying that its resource survey was completed. Diplomatic negotiations between the two governments could of course achieve the desired result to some extent; however, strong and solid attitude of the Vietnamese government should also be recognized as an effective approach to this kind of situation.

Any engagement-only procedure can not deal with China's arbitrary thinking and behavior effectively. Hedge is vital to ensure China understands the global standard...In this regard, the US commitment to "rebalancing toward Asia" is indispensable to hedge China in the SCS, and Japan should support US commitment under the Japan-US Security Treaty.

Japan's New Role in the SCS Situation

Currently, Japan's new security law aims to revise the role of Japan's Self Defense Force (JSDF) to meet the increasingly uncertain international situation. The law covers from "defense of Japan" under the so-called gray zone situations to more active contribution to peace and stability of the region and the world. Prime Minister Abe named it the "proactive contribution to peace" policy. However, Japan's peace-oriented defense policy will never change, as Prime Minister Abe has guaranteed

at the Japanese Diet.

Although the fundamental spirit of upholding peace will not sway, are there any changes to the activities of the JSDF under the new security law? What implication does the new security law have for the SCS situation?

There are some uncertainties regarding how much Japan will be involved in the SCS situation. As a matter of fact, any incident in the SCS does not pose direct impact on the security of Japan. It is true that sea lines of communication in the SCS are important to Japan. Any threat to the SLOCs in the SCS can severely impede Japan's economy and the future prosperity. However, will it be a threat to Japan's very survival and pose a clear danger to fundamentally overturn Japanese people's right to life? The short answer is "No." Therefore, Japan should classify the SCS situation into "proactive contribution to peace," not as a situation for the "defense of Japan." In this regard, the role of the JSDF in the SCS situation should be taken into the current security framework or an organization which will establish to meet a certain issue by the coalition countries. China has been opposing Japan's active role in the SCS, arguing that Japan does not have any interest in the SCS. As a response to China's opposition, Japan should highlight the principle commonly accepted by the international community, including China itself: safeguarding global commons. There is no doubt that China's aggressive maritime activities in the SCS pose a challenge to the global commons. Japan should take appropriate measures within the current security frameworks under safeguarding global commons.

Engagement and hedge are also effective in this situation.

There are several existing security frameworks where the SCS issues may be discussed, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting (ADMM). However, it is very difficult to solve the territorial issues in these frameworks because of the differences of relations between China and each of the state

members. Japan should take these frameworks as the touch points for engagement and lead the discussion regarding safeguarding global commons. “Freedom of navigation” could be a good theme for discussion. The discussion for a common definition of “freedom of navigation” or “what kind of activities could be seen as hindering freedom of navigation” should be useful for every country. Through this kind of discussion, China can understand or help to deepen the world standard.

However, any engagement-only procedure can not deal with China’s arbitrary thinking and behavior effectively. Hedge is vital to ensure China understand the global standard. China is the second largest country next to the US both militarily and economically. Only the US has the ability to give pressure to China. In this regard, the US commitment to “rebalancing toward Asia” is indispensable to hedge China in the SCS, and Japan should support US commitment under the Japan-US Security Treaty.

“Cooperation for local and global peace and security” is prescribed in the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation agreed in this April. Japan-US Security Treaty is a global commons for regional security as well as the defense of Japan. To hedge China’s aggressive maritime activities including military ones, the maintenance of maritime domain awareness (MDA) is considerably important. MDA is also helpful for freedom of navigation. Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities to cover a wide range of area require a large number of patrol aircraft and ships. Systems and network for the exchange of information are also prerequisite. Even the US alone does not have enough capabilities. There are two procedures for Japan to solve this problem.

One is burden sharing between the US and Japan, and the other is the building of ISR capacity of concerned countries. Burden sharing means that the US is mainly responsible for situation in the SCS, while Japan is mainly responsible for situations in the ECS and a part of the West Pacific. China’s maritime activities spread not only to the SCS

but also to the West Pacific. China’s activities in the ECS and a part of the West Pacific are closely related to the defense of Japan itself; therefore, Japan should take responsibility for these two areas. If Japan can cover these areas, the US can focus its forces on the SCS. In the meantime, Japan should continue joint exercises with concerned countries, such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and Singapore, to keep strategic ambiguity for possible options in the future. This kind of strategic ambiguity could be a good hedge against China. The ISR capacity building can include a variety of areas, such as providing patrol boats and aircraft through Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework to SCS claimants, providing personnel training, and supporting the establishment of the network and system for the exchange of MDA information among related countries. When orchestrating specific plans for capacity building; however, Japan should be sensitive about what assistance it can provide and how to provide it. In the SCS, there are many territorial and national interest-related disputes between not only China and other claimants but also among other claimants. In addition to fisheries disputes between Taiwan and the Philippines, the squabble between Malaysia and Indonesia is another example. Therefore, Japan’s capacity building supports should not have a bias against neither of these countries.

Implication for Taiwan

With its special relations with China and geopolitical location, Taiwan can be a key player for engagement and hedge.

The relations between Taiwan and China have been growing closer, and the economic interaction and people-to-people exchange are particularly active. Many Mainlanders visiting Taiwan have the opportunity to perceive a sense of internationally-shared values, such as democracy and the freedom of speech. This increases the possibility to influence the Chinese Communist government’s decision making in the future. It may be a roundabout

method, but it can help to spread internationally-shared values in China as well as economy as a “Social and Economical Gateway.” This is the role of engagement for Taiwan to play.

As for hedge, Taiwan’s geographic vicinity to the SCS and its actual control of the Taiping (Itu Aba) Island can be an effective tool for Taiwan. Taiwan has acquired several P-3C patrol aircraft and vessels from the US under the *Taiwan Relations Act* (TRA), and it has constructed fast patrol craft on its own. Taiwan’s ISR ability is more advanced than any other Southeast Asian countries. The Taiping Island can help to expand Taiwan’s ISR capabilities. Taiwan has great possibility to enhance the MDA in the SCS in this regard. However, China is likely to strongly oppose information sharing framework between ASEAN countries and Taiwan in the name of maritime security. Therefore, adopting a low key approach from the beginning for information sharing of Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) can be appropriate. The establishment of the information sharing framework with ASEAN countries aiming to enhance MDA led by the US can be a long-term goal.

The South China Sea Peace Initiative advocated by President Ma Ying-jeou is the right direction in the future. But the idea of the “shelving dispute over sovereignty” would be impossible as long as China keeps its nine-dash line and claims exclusive rights in the SCS. Taiwan should take a more realistic method to support engagement and hedge steadily, while continuing down the right direction.

Conclusion

China’s tactic to gradually extend its rights and interests in the SCS is nicknamed “Salami-slicing.” It piles up the results by repeating action and announcing its legal rights with the self-righteous interpretation. China already has the military and economic influence to do so. China’s maritime activities in the SCS and the ECS are quite active compared with any of China’s activities in other regions. The International community should

restrain China’s activities based on the international standard. The international community should not allow China’s challenge to change the world order by forces. Therefore, we should monitor China’s maritime activities continuously, evaluate them from the world standard and disclose their wrongdoing. Establishment of solid MDA posture in the SCS is highly expected.

The cooperation of surrounding nations is indispensable for effective MDA. With its international influence and military and economic power, the US should take up the leading position. Japan is also expected to widen its contribution to regional and global security under the “proactive defense” policy. There are some countries, including the US, expecting Japan to dispatch patrol aircraft to the SCS for ISR mission. However, Japan should keep off direct military participation in view of lessons learnt from the history of the SCS. Japan’s contribution should be made through the Japan-US Security Treaty. In the SCS, Japan cannot replace the role of the US.

The other important issue is nuclear deterrence system. Not only China’s SSBN patrol in the SCS but also its aggressive growth of nuclear inventory and modernization has resulted in a big impact on global nuclear deterrence system. Both the US and Russia are working on limiting their nuclear weapons under several agreements, such as START and INF. If China continues to expand its nuclear capabilities, both US and Russia may withdraw from this framework, then that will be the end of the road to a “nuclear-free society.” In light of this, the international community should work hard to include China into the nuclear management framework.

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Toward a Sustainable Peace in the South China Sea: Confidence, Dependence, and Meteorology

Li Wei-teh

The South China Sea (SCS) has been, and remains, an area rife with tension. Disputes among SCS states stem from unresolved issues relating to sovereignty, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), natural resources, and acceptable uses of the military. In the past two decades, fishing boats have been detained or damaged, fishermen and sailors arrested or killed, and artificial islands constructed for military purposes. These years of strife have led to the current SCS state of play: it is a vitally important region where competition is high and trust is low.

Yet, within this turmoil lies an opportunity. Although each SCS state encounters a unique array of challenges, they all face one common threat: the high probability of severe weather and natural disasters. Many natural disasters occur in the SCS and its surrounding states in East Asia each year, including typhoons, heavy rainfalls, earthquakes, tsunamis, and more. Recent examples include Taiwan's Typhoon Morakot in 2009 and Japan's Sendai earthquake and tsunami in 2011. On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines. In that case, the severe storm caused more than 6,300 deaths, and affected more than 1.4 million families in the eastern part of the country.¹ As the climate continues to change, such extreme weather events are likely to be even more severe, last longer, and cover more ground than before. This makes it less likely for the littoral regions of SCS states to be resilient—especially in the growing seaside urban areas—and will prove a major hurdle for their navies and coast guards. By itself, no SCS

state—regardless of its individual power—can mitigate the dangers posed by this weather. Together, though, these states can prepare for the coming storms. SCS states have an imperative to avert humanitarian disasters resulting from severe weather changes and work toward making the region one of greater mutual confidence and mutual dependence.

Upon closer inspection, it is apparent that not single state may fully address the people's needs by means of budget or technology. These states are eager for regional countries' help that should an MC/MD environment be achieved, would become more readily available and a norm among SCS states.

Current Security Challenges: HA/DR Operations as Example

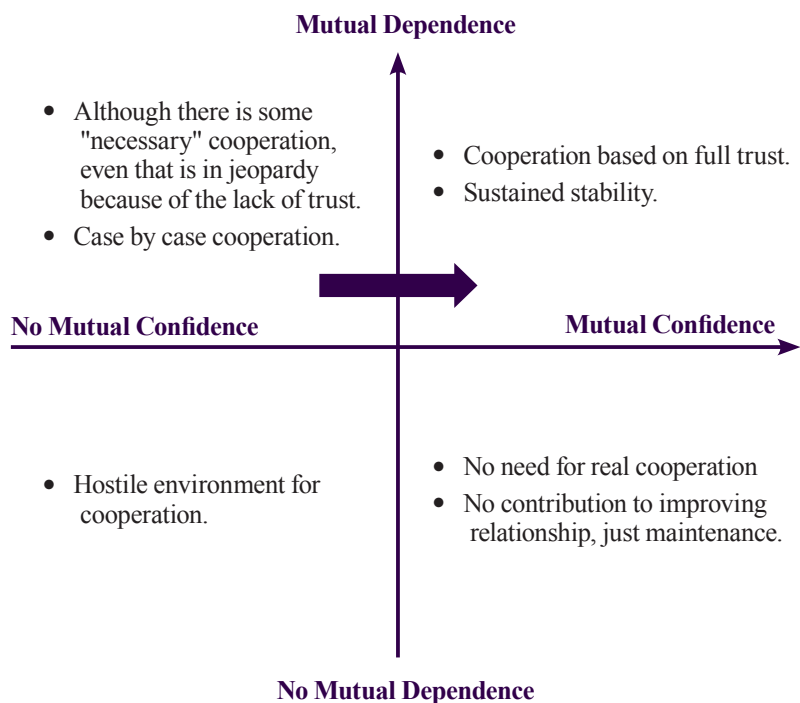
This article argues that SCS countries need to work toward a “mutual confidence” (MC) and “mutual dependence” (MD) end state. In particular, the paper focuses on sharing meteorological data to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations, including search and rescue operations, foreign disaster relief goods delivery, and medical care. When disasters occurred, the disaster reduction units/organizations of the

governments would usually coordinate the entire HA/DR operations to confirm the disaster situations, decide the projection of resilient forces, collect and distribute domestic/international donation and goods, and suggest better relief works preparing for further disasters. In the case of Typhoon Haiyan, one year after the disaster, the Philippines government announced a reconstruction plan of 3.8 billion USD that has been approved to design and rebuild the shattered typhoon belt during the next two years. The government reported it has already spent 914 million USD on Haiyan relief. Yet, people are still waiting for long-term improvements such as storm-proof houses and durable highways.² Upon closer inspection, it is apparent that no single state may fully address the people's needs by means of budget or technology. These states are eager for regional countries' help that, should an MC/MD environment be achieved, would become more readily available and a norm among SCS states.

An MC/MD relationship between two SCS states would help mitigate regional conflicts or disputes, which in turn can help lead to a more

peaceful region. Today, the SCS is best described as the scenario in the top-left quadrant of the graphic below — a region of mutual dependence but with little-to-no confidence among SCS states. The challenge for regional actors, then, is to move from the top-left to the top-right section — a region defined by MC/MD relationships among the area's actors.

Reaching this status quo in the SCS is of vital importance. Yet, past storms in the SCS continue to cause huge losses of life and property, and infrastructure damage. For example, Typhoon Feng-wong caused heavy rainfall and floods, affecting more than half a million families in the northern Philippines in 2014, and then turned to Taiwan. This year, Typhoon Soudelor hit Taiwan, causing damages and casualties. In response, each state did its best to conduct search and rescue operations to save what it could, but all of them still lacked the requisite technological ability to monitor the dynamic and dangerous storm conditions. The lack of these capabilities precluded government officials from predicting, detecting, and tracking the weather, especially with regard to forecasting when



Graphic: Mutual confidence and mutual dependence in the South China Sea. (Source: Li Wei-teh)

	Station Names	WMO Index Number	Area	Surface observation	Upper-air Observation
China	Xisha Dao	59981	Paracel	×	×
	Sanhu Dao	59985	Paracel	×	×
	Yongshujiao	59995	Spratly	×	-
Taiwan	Dongsha	46810	Pratas	×	×
	Nansha	46902	Spratly	×	×
Vietnam	Song Tu Tay	48892	Spratly	×	×
	Huyen Tran	48919	Spratly	×	-
	Truong Sa	48920	Spratly	×	×

Table: Weather stations in the South China Sea. (Source: Li Wei-teh)

and where the storms would hit lands. Barriers to formulating effective responses to severe weather and natural disasters in the SCS include:

Regional states do not efficiently and effectively operate in the SCS

Encompassing an area of around 1.4 million square miles, the SCS is a vast maritime domain. However, the SCS has only eight weather stations, making it nearly impossible to understand dynamic changes in the weather (see the table).³ Compared with the larger number of weather stations in big cities and other areas, those on the ocean surface of the SCS are relatively low. The reason for the low number of weather stations is that the SCS has a sparse distribution of islands; sovereignty disputes impede the placement of more stations; and the costs of maintaining and updating these stations are too high. An increased number of large weather station systems, though, would provide critical data for the users and allow that information to be sent to regional meteorological centers, designated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an agency of the United Nations (UN). The WMO is the UN's authoritative voice on the state and behavior of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the oceans, the climate it produces, and the resulting distribution of water resources.⁴ According to the main standard times by the WMO, the weather data exchange mechanism shall include surface observations every six hours (12:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and

6:00 p.m. Coordinated Universal Time (CUT)), and upper-air observations every twelve hours (12:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. CUT).⁵ Therefore, people around the world can share the whole data set periodically. However, only three of the eight weather stations are currently operating at the requisite level due to a lack of maintenance (Xisha Dao, Dongsha, and Nansha can be examined by analyzing the surface weather charts).⁶ Thus, the observation data are not sufficient to cover the entire SCS surface.

SCS states have let marine environment professionalism dwindle

Due to a multitude of regional security issues, SCS states have long neglected the allocation of needed resources for properly managing the marine environment. SCS states have been more focused on issues regarding sovereignty, maintaining free and open sea lanes, counter-piracy and terrorism, as well as halting illegal immigration. Although tackling these challenges is important, the neglect of the natural maritime-domain problems has been costly. Today, much of the infrastructure of coastal cities in the SCS area is not well protected against potent storms. Furthermore, the massive area is not completely safe for one of the busiest and most important sea lanes for global maritime transportation that navigates the SCS.⁷ SCS states continue to neglect these issues at their own peril.



The aerographer's mates carry on 24/7 observation of anomalous atmosphere and sea state at Naval Nansha Weather Station (WS-46902) in the South China Sea. (Source: Li Wei-teh)

Residents in the SCS states currently have little to protect themselves from severe weather

Citizens worldwide are generally unprepared to deal with severe weather situations, and it is difficult to teach resilience against these storms. In the SCS specifically, the general unpreparedness is coupled with limited infrastructure to protect citizens from harsh weather. Thus, there is marginal utility in teaching outdated resiliency and survival courses to SCS populations structurally at risk, especially for those coastal residents facing tsunamis or typhoons from the sea. For example, when the 2011 Sendai tsunami hit Japan, the coastal infrastructure was too vulnerable to survive the flooding. After that, Japan invested in the construction of a massive network of ocean bottom sensors and tidal gauges to improve the estimation of earthquakes. The seismic network can prevent missed estimates, and help answer some of the fault's behavior near the surface that is a missing gap in the numerical models.⁸ Besides, this network's experience can provide more accurate early warnings, allowing SCS citizens to better prepare for disaster survival, and over time improve environmental education. Due to the large number

of people in the region, this will require a massive undertaking by SCS state governments.

To sum up the challenges, the unreliability of marine environmental predictions and lack of bilateral and multilateral collaboration will reduce the effectiveness of SCS HA/DR operations. Therefore, it behooves SCS states capable of advanced technological development to join a regional framework to share environmental data. For the purpose of maximizing environmental observation, an array of buoys loading with automatic atmospheric, oceanographic, and seismographic instruments can be placed on the ocean surface, which can be connected with the current weather stations, filling the data gap. Moreover, the island-based weather radars, unmanned aerial/underwater systems, and international projects can be other options to improve the quantity and quality of observations. This would not only decrease the financial burden on individual SCS states, but it would also provide important information to ships and aircraft navigating the area. For example, each SCS state needs tsunami early warning capabilities to produce

viable contingency plans for those tsunamis caused by submarine earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. No SCS state can escape this possibility, as almost all of the region's states are geographically located on or near the earthquake belt in the Pacific. Precise observation and analysis requires further investment in vital (and expensive) equipment and technology, as well as their maintenance. These systems require more collaboration to be most effective. A joint-purchasing program would thus best suit SCS states.

Strategic Goals for the South China Sea

Leveraging the data-sharing of marine meteorological information would help prevent disasters and control damage, which may be a possible way to contribute toward a regional MC/MD end state. In order for SCS states to achieve a region characterized by MC/MD and effective use of meteorological information, they should implement three strategic imperatives:

Redesign environmental education

Increasing civilians' training for, and understanding of, severe weather can improve their survival capabilities, as well as help others in the event of a natural disaster. People should be well-trained and possess the survival skills to adapt to environmental change. There is a need for high-quality formal classes and self-training programs to be accessible to companies, schools, families, and individuals. SCS states should provide these newly updated training courses to any citizen, but primarily to those who live in the coastal areas. Training sessions should focus on sharing previous experiences of dealing with environmental disasters, disseminating information, understanding weather warnings, providing assistance as a storm approaches, using foreign support, and helping with HA/DR operations after the disaster. These seminars would allow for both domestic and international awareness, understanding, and, ultimately, cooperation and confidence. Over time, trainees will

realize that their regional safety is dependent on neighboring governments and individuals as well as on their own societies.

The collection and dissemination of environmental information would decrease the uncertainty involved in predicting environmental events and SCS states' plans for dealing with them. SCS states should work on creating an integrated data and early-warning system that adequately provides information to aid command

Update disaster contingency plans

Renewing contingency plans used before and after disasters will help put in place the requisite security infrastructure and improve early warnings. Ensuring governments and publics are well prepared for dangerous and dynamic weather will ensure basic human needs are met quickly, especially the provisions of food, water, electricity, and communication networks. This also allows for HA/DR operations to proceed unabated. Furthermore, having the right plans and procedures in place will help commanders of relief troops to make well-informed decisions. Besides, SCS states should conduct multinational joint missions to test the performance of the data-sharing mechanisms. And, in the case of a major weather event, the most affected state should lead the coordination of HA/DR operations while working closely with regional partners, along with nongovernmental organizations, that can fill gaps in care.

Develop regional, multilateral agreements for data-sharing and HA/DR operations for natural events

Developing regional, multilateral agreements

for countries to conduct HA/DR operations and share data is vital for reaching a state of MC/MD. The collection and dissemination of environmental information would decrease the uncertainty involved in predicting environmental events and SCS states' plans for dealing with them. SCS states should work on creating an integrated data and early-warning system that adequately provides information to aid command and control. While SCS states have developed abilities over time to observe the environment, they can only collect, analyze, and use all pertinent data covering their occupied territory and surrounding area. An agreement that promotes and regulates data-sharing would encourage mutual dependence (because SCS states need each other to get the full picture) and mutual confidence (by having states work closely together to save lives). In addition, SCS states would have more precise data and save costs by sharing through a WMO-regulated system. Remote-sensing and weather-prediction systems could also be distributed to help improve forecasting during both normal and disaster periods.

With greater sharing of meteorological data and greater environmental-disaster education for the regional populations, the immense human and financial losses resulting from environmental disasters can be minimized.

The Role of Marine Meteorology

States surrounding the SCS should take responsibility for monitoring the environment in a regionally collaborative fashion. However, marine meteorology is not just used to provide daily weather reports. In addition to staying informed, SCS region citizens can leverage modern information technology to enhance the research and development of an informal data-exchange mechanism that meets international standards.

For marine meteorology to play its intended role, certain steps must first be taken. Luckily, there are some simple approaches to ensuring marine meteorological data can be shared, helping the region reach the desired MC/MD end state.

- All data should meet the standards regulated by the WMO to ensure the necessary quality and quantity of information, including the data's format and observation time.
- Data exchanges must focus primarily on severe weather. They should contain analysis and forecasts on atmospheric developments as well as ship and aircraft movements. This data can come from satellite and radar sensing as well as statistical predictions of meteorological and oceanographic events.
- Observed data should be made public for local government and private-citizen use.
- States outside the SCS area with mature severe weather observational capabilities should be invited to join the joint-monitoring missions for technical support.
- SCS states should take turns serving as leaders of joint-monitoring missions. All states, though, should share budgetary and financial risks, especially during periods of severe weather.

To ensure that meteorological data is successfully integrated into a shared system, limited resources must be appropriately allocated among SCS states. Within the first five years, investments should be used to ensure the data-sharing mechanism remains operational. Over time, weather stations will need upgrades in order to better observe the entire SCS. Furthermore, resources should be used to enhance international usage of technology, scientific education, and subject-matter expertise. After the initial five years, SCS states should work toward creating a sustainable quality and quantity of weather information via the data-sharing mechanism. This will lead to greater situational

awareness of the SCS for years to come. Efficient administration of this massive amount of data will be needed, including the storage, capture, transfer, and maintenance of information privacy. Open data could be leveraged to provide easy access to the marine meteorological data network, thereby enhancing the advantages of regional communication and conflict avoidance.

Conclusion

In the past, the SCS area has witnessed terrible tragedies due to a lack of understanding of how to deal with natural disasters, such as people's misunderstanding or ignoring the warning information of severe weather, and deciding to stay in their homes in direct violations of the governments' security evacuation plans. With greater sharing of meteorological data and greater environmental-disaster education for the regional populations, the immense human and financial losses resulting from environmental disasters can be minimized.

For this to happen, SCS states must prioritize national and regional security over their disagreements and disputes. If they did so, these states would realize the effect of severe weather preparedness to their overall well-being. Currently, not all SCS states are willing to share comprehensive environmental information with regional state and non-state actors. However, they can only face these challenges if they work together to build MC/MD

through preparation for disasters and meteorological data-sharing.

The more methods SCS states have to build relationships with one another, especially during these tense times, the more regional and global security can be assured. Most importantly, it will help save the lives of SCS citizens placed in harm's way by nature's awesome power.

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Highlights of the 2015 Taipei Aerospace and Defense Technology Exhibition

The biennial Taipei Aerospace and Defense Technology Exhibition (TADTE) took place August 13-16 at the Taipei World Trade Center. This year, a total of 126 domestic and international exhibitors participated in the event, which represented a 27% increase compared with two years ago.

This year, the spotlight was on the exhibits of the National Chung Shan Institute of Science and Technology (NCSIST). In addition to the weapons demonstrated at the 2015 Paris Air Show, three other weapons were particularly worth mentioning: the Medium Altitude Long Endurance Unmanned Aerospace System (MALE UAS), the Sea Oryx Missile System and the Steel Ball High Explosive Rocket System.

The NCSIST did not reveal the specifications of the MALE UAS. The system resembles the US-made Predator in appearance, but it is larger and heavier than the RQ/MQ-1, and more like the later variety of the MQ-9 (Reaper). In addition to EO/IR sensors, the system can be equipped with synthetic aperture radar (SAR), and can carry lightweight air-to-surface weapons.



The MALE UAS is one of the most attractive indigenously-made systems shown in the 2015 TADTE. (Source: Military Link Magazine)



The Sea Oryx is an efficient system to intercept incoming anti-ship missiles and aircraft. (Source: Military Link Magazine)

The Sea Oryx made its debut at this exhibition. This missile system can intercept incoming anti-ship missiles and aircraft. When compared with the existing Phalanx Close-in Weapon System of the ROC Navy, the Sea Oryx can more effectively improve the short-range air defense and anti-missile capabilities of ships equipped with this system.

The Sea Oryx can carry 16 missiles. It looks like the Rolling Airframe Missiles (RAM) jointly developed by the United States and Germany. However, the design and operational concept are completely different. Instead of using a radio frequency receiver, the Sea Oryx uses a Focal Plane Array Imaging Infrared Seeker (FPAIIS) and an up-link device. The missiles can perform lock-on after launch and adjust their trajectory based on the latest target data received from ship-based radars. Moreover, Sea Oryx missiles do not spin like RAM missiles when in flight. The free rotating rear folding wing, whose design concept is similar to that of the French-made R550 Magic 2, and the front folding wings help to control the missile's flight direction.

The peculiar appearance of the Steel Ball High Explosive Rocket System caused it to attract the



The Steel Ball High Explosive Rocket System will carry the responsibility for the protection of offshore islands and coastal areas. (Source: Shu Hsiao-huang, ODS associate research fellow)

curiosity of the media and public. This system can carry 84 66-millimeter rockets with a range of 1.2-2 kilometers. This system can be used for the defense of offshore islands and seacoasts. When used with a remote control console, it can simply aim its EO/IR sensors at a target to automatically receive fire data solutions to attack enemies making coastal landings.

To replace the aged AT-3 advanced trainers and F-5E/F fighters currently used to train fighter pilots, the ROC Air Force plans to allocate a budget of about USD 2.1 billion for 66 new advanced trainers, which are expected to be delivered starting in 2019. To meet this need, the Aerospace Industrial Development Corp (AIDC) is offering the AT-3 MAX (resembling the AT-3 but with upgraded avionics and increased thrust) and XAT-5 (a simplified version of the IDF fighter), and hopes to win over the ROCAF. Models of both trainers were on display on the exhibition. The AIDC is also working with Italy's Alenia Aermacchi to participate in the bid with the Italian-designed M346, which provides the ROCAF with another option.

In addition to major weapon systems, the truck-mounted mortar systems, semi-automatic mortar loading systems, new assault rifles, submachine guns, sniper rifles and remote weapon stations demonstrated by the 202nd and 205th arsenal plants of the Armament Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense also attracted the attention of numerous visitors.



The AT-3MAX is one of the possible candidates to replace aged AT-3 advanced trainers and F-5E/F fighters. The other options include the XAT-5 and the Italian-designed M346. (Source: Shu Hsiao-huang, ODS associate research fellow)

Observing the Development of China's Long-range Missiles through China's Recent Military Parade

At its recent military parade celebrating the 70th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II on September 3, China showed to the world various medium and long-range missiles. The most eye-catching items included various anti-ship ballistic missiles, particularly the Dong Feng-21 and Dong Feng-26. Both are equipped with maneuverable reentry vehicles (MaRV), the same technology for long-range anti-ship operations used on US-made Pershing II tactical missiles. This shows how China is innovating with old technology to create advantageous strategic firepower.

In addition to medium and long-range missiles, China also has several types of short-range ballistic missiles with a range of several hundred kilometers. Together, these short, medium, and long-range missiles can easily threaten US military bases in the first and second island chains, thus challenging US military deployment in the Asia-Pacific Region. In the event of a conflict in the West Pacific, the People's Liberation Army Navy and Air Force, under the cover of these missiles, can focus on dealing with Japanese or the ROC's naval and air forces without worrying about immediate intervention from the superior US Navy and Air Force. Such a strategy will be more effective in warding off US interference



Dong Feng -21D on the September 3 military parade (Source: Asia-Pacific Defense Magazine)

than pursuit of a “blue-water navy,” and is also a much cheaper course of action.

However, the US is not without countermeasures. The US's strength lies in platforms such as nuclear-powered attack submarines, cruise-missile submarines, and long-range bombers with long-range precision strike missiles. The US is also developing game-changer weapons, such as laser weapons, electromagnetic rail weapons and hypersonic weapons. With China's “anti-access/area-denial” (A2/AD) capabilities on the rise, the US may restart its development of weapons for conventional prompt global strikes (CPGS). There are also US-based think tanks suggesting the US government work more closely with China's neighbors, such as Japan and the ROC, to jointly counter China's A2/AD threats.



Dong Feng-26 on the September 3 military parade. (Source: Asia-Pacific Defense Magazine)

USS Ronald Reagan Arrives in Yokosuka, Japan

US aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) arrived at its new home port in Yokosuka, Japan, on October 1, to implement forward deployment missions. The USS Ronald Reagan and USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) are the only two Nimitz-class aircraft carriers left in the US Navy.

Under President Barack Obama's "Rebalancing toward Asia" strategy, the US Navy has committed to deploy 60% of its power in the Pacific Ocean, and has currently reached a level of about 58%. However, until the brand-new USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) is commissioned, there will only be ten aircraft carriers in the US Navy. Four of them are either refueling, in complex overhaul (RCOH), or in planned incremental availability (PIA) at any one time, leaving only six of them available for deployment.

During its recent maintenance period, the USS Ronald Reagan has completed several system upgrades. It is now the only forward deployed aircraft carrier in the US Navy, which is also considering deploying three more carriers in Hawaii.

Except for the USS Ronald Reagan, the other aircraft carriers have their home ports either in San Diego or Bremerton in Washington State.

The USS George Washington (CVN 73) recently finished a forward deployment from 2008 to 2015. It left Japan in May and returned to San Diego in August. After ten days of personnel and equipment transfer, one-third of its personnel was put on USS Ronald Reagan. The USS George Washington will sail to a dock of the Huntington Ingalls Corp. in Newport News in the autumn of 2016 for RCOH. The USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) will likely be assigned to San Diego to replace the USS Ronald Reagan's position in the 3rd Fleet. This rotation will ensure that six aircraft carriers remain in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The USS Ronald Reagan will still carry the 5th Carrier Air Wing (CVW-5). The CVW-5 has four strike fighter squadrons (equipped with F/A-18E/F Super Hornet aircraft) and a new electronic attack squadron, making it one of the most advanced fighter wings in the US Navy.



USS Ronald Reagan arrives in Yokosuka. Sailors form human letters on the deck, spelling out the Japanese term "hajimemashite (nice to meet you)" to greet Japan. (Source: PACOM)

ODS Seminar of the Month: Development of the People's Liberation Army

To build a military power commensurate with the country's growing overseas interests, China continues to push forward with its large-scale military modernization campaign. Despite China's repeated assurance that it will pursue peaceful development and will never seek to be a hegemon, its seemingly excessive military buildup and preparation still worries its neighbors. To gain a better understanding of the development of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the Office of Defense Studies held a seminar and invited Professor Arthur Hsueh-fan Ding of the Institute of International Relations of National Chengchi University, Director Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang of Council on Strategic and Wargame Studies, Dr. Zeng Fu-sheng of the National Policy Foundation, Professor Hu Rui-zhong of the Department of Diplomacy of National Chengchi University, Professor Ou Si-fu of Tamkang University, and Deputy Chief Executive Yen Tieh-lin of the Center for Security Studies to share their insights on this topic.

Reduction of PLA Personnel and Merger of Seven Military Regions

The first issue discussed concerned Chinese Leader Xi Jinping's announcement of cutting PLA personnel by 30,000 people before 2017. The announcement, made during China's military parade marking the 70th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II, was intended by China as a gesture of embracing peace. However, Director Huang and Professor Hu have different interpretations. Both of them believe the downsizing does not necessarily lead to a smaller defense budget and military spending. In contrast, the funds saved from the reduction of personnel will likely be invested in upgrading weapons and equipment, researching

and developing newer systems, and accelerating the country's military transformation. China's defense budget may continue to maintain a two-digit growth rate, and is still more likely to increase than decrease. They also believe the reduction is an effort to get rid of redundant and disqualified personnel and units, so as to improve the overall quality and capabilities of the PLA.

Director Huang and Professor Hu also mentioned the future merger and reduction of military regions from seven to five. This move aims to strengthen the joint operational command and control system of each of the military region. However, currently the seven military regions run their command and control (C2) systems separately, so a merger will result in difficulties and complexity regarding the integration of C2 systems, especially for the PLA Air Force. At present, the PLA Navy is mainly commanded by the North Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet and South Sea Fleet, the Second Artillery is commanded by the Central Military Commission, and the Army's bases will not change after the merger; therefore, the PLAAF is likely to encounter more C2 integration problems.

In addition to C2 integration, the merger will require the revision and verification of joint operational doctrines. The process from the declaration of the merger, reorganization, revision and verification of doctrines to the demonstration of force will require a long time until completion. During this period, China will need to ensure the stability of its strategic environment, and the same will hold true for China's reduction of PLA personnel. Director Huang and Professor Hu therefore argue that, within Xi Jinping's term, China will avoid major military conflicts with other countries. Although China continues to maintain an assertive stance concerning issues such as the South

China Sea disputes, it will refrain from engaging in serious military confrontations with other claimants, so as to ensure a stable strategic environment for its military transformation.

That is not to say that China will stay this way forever. Professor Hu pointed out that China's strategic thinking has already changed from "concealing its strength and biding its time" to "not being afraid to show off its capabilities." Although it will avoid provoking wars for the time being, it will seek every opportunity to show its strength as the world's second largest economic and military power. For instance, while the establishment of the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone and large-scale land reclamation in the South China Sea did not in fact result in major conflicts, they have been proved to be effective measures to demonstrate what China dares to and is capable of for the protection of its perceived core national interests. By the time China perceives that its military transformation has been completed to a certain extent, which is likely to be when the second step of its "Three Steps Forward" military development program is completed in 2020,* the PLA will become a stronger and more assertive military force. The period before that occurs can therefore be seen as a strategic window of opportunity for Taiwan and even the United States and Japan. In the case of Taiwan, it needs to seriously consider its priorities in its defensive force buildup, so as to respond to a possibly more assertive and aggressive PLA.

Development of the PLA Navy

In its newly released *China's Military Strategy*, China identifies sea, space, cyberspace and nuclear deterrence as its four major security domains. Dr. Yen observed that the sea domain is placed on the top of the list, showing that China's most urgent need is to advance its maritime capabilities. With this urgency in mind, the PLAN's development has followed the "Three Steps Forward" closely, such as by completing the goal of comprehensive deployment of missiles across major warships and

the standardization of all weapons and equipment by 2010. For its next step, the PLAN aims for digitization and informationalization by 2020, which is when China's Beidou Navigation Satellite System is expected to achieve global coverage. That implies the PLAN, with the US Navy as its example, is aiming to perfect its network-centric warfare and global C2 capabilities.

China's Military Strategy also elaborates that the PLAN will move from focusing only on "offshore water defense" to stressing both "offshore water defense" and "open sea protection." The ability to operate in far seas has therefore become critical to the PLAN. PLAN Commander Admiral Wu Shengli once said that the Chinese Navy will follow wherever Chinese interests go. Dr. Yen argued that, to that end, China may need to establish four aircraft carrier strike groups: the North and East Sea Fleets will each have one group, and the South Sea Fleet will have two. The PLAN will need to have enough surface ships to support its strike groups. According to Dr. Yen's calculations, this will not be a problem for the PLAN. At present, each of the three fleets has three flotillas, and each of the nine flotillas has eight surface ships, which add up to a total of 72 surface ships. Each flotilla also has several patrol divisions that have different numbers of surface ships. Furthermore, the PLAN is constructing new-generation surface ships to replace older ships and building up its ship inventory. Dr. Yen thus suggested that the PLAN will have the necessary number of surface ships for its future strike groups.

However, the strike groups will also need enough nuclear submarines to beef up the PLAN's undersea capabilities. The PLAN currently has only five nuclear submarines for offshore defense. It will need to have at least twelve nuclear submarines to be able to perform anti-submarine missions. A bigger challenge, according to Dr. Yen, lies in the establishment of a sufficient number of overseas ports. If the PLAN really wants to establish a global reach, it needs more than just the home ports within its borders to host its strike groups. It will also need to build joint command and operational mechanisms



for the strike groups in order to conduct global operational planning. As a result, there is still a long way for the PLAN to go if it hopes to become a true global navy.

Development of New Advanced Technology

Professor Ding and Professor Ou talked about the development of the PLA's new advanced technology, particularly the improvement of its satellite positioning and space technologies. To develop a satellite positioning ability free from the limitation of the US-operated GPS, China has been pushing forward with its indigenous Beidou Navigation Satellite System by launching satellites since 2000. China's continuous and zealous effort in this regard has allowed it to complete regional coverage by 2012. The system is now providing positioning, navigation, timing and short message services in China and several other Asian countries.

For its next step, China aims for global coverage with at least 35 satellites by 2020. If that happens, the coverage, accuracy and satellite altitude of this system will likely be superior to the US GPS, the EU Galileo system, and the Russian Glonass system. By that time, the landscape of the world's satellite positioning technology and related applications will be much like the power structure seen in the Asia-Pacific today: divided into two camps led by the US and China.

On the other hand, China still has a huge gap to fill in its space warfare capabilities versus those of the US. Apart from striving to fill that gap, China, fully aware of how much the US relies on space technology for operations, is also developing anti-satellite technology based on an asymmetric strategy. This effort includes the development of anti-satellite ballistic missiles. It is expected that China will work to complete its anti-satellite technology based on the "Three Steps Forward" plan by 2020.

* The "Three Steps Forward" military development refers to China's three military goals for 2010, 2020, and 2050. In the first step, China has preliminarily developed a force with more advanced weapons and operational systems. In the second step, China will enhance the quality and quantity of its weapon systems and optimize its military structure. In the third step, China aims to achieve overall informationalization of its defense force.

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