

A presentation featured at the

2010 Pacific Symposium:

China's Naval Modernization: Cause for Storm Warnings?

Hosted by:

The Institute for National Strategic Studies

of

The National Defense University

16 June 2010

By

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INSS



INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL
STRATEGIC STUDIES

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China's Evolving Naval Strategy

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Note: This presentation reflects the personal views of the author and not the official assessments of the U.S. Navy or any other entity of the U.S. Government

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1. Why Important ?

- Understanding inadequate

- translation : 近海/ near-seas vs. off-shore/离岸

- geo-cultural meaning

- Help to understand intentions

- Policy implications



2. Near-Coast Defense (近岸防御) (1950s – Mid-1980s)

- Defense of 12-24 nautical miles of waters extending from shore
- Concern of a Soviet land invasion in late 60s rendered PLAN less relevant because Mao wanted to “lure enemy in deep”
- Supportive to land operations
- Counter–amphibious landing
- Ambush to sabotage supply lines
- “Aircraft, submarines and FAC” (“飞, 潜, 快”)



- **Exceptions**

- 1974 sea battle to capture Paracels

- Development of destroyers and nuclear submarines





3. Near-Seas Active Defense (近海积极防御) (Mid-1980s – Mid-2000s)

- “Our strategy is near-seas operations. We don’t interfere everywhere like the hegemonists do.” (“我们的战略是近海作战. 我们不像霸权主义那样到处伸手.”)

Deng Xiaoping’s speech to PLAN Party Committee meeting on July 29, 1979

- Articulated by Liu Huaqing
 - Navy as a strategic service – effective and independent operations within and slightly beyond first island chain, or in “three seas” (“三海”)
 - Local and temporary sea control
 - More credible nuclear deterrence

- **Post-2000 new capabilities**

- Better ISR
- Fleet air defense
- “Assassin’s mace and data link-centric warfare” (“杀手铜数据连中心战”)
- ✓ **New nuclear submarines**



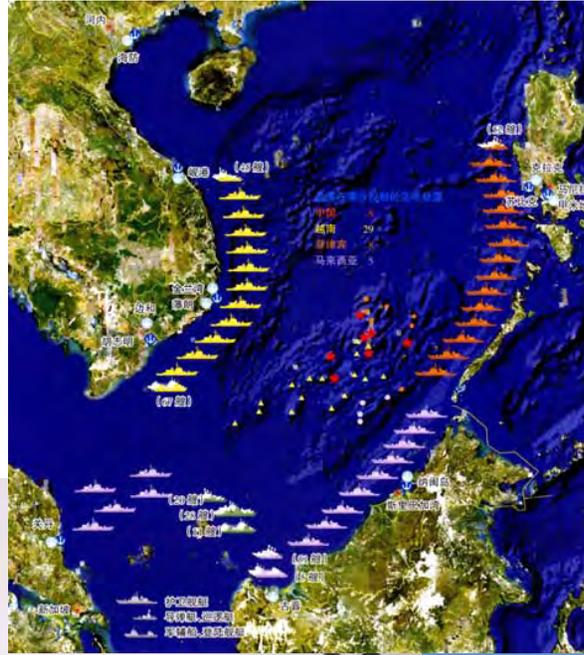
- **Taiwan**

- **Sea control (制海权) for sea crossing (渡海)**
- **Sea denial (lack of Chinese vocabulary) or anti-access (反介入)**
- **Naval blockade and counter-blockade**
- **“Shock and awe”**



- **Spratlys**

- **Amphibious warfare**
- **Air cover for naval operations**





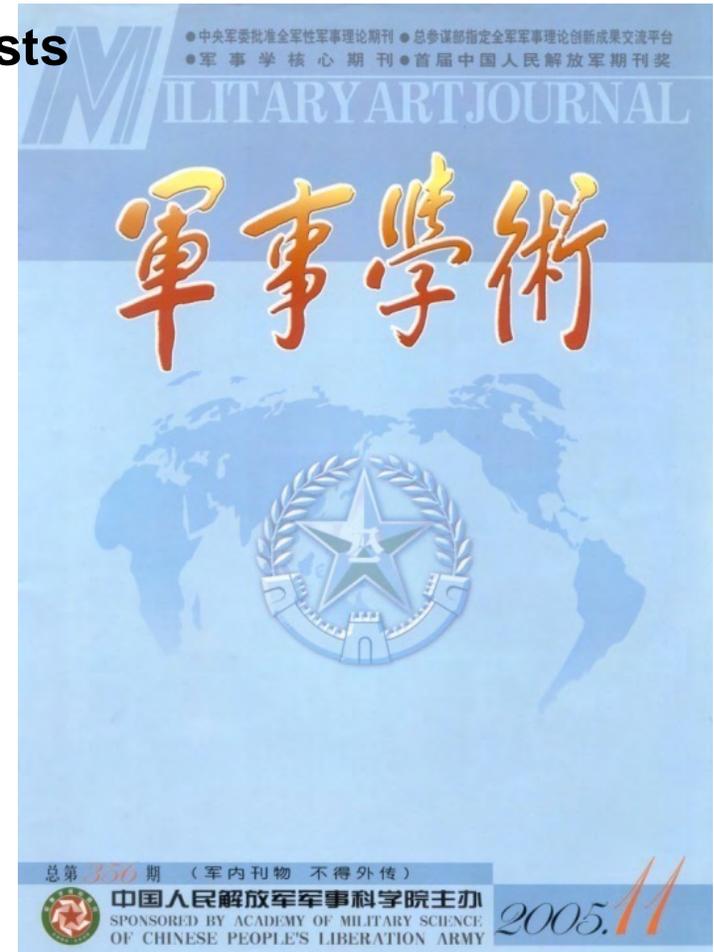
4. Far-Seas Operations (远海作战) (Mid-2000s – Present)

- Endorsed by both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao
- Effective naval operations within and beyond second island chain
- Regional defensive and offensive-type navy (区域防御进攻型海军) by 2020



• Reasons articulated by China's naval analysts

- Decline of land-based security threats
- Prosperous coastal region needs to be protected but is vulnerable



关于海军由近海走向远海战略思考

★叶信荣 左立平

关键词: 海军 近海 远海 战略

中图分类号: E815 文献标识码: A 文章编号: CN11-4233/E(2004)-10-30-04

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加快完成海军“近海防御”战略确定的使命任务, 走向远海, 是人民海军发展的必然, 是国家发

斗力的快速提升。

建设强大的海军是我党三代领导核心一以贯之

– Newly emerging maritime interests - resources and overseas investment and trade

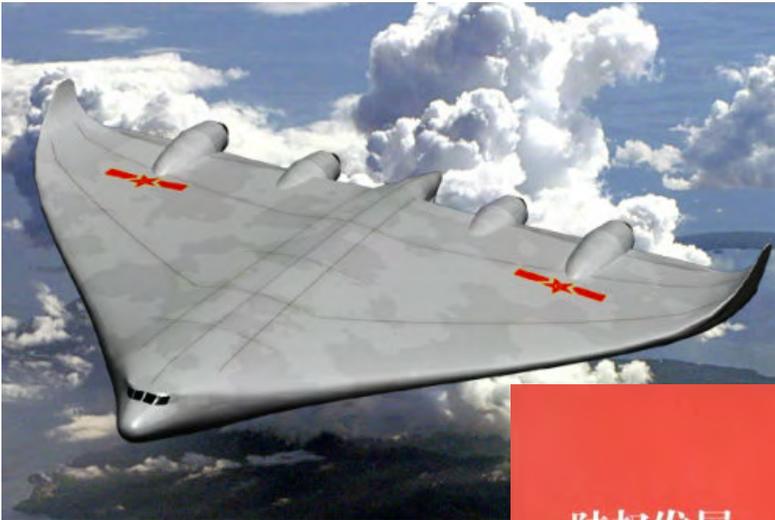
– Need space for “exterior-line operations” to “gain initiative” in naval operations



5. Implications and Constraints

- Possible new capabilities

- Aircraft carriers
- Long-range strike of “enemy’s rear” (“敌后”)



- Constraints and debates

- “Continentalist” argument
- Unclear objectives
- Overseas bases
- ASW