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China's Naval Nationalism

Sources, Prospects, and the U.S. Response

Robert S. Ross

Since China began its rise to great power status in 1978, U.S.-China relations have avoided much of the instability and great power rivalry associated with the U.S.-Soviet competition. The development of the Chinese economy, the growth of central government revenues, and annual double-digit increases since the mid-1990s in the Chinese defense budget have yet to yield China military capabilities or great power ambitions that fundamentally affect the regional security order and vital U.S. interests.

Nonetheless, recent developments in Chinese politics and defense policy suggest that China will soon embark on a more ambitious maritime policy, beginning with the construction of a power-projection navy centered on an aircraft carrier. In so doing, China will follow the example of prior land powers. Just as nationalism and the pursuit of status encouraged past land powers to seek great power maritime capabilities, nationalism, rather than security, is driving China's naval ambition. And China's maritime power will be limited by the constraints experienced by all land powers—extensive challenges to territorial security and a corresponding commitment to a large ground force capability. China's naval nationalism will nonetheless challenge U.S.-China cooperation. It will elicit increased U.S. naval spending and deployments and politicize China policy in the United States.

The first section of this article offers a historical comparative framework for analysis of the geopolitical context of competition between land and sea powers. It defines land and maritime powers by establishing their respective underlying geopolitical characteristics. It discusses asymmetric resource constraints on maritime and land powers and the effective commerce-raiding/*guerre de course* and access-denial strategies pursued by land powers. This section also defines naval nationalism as one manifestation of nationalist "prestige strategies" pursued by governments seeking greater domestic legitimacy, and it considers the role of naval nationalism in a land power's pursuit of

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costly and ultimately ineffective maritime capabilities. The second section establishes the continued importance of geography in contemporary international politics. It describes China's land-power characteristics and contrasts Beijing's corresponding strategic priorities with U.S. strategic priorities. In this context, it considers China's post–Cold War development of an effective access-denial capability. The third section discusses growing societywide nationalist pressure on the Chinese leadership to construct a power-projection navy centered on an aircraft carrier. The fourth section examines the implications of Chinese development of a carrier-based fleet for U.S.-China relations. The conclusion considers the implications of China's naval nationalism for understanding great power conflict and the challenges for U.S.-China relations.

Definitions and a Framework for Great Power Naval Competition

The emergent Sino-American naval competition is the most recent example of maritime competition between a land power and a maritime power. The development of this competition will reflect the enduring underlying dynamics common to this geopolitical relationship. A framework for analysis of these dynamics consists of four elements: (1) analysis of the geopolitical circumstances that determine the resources that great powers can bring to the competition; (2) the effect of distinct geopolitical circumstances in determining optimal defense policies; (3) the nationalist sources of suboptimal land-power maritime policy; and (4) the geopolitical sources of the repeated failure of land powers to secure maritime power.

THE GEOPOLITICS OF SECURITY

Naval competition occurs among distinct dyads: two land or two maritime powers can compete over sea power, or a naval power can compete for sea power with a land power. The dynamics of each dyad are different because of the distinct geopolitical attributes of land and sea powers. Nations are land or sea powers not because of a cultural or historical predisposition, but because of enduring geopolitical circumstances that tend to reward particular defense strategies. Alfred Thayer Mahan made this point more than a century ago, observing that the most important factor determining a nation's sea power is its neighbors: "A nation that is neither forced to defend itself by land or to seek extension of its territory by way of the land . . . has an advantage as compared with a people one of whose boundaries is continental."[1] He further argued

1. A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower upon History, 1660–1783* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), p. 25. See also Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Ashfield, 1986), pp. 5–9.

that "history has conclusively demonstrated the inability of a state with even a single continental frontier to compete in naval development with one that is insular, although of smaller population and resources."[2]

From this perspective, land powers are great powers that confront enduring and significant strategic challenges emanating from interior threats to their border security. Maritime powers, on the other hand, are great powers whose political or geographic circumstances offer them enduring internal border security and ready access to the sea. The United States' emergence as a maritime power reflected its geopolitical circumstances. It first developed significant naval power in the late nineteenth century, after it had consolidated domestic stability following the Civil War, conquered its western territories, and confronted considerably weaker powers on its northern and southern borders. Mahan's 1890 publication *The Influence of Seapower upon History* resonated with historical circumstances that enabled the United States to turn its strategic priority from land power to sea power.[3] The sources of U.S. maritime power are similar to those of prior maritime powers. England's land neighbors, Scotland and Ireland, lacked the resources to pose anything more that "spasmodic threats" to English security, and the English Channel served as an effective moat providing security from continental powers. In addition, England possesses plentiful harbors along its entire coast.[4] Japan, for a brief period, was also a maritime power. During the early twentieth century, it took advantage of its secure maritime borders and easy access to the sea to develop dominant naval power in the western Pacific Ocean.

In contrast to the natural attributes of successful maritime powers, land powers confront internal threats that impose severe resource constraints in developing maritime power. Europe's continental great powers were never unencumbered from challenges to their land borders. France encountered continental challenges throughout its history into the twentieth century. Germany has faced two-front land challenges since 1871. Russia's borders with the central European powers and then with Asian powers have similarly challenged its security. In each case, interior threats required the great power to prioritize

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2. A.T. Mahan, *Retrospect and Prospect: Studies in International Relations* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1902), quoted in Colin S. Gray, *The Navy in the Post–Cold War World: The Uses and Value of Strategic Seapower* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994) p. 89.
3. For a discussion of Mahan and the development of U.S. sea power, see Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776–1918* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990); Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956); and Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harper, 1973). See also Colin S. Gray, "National Style in Strategy: The American Example," *International Security,* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 1981), pp. 21–47.
4. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, p. 19.

continental defense at the expense of costly maritime capabilities. Japan confronted similar constraints on its maritime power after extending its continental empire deep into China and along Russian borders before World War II.

LAND POWERS AND OPTIMAL MARITIME STRATEGIES

Geopolitically determined resource constraints determine that the optimal maritime strategy for a continental power is a commerce-raiding/*guerre de course* capability and, following the advent of the aircraft carrier, an access-denial capability. Such capabilities have offered the continental power a maritime deterrent and the capability to impose significant wartime costs on a maritime power while it prioritizes its ground force capability.

France frequently adopted with great success a commerce-raiding/*guerre de course* strategy. Between 1689 and 1697, it took approximately 4,000 prizes from England. Ten years later, French commerce raiding again pressured British shipping and compelled Britain to alter its naval strategy. Altogether, from 1689 to 1713, France took approximately 12,000 prizes and 3,600 merchantmen from its enemies and significantly damaged both the English and Dutch economies.[5] During the Napoleonic Wars, Britain lost nearly 11,000 ships to commerce raiders; it lost 619 ships in 1810, after Napoleon attacked British commerce in the Baltic.[6] Then, in the 1870s, France's *jeune école* adopted a commerce-raiding/*guerre de course* strategy in recognition of the geopolitical constraints on its maritime potential.[7] Russia was an early adherent to a commerce-raiding strategy, adopting it after being defeated in the Crimean War. Germany also developed a commerce-raiding strategy. Before Alfred von Tirpitz assumed control of the German Navy in the mid-1890s, Bismarck and his naval officers understood that Germany, as a continental power, could not afford development of capital ships, so they focused instead on building smaller, less expensive ships to contend with the navies of the smaller European states. After the onset of World War II, Adolf Hitler all but abandoned construction of capital ships to focus on submarines for commerce raiding, which had a major impact on Allied shipping.[8]

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5. N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 157–159, 175–177; and Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery,* pp. 78–79, 84–85.
6. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery,* pp. 130–131.
7. On the *jeune école,* see Arne Røksund, *The Jeune Ecole: The Strategy of the Weak* (Boston: Brill, 2007).
8. Lawrence Sondhaus, *Naval Warfare, 1815–1914* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 68, 89–90, 125; David H. Olivier, *German Naval Strategy, 1856–1888: Forerunners of Tirpitz* (New York: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 84–85, 100, 115, 186–188; Clay Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War: The Hunters, 1939–1942* (New York: Random House, 2000), pp. 31, 39, 45–47, 97–98, 163–175, 158–205; and Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), pp. 31–32, 314–325.

The advent of the aircraft carrier transformed the optimal land-power maritime strategy. For the first time, a naval power could threaten a land power's territorial security without coming ashore. In this transformed environment, the submarine remained the land power's preferred maritime platform, but now it was primarily useful for an access-denial capability to reduce the challenge of carrier-based aircraft to territorial security. Access denial was the Soviet Union's maritime strategy for nearly three decades following World War II. Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev, despite pressure from naval officers, dedicated the Soviet Union's limited resources to construction of smaller ships and submarines, in part to contend with U.S. carrier-based aircraft operating near the Soviet coast. Leonid Brezhnev similarly focused on submarine construction into the early 1970s. By this time, Moscow had developed a submarine force that, in combination with its land-based aircraft, posed an effective challenge to the U.S. fleet operating near Soviet waters.[9]

NAVAL NATIONALISM AND SUBOPTIMAL MARITIME STRATEGIES

The financial restraints on naval power have not always prevailed on a land power's strategic choices. Naval nationalism has frequently encouraged continental powers to seek battle-capable surface fleets. Naval nationalism is one manifestation of "prestige strategies," whereby governments seek international success to bolster their domestic popularity. Prestige-seeking governments sometimes provoke war in the pursuit of a popular military victory.[10] But governments also can seek greater prestige by developing defense policies and acquiring weaponry that do not provoke war but nonetheless destabilize great power relations. Naval nationalism is one example of a potentially destabilizing prestige strategy.

During the nineteenth century, with the emergence of European popular nationalism, naval nationalism became a prominent prestige strategy and a critical source of maritime rivalries. Napoleon's acquisition of capital ships

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9. See the 1983 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate in John B. Hattendorf Jr., "The Evolution of the U.S. Maritime Strategy, 1977–1986," *Newport Paper,* No. 19 (Newport, R.I.: Center for Naval Warfare Studies, Naval War College, 2004), pp. 101–183. See also Jürgen Rohwer and Mikhail S. Monakov, *Stalin's Ocean-Going Fleet: Soviet Naval Strategy and Shipbuilding Programmes, 1935–1953* (Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 185–188, 201, 216–217; Vadim Kolnogorov, "To Be or Not to Be: The Development of Soviet Deck Aviation," *Journal of Strategic Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 2005), p. 341; and Sergei Chernyavskii, "The Era of Gorshkov: Triumph and Contradictions," *Journal of Strategic Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 2005), pp. 294–295. On Soviet submarines, see Barry M. Blechman, *The Changing Soviet Navy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1973), pp. 24–31, 42.

10. Prestige strategies as a source of war are discussed in Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security,* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), pp. 33–34.

and his challenge to Britain's maritime superiority and presence in North Africa were the first steps toward realizing his maritime ambition to oust the British from India and reflected his insatiable need for military successes to sustain his domestic nationalist legitimacy.[11] Nationalism drove the French naval buildup in the 1860s, when there was popular widespread support for enhancing French prestige and grandeur through possession of large capital ships. Louis Napoleon's legitimacy depended on his satisfying this nationalist desire, and he personally participated in developing France's naval policy. In six years, France's naval budget grew by more than 30 percent and strained the country's finances. French naval nationalism reemerged in the 1880s, when widespread interest in enhancing France's prestige demanded large colonial possessions and a large navy to protect them.[12]

Naval nationalism drove German development of the dreadnought and the Anglo-German arms race in the early twentieth century. Tirpitz's "risk fleet" was not subjected to rigorous military analysis before it was developed, and it was resisted by many German military officers. Nevertheless, Tirpitz secured funding for the dreadnoughts because Kaiser Wilhelm II valued the German Navy as the personal flotilla of a world leader and as the foremost expression of Germany's power and mission to achieve its "place in the sun." Just as the "Greeks and the Romans each had their time, the Spaniards had theirs and the French also"; now it was Germany's turn.[13] Thus, not only did Germany devote insufficient resources to its ground forces, but the kaiser's preoccupation with capital ships prevented it from developing adequately its submarine force until 1916.[14]

Russia's drive into the North Pacific in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its war with Japan in the North Pacific in 1904–05 reflected the impact of nationalism on Russian defense policy. Russian leaders, including Czar Nicholas II, were acutely aware of Russian vulnerability to Japanese naval supremacy; they believed it was imperative for Russia to avoid war.

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11. See A.B. Rodger, *The War of the Second Coalition, 1798 to 1801: A Strategic Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), pp. 18–21; and Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, pp. 457–459.
12. C.I. Hamilton, *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry, 1840–1870* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 88–89, 268–270; Theodore Ropp, *The Development of a Modern Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), pp. 6–7, 10, 142–146, 166, 205–210, 213–214, 246–251, 263; and Sondhaus, *Naval Warfare*, pp. 55, 141–144.
13. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914* (London: Ashfield, 1987), pp. 418–419.
14. Rolf Hobson, *Imperialism at Sea: Naval Strategic Thought, the Ideology of Sea Power, and the Tirpitz Plan, 1875–1914* (Boston: Brill, 2002); Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism*, pp. 416–419; and Peter Padfield, *The Great Naval Race: The Anglo-German Naval Rivalry, 1900–1914* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005), pp. 65, 295. On World War I, see Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War*, pp. 9–15, 36. On its failure to develop submarines, see Robert J. Art, *The Influence of Foreign Policy on Seapower: New Weapons and Weltpolitik in Wilhelminian Germany* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1973).

Russia's belligerence reflected excessive confidence in Russian cultural superiority over Asians and its resistance to suggesting weakness or humiliation in the face of Japanese pressure, especially in the context of early twentieth-century domestic political instability.[15] Soviet maritime policy in the late twentieth century similarly reflected naval nationalism. The Soviet Union began development of a large surface fleet in 1972, just as its ground forces incurred the cost of a second front with China.[16] It laid the keel of its first aircraft carrier in 1983, just as it was entering into a comprehensive arms race with the United States and its economy began to stagnate. Yet the Soviet Union was not a trading country, and it relied on domestic sources of energy. Russian nationalism and the intrinsic militant ideology ingrained in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led to a maritime policy that aimed to establish the superiority of the country's communist political and economic system.[17]

Nationalism drove Japan's simultaneous pursuit of continental and maritime empires in East Asia in the early twentieth century. The Meiji effort to create a national identity fostered a nationalist culture that sought validation for Japan through empire and forced industrialization. Once unleashed, this nationalism dictated Japan's security agenda and, in the context of economic depression and social instability, became the foundation of the government's legitimacy. Japan thus pursued a relentless expansionist agenda even as it encountered growing economic difficulties and diminished resources.[18] Ultimately, naval nationalism led to Japan's pursuit in the 1930s of an East Asian maritime empire even as its ground forces occupied China and maintained a continental empire.

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15. Denis Warner and Peggy Warner, *The Tide at Sunrise: A History of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905* (London: Angus and Roberston, 1974), pp. 71–77, 144, 147, 162–166; Andrew Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy, 1881–1904: With Special Emphasis on the Causes of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Octagon, 1977), pp. 41–68, 170, 209, 218, 228, 243, 245, 248; Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Longman, 1985), pp. 163, 247, 253; and John Albert White, *The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 121, 127.
16. Paul F. Langer, "Soviet Military Power in Asia," in Donald S. Zagoria, ed., *Soviet Policy in East Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 252–255; and Robert A. Scalapino, "Asia in a Global Context: Strategic Issues for the Soviet Union," in Richard H. Solomon and Masataka Kosaka, eds., *The Soviet Far East Military Buildup: Nuclear Dilemmas and Asian Security* (Dover, Mass.: Auburn House, 1986), pp. 21–39.
17. See, for example, Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1973,* 2d ed. (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 3–30; Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Jack Snyder, "The Gorbachev Revolution: A Waning of Soviet Expansionism?" *International Security,* Vol. 12, No. 3 (Winter 1987/88), pp. 93–131.
18. Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1978), pp. 98–101, 108–109, 140–143; Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), pp. 119–123, 196–198; and Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931–1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pp. 3–12, 97–128.

NAVAL CONFLICT OUTCOMES

In contests between maritime and continental powers, the maritime power consistently responds to the emergent threat with resources sufficient to maintain supremacy. The continental power, on the other hand, unable to resolve its land border insecurity, cannot approach military parity with the maritime power. Its effort to achieve maritime superiority results in defeat, either in an arms race or in battle, and it ultimately returns to a more limited maritime strategy.

The British responded to nineteenth-century French naval ambition with unconstrained zeal. Adm. Horatio Nelson aggressively pursued and defeated Napoleon's fleet at Alexandria and Trafalgar. In the 1860s Britain defeated Louis Napoleon's maritime ambitions in a naval arms race, and it coerced France into submission in 1899 at Fashoda. In each case, not only did Britain easily outspend France on increasing its naval power, but France was handicapped by simultaneous conflict with European land powers, including during the Napoleonic Wars and then with Prussia in 1870 and Germany in the late 1890s.[19] German abandonment of its naval arms race with Britain on the eve of World War I and the insignificance of Tirpitz's "risk fleet" during the war reflected British resolve to maintain maritime superiority and Germany's preoccupation with its ground forces. In the decade prior to World War I, Germany allocated between 19 and 26 percent of its defense budget to the navy; the rest of the budget was for the army. Britain allocated 60 percent of its defense budget to the navy.[20] Thus, despite its success during the Battle of Jutland in 1916, the German Navy never left its harbors following this battle, and Britain easily sustained its naval blockade. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 and Russia's defeat in 1856 reflected Lord Palmerston's determination to vanquish the nascent Russian Navy and Russia's inability to devote significant resources to maritime power. Ultimately, Russia's navy remained in port. Prior to its forces evacuating Sebastopol, Russia sunk its Black Sea fleet to prevent the fleet from falling to the British.[21]

As a naval power, Japan was similarly determined to prevent the emergence of a maritime rival. Japan's 1904–05 defeat of Russian forces in the Far East

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19. Peter Padfield, *Maritime Power and the Struggle for Freedom: Naval Campaigns That Shaped the Modern World, 1788–1851* (New York: Overlook, 2005), pp. 147–172, 217–253; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery,* pp. 124–133, 145, 167–168; Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean,* pp. 459–460; Ropp, *The Development of a Modern Navy,* pp. 10, 22–23, 308, 322–323; Hamilton, *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry,* pp. 51–54, 296–298, 304, 314–318; C.J. Bartlett, *Great Britain and Sea Power, 1815–1853* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), pp. 180–181, 186–187, 249, 283–285, 290–293; and Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880–1905* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), pp. 311–316, 320–321, 330–335.
20. Padfield, *The Great Naval Race,* pp. 180, 184, 210–212, 234, 250–260, 280, 288, 292, 297–298.
21. Paul W. Schroeder. *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War: The Destruction of the European Concert* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 147–148, 171, 187, 223, 283–284, 293.

reflected its resolve to carry out large-scale naval expansion and eliminate a naval challenge in Northeast Asia. It also reflected the geopolitical constraints on the Russian naval budget. The Russian Navy received less than 25 percent of the Russian defense budget, while maintaining a presence in European waters and in the Far East.[22] Russia's geopolitical constraints also contributed to the failure of the Soviet Union's maritime policy. In the 1970s and 1980s, Moscow's inability to develop an effective carrier-based maritime capability reflected the multiple land threats to Russian security and the resolve of Ronald Reagan's administration to engage in a naval arms race. When Japan in the 1930s simultaneously sought land and maritime empires, geopolitical realities determined its failure. Given the size of Japan's army in China, its navy could not contend with the United States' maritime capability; after Pearl Harbor, Japan's defeat was all but certain.[23]

China as a Land Power and Its Access-Denial Strategy

The emerging U.S.-China naval competition occurs within the enduring context of competition between continental and maritime powers. Whether China can develop a battle-capable surface fleet will reflect its geopolitical circumstances and its ability to devote resources to sustain a long-term naval competition. To the extent that China's continental security challenges undermine its maritime potential, a cost-effective access-denial strategy will not only best serve Chinese security but will also pose the greatest challenge to U.S. maritime security.

GEOPOLITICS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Despite post–Cold War development of high-technology weaponry, geography remains a potent force in great power politics. This is especially the case for water, in that advanced technologies have not made maritime capabilities obsolete for military power projection across the oceans.[24] For the United States, a power-projection navy fleet has been an essential element of its post–

22. On the conditions of the Russian and Japanese navies, see Warner and Warner, *The Tide at Sunrise*, pp. 55, 77–78, 162–164; and Donald W. Mitchell, *A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 198–203.
23. James William Morley, *The Fateful Choice: Japan's Advance into Southeast Asia, 1939–1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 121–122; and John Mueller, "Pearl Harbor: Military Inconvenience, Political Disaster," *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Winter 1991/92), pp. 172–203.
24. On the ongoing importance of geography for international politics, see Jakub J. Grygiel, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 1–20, 164–177; and John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001). More generally, see Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167–214; and Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring 1998), pp. 5–43.

Cold War great power role in distant theaters. Both the U.S. victory over Iraq in 1991 and the rapid destruction of the Iraqi government in 2003 depended in part on U.S. carrier-deployed aircraft. The U.S. air war against Afghanistan's Taliban government in 2001 also depended on carrier-based capabilities.

For China, despite the revolution in military affairs, its land-based capabilities are insufficient to enable it to project power in even the relatively near waters of maritime East Asia. Meanwhile, the United States is using the same maritime capabilities to dominate East Asia's sea-lanes and to preserve the regional security order that it has used to wage war in Iraq. Neither submarines nor a surface fleet without on-location air defense can enable China to challenge U.S. dominance of regional sea-lanes and the security of its regional strategic partners, including Japan, Singapore, and other countries in maritime Southeast Asia. Chinese ability to secure access to overseas resources and to challenge U.S. regional alliances and strategic presence will thus require naval power-projection capabilities similar to the capabilities the United States has deployed to project power in its wars in the post–Cold War era.

Nuclear weapons have transformed much of international politics and have significantly reduced the likelihood of great power war. But despite extensive U.S. and Soviet development of nuclear weapons, the Cold War experienced prolonged periods of heightened tension, nuclear and conventional arms races, and numerous crises. And the geography of the European front, including U.S. distance from the European theater and the Soviet Union's proximity to Western Europe, contributed to the dynamics of U.S.-Soviet competition. Nuclear weapons have not eliminated the role of geography in great power conflict or the prospect of heightened U.S.-China naval competition, including arms races and maritime crises.

THE GEOPOLITICAL CONSTRAINTS ON CHINESE MARITIME POWER

China is a continental power. It shares borders with fourteen countries, and four of its neighbors possess nuclear weapons (India, North Korea, Pakistan, and Russia). Among China's larger neighbors are Russia in Central Asia and Northeast Asia and India in Southern Asia. The possibility of a revived Russian ground force capability and the prospect of Sino-Russian competition in Central Asia and in Northeast Asia require China to prepare for possible tensions. If India should stabilize its conflict with Pakistan and continue to develop its economy, it may build the capabilities to challenge Chinese border security. Despite their comparatively small populations, Vietnam and a united Korea also would require Chinese vigilance, given their traditional enmity toward China.

Moreover, China's interior borders are difficult to defend. From Afghanistan

to the eastern border of Mongolia, Chinese borders are in expansive and porous desert terrains populated by widely dispersed nomadic groups. These conditions bedeviled China's security through its dynastic history. Dynastic China could subdue its southern neighbors and the Korean Peninsula, but could rarely pacify its northern and western frontiers. Major challenges to the empire always emanated from the interior.[25] Even the most threatening nineteenth- and twentieth-century occupations by imperial powers reflected China's inability to contend with ground forces entering China from the north—the ground forces of Russia and Japan. In the twenty-first century, China's Central Asian geopolitical difficulties are exacerbated by the presence of many disaffected minorities dispersed along its interior borders, including borders with India in Tibet, Islamic countries in Central Asia, and Russia in Northeast Asia.

Reflecting these geopolitical circumstances, Chinese dynasties almost exclusively concentrated their defense resources on internal border security. Adm. Zheng He's famous "treasure fleet," constructed by the Ming dynasty Emperor Yongle from 1405 to 1433, was a notable example of China's pursuit of sea power. Yet Emperor Yongle's maritime ambitions lasted a mere thirty years. After a single symbolic expedition following his death, Yongle's successors, Emperor Hongxi and Emperor Xuande, allowed Zheng He's treasure fleet to rot in port.[26] Moreover, Yongle's treasure fleet was China's sole effort to construct a large, oceangoing fleet from the early fifteenth century through the early twenty-first century, underscoring dynastic China's preoccupation with its continental frontiers.

China's geopolitical realities also have determined its post–Cold War force structure. China does not release information on budget allocations among the People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces, but available information underscores the PLA's bias toward a ground force military. Although China has increased naval spending, its ground forces make up approximately two-thirds of PLA forces, while the navy makes up slightly more than one-tenth of PLA forces. In contrast, in 2006, at the height of the war in Iraq and extensive mobilization of U.S. ground forces, the U.S. Navy and Marines together made up nearly 40 percent of total U.S. forces. In recent years, China has deployed approxi-

25. See, for example, Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2005); Morris Rossabi, ed., *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); and Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

26. The best research account of the construction of the treasure fleet and the Ming voyages is Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405–1433* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007).

mately 300,000 troops for border security; the United States deploys about 11,000 troops on its borders.[27]

Moreover, the PLA is responsible for domestic security and the survival of the Chinese Communist Party. Although China funds the People's Armed Police (PAP), a paramilitary force of up to a million soldiers that is responsible for domestic security, the per capita number of China's national police force and the PAP together amount to only one-half the per capita police force of the United States, which in 2004 totaled 836, 787 federal, state, and local full-time officers. Thus, the PLA must be staffed with ground forces to backstop China's public security forces. In January 2008 the PLA General Staff Department stressed noncombat training, including training to maintain domestic stability and for disaster rescue, as one of the PLA's three training priorities. The PLA then deployed large numbers of troops to clear the roads and undertake relief operations during the January blizzard, supported suppression of the March anti-Chinese violence in Tibet, contributed to disaster relief operations following the May Sichuan earthquake, and contributed to security for the Olympic Games. In the early stages of China's 2008–09 economic slowdown and the emergence of widespread unemployment, the PAP suggested that it lacked the resources to deal with greater instability, and President Hu Jintao reminded the PLA of its responsibility for "the arduous task of safeguarding social stability."[28] The subsequent July 2009 Uighur anti-Chinese vio-

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27. Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Dennis J. Blasko, "PLA Ground Forces: The View from Beijing . . . or Heilongjiang . . . or Xinjiang," in Mark Mohr, ed., *The Chinese People's Liberation Army: Should the United States Be Worried?* Asia Program Special Report, No. 135 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, December 2006), pp. 17–24.

28. Dennis J. Blasko, "PLA Ground Force Modernization and Mission Diversification: Underway in All Military Regions," in Roy Kamphausen and Andrew Scobell, eds., *Right-Sizing the People's Liberation Army: Exploring the Contours of China's Military* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), pp. 281–374; and Murray Scot Tanner, "How China Manages Internal Security Challenges and Its Impact on PLA Missions," in Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell, eds., *Beyond the Strait: PLA Missions Other Than Taiwan* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2009), pp. 39–98. Chinese border forces include the PAP. On the 2008 blizzard, see "China to Deploy Military Helicopters in Snow Disaster Relief Work," Xinhua, January 30, 2008, World News Connection (WNC), doc. no. 200801301477.1_544d0025dbc550ac. On U.S. and Chinese forces, see International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance: 2007* (London: IISS, 2007), pp. 28–38, 346–350. On the PAP, see Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense in 2006," *China Daily,* December 29, 2006, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-12/29/content_771191.htm; "Chinese Servicemen Urged to Cherish 'Correct Values,'" *People's Daily,* February 13, 2008, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90785/6353225.html; and Craig S. Smith, "China's Efforts against Crime Make No Dent," *New York Times,* December 26, 2001. On PAP apprehension, see Yang Minqing and Tang Hua, "Strengthen Capacity of Armed Police Force in Implementation of Diversified Tasks," *Liaowang,* January 26, 2009, Open Source Center (OSC), doc. no. CPP20090210710009. For the quote from Hu's speech, see *Jiefangjun Bao,* March 17, 2009, OSC, doc. no. CPP2009031770001. On the General Staff Department's priorities, see "Zongcanbu

lence in Xinjiang was more serious than the 2008 anti-Chinese violence in Tibet, and forceful restoration of order throughout the province required deployment of PAP forces from interior provinces as well as the presence of PLA forces.[29]

Although the Chinese Navy's budget will continue to increase, its ability to engage in a large-scale and protracted program of ship construction will be challenged by the army's simultaneous demand for resources to contend with the intrinsic vulnerability of China's interior borders and its domestic insecurity. Despite China's large population and its rapid economic growth, China's geopolitical circumstances and the PLA's extensive and costly domestic security responsibilities create constraints on China's maritime capability that are as challenging as those confronted by prior continental powers.

China's access-denial strategy

Reflecting its geopolitical environment and the corresponding constraints on its naval budget, China's post–Cold War maritime policy has focused on modernizing its access-denial capability. Although China has purchased four Russian Sovremmeny-class destroyers and has modernized its domestic destroyer fleet, the PLA Navy has focused on its submarine force. In this respect, China's post–Cold War maritime strategy resembles the commerce-raiding strategies of European continental powers and, in particular, the access-denial strategy that dominated Soviet policy from World War II through the 1970s.[30]

At the heart of China's maritime strategy is its fleet of attack submarines. Since 1992 China has taken delivery of twelve Kilo-class diesel submarines from Russia. In addition, it has produced approximately twelve Song-class diesel submarines, and in 2004 it introduced an upgraded Song, designated the Yuan-class. Equipped with sophisticated antiship cruise missiles, these

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Shu Quanjun Xiniandu Junshi Xunlian Gongzuo" [General staff department lays out 2008 annual training work for entire military], *Jiefang Junbao,* January 21, 2008, p. 1. I am grateful to Taylor Fravel for suggesting this source. For the total number of U.S. police officers, see the U.S. Department of Justice figures at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/lawenf.htm.

29. "Minyong Jichang bei Zhengyong" [Civilian airfields commandeered, more than 10,000 People's Armed Police will go to Xinjiang to maintain stability], *Boxun.com,* http://news.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2009/07/200907101619.shtml; Edward Wong, "China Locks Down Restive Region after Deadly Clashes," *New York Times,* July 7, 2009; and "Clampdown on Uyghur Cities," Radio Free Asia, July 7, 2009, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/clampdown-07092009101424.html.

30. Roger Cliff, Mark Burles, Michael S. Chase, Derek Eaton, and Kevin L. Pollpeter, *Entering the Dragon's Lair: Chinese Anti-Access Strategies and Their Implications for the United States* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2007). For a comparison of Chinese and Soviet strategies, see Michael McDevitt, "The PLA's Anti-Access Role in a Taiwan Contingency," paper presented at the 2007 International Conference on PLA Affairs, Council of Advanced Policy Studies, Taipei, Taiwan, November 29–December 1, 2007.

"quiet" diesel submarines make vulnerable and complicate the operations of the U.S. surface fleet in the western Pacific Ocean.[31] Both the ability of a Chinese submarine to breach a U.S. carrier task force and Chinese submarine operations beyond the Ryukyu Islands, the island chain approximately 200 miles from the Chinese coast, testify to the improving operational capability of China's submarine force.[32] China has also developed its mine-warfare capability as a key element of its access-denial capability. Moreover, China's acquisition of Russian Su-27 and Su-30 jet fighters contributes to defense of its airspace from U.S. aircraft based in Japan and Guam and on aircraft carriers, as well as to a limited coastal water power-projection capability. In addition, by 2005 China had taken delivery of nearly 1,500 Russian surface-to-air missiles, and from 2005 to 2009 it had ordered more than 1,000 additional missiles.[33] Deployed along China's coast, these missiles also contribute to defense of Chinese airspace.

China's access-denial capability is not a war-winning capability; the United States retains overwhelming maritime superiority in the western Pacific Ocean.[34] But China's submarines make vulnerable U.S. surface ships, especially aircraft carriers, operating near the Chinese coast. The limited deterrent capability of these submarines considerably complicates the operations of the U.S. Navy, including the rapid transit of a carrier task force to the region and the ability to deploy aircraft carriers close to the theater of operations, especially in a Taiwan contingency.[35] Because Chinese submarines compel U.S. car-

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31. Lyle Goldstein and William Murray, "Undersea Dragons: China's Maturing Submarine Force," *International Security,* Vol. 28, No. 4 (Spring 2004), pp. 161–196; William S. Murray, "An Overview of the PLAN Submarine Force," in Andrew S. Erickson, Lyle J. Goldstein, Murray, and Andrew R. Wilson, eds., *China's Future Nuclear Submarine Force* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007), pp. 59–76; and Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2007* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2007), http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/070523-China-Military-Power-final.pdf.

32. On the breach of the carrier task force, see "Defenses on Subs to Be Reviewed, Chinese Ship's Shadowing Cited," *Washington Times,* November 14, 2006; Bai Yu, "The Mystery of Stalking U.S. Aircraft Carrier 'Kitty Hawk,'" Zhongguo Tongxunshe, November 16, 2006, in WNC, doc. no. 200611161477.1_e25100ab737a10f8; and Audra Ang, "Admiral Downplays Sub Incident," AP, November 17, 2006. On Chinese mine capability, see Andrew S. Erickson, Lyle J. Goldstein, and William S. Murray, "Chinese Mine Warfare: A PLA Navy 'Assassin's Mace' Capability," *China Maritime Studies,* No. 3 (Newport, R.I.: China Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, 2009).

33. On Chinese acquisition of Russian arms, see "Zhong Yi Wuqi Jiaoyi" [Sino-Russian arms exchange], *Guoji Zhanwang* [World outlook], No. 8 (2007), p. 19; and Dmitriy Vasilyev, "Whom Russia Arms," *Kommersant-Vlast,* March 9, 2009, OSC, doc. no. CEP20090310358002.

34. McDevitt, "The PLA's Anti-Access Role in a Taiwan Contingency"; and Bernard D. Cole, "China's Growing Maritime Power: Implications for the United States," in Mohr, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army,* pp. 12–16.

35. Office of Naval Intelligence, "Seapower Questions on the Chinese Submarine Force," U.S. Navy, December 20, 2006, http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/ONI2006.pdf; Bernard D. Cole, *Taiwan's Security: History and Prospects* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 34–36,179–180; Eric A. McVadon, "China's Maturing Navy," *Naval War College Review,* Vol. 59, No. 2 (Spring 2006), pp. 90–

riers to operate at a greater distance from China's coast, they reduce the capability of U.S. carrier-based aircraft operating in the Taiwan theater. Thus, China's submarine force, in combination with its land-based capabilities, has been an effective instrument within China's technological and financial reach that raises the potential cost of war to U.S. forces operating at increasing distances from China's coast.

Naval Nationalism and the Politics of Chinese Naval Policy

Since the end of the Cold War, China has pursued an effective access-denial capability. But just as nationalism has led prior continental powers to develop more ambitious maritime capabilities, nationalism is shaping China's maritime defense policy. Chinese nationalism drives a widespread popular demand for construction of an aircraft carrier and a large blue-water navy, traditional symbols of great power status. It also drives grandiose and costly expectations as well as dismisses the costs of a U.S.-China maritime rivalry.

THE SOCIETAL PRESSURES OF NAVAL NATIONALISM

As early as 1986, Commander of the Chinese Navy Adm. Liu Huaqing advocated development of an aircraft carrier and assigned responsibility for initial research to the PLA's naval armaments and research center. In early 1987 Liu argued before members of the PLA's General Headquarters that it was impossible for China's forces to conduct war at sea without air cover. He vowed that China could develop an aircraft carrier task force without significantly increasing the defense budget and that it could develop the advanced technologies itself. He proposed that China complete initial research on a carrier by 1990 and construct a model carrier by 2000. After Liu delivered his report, the Scientific Research Office of the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense began research on the development of a carrier. When Liu moved to the Central Military Commission in 1992, he continued to oversee research on a Chinese carrier, and he sent military delegations to France, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States to study aircraft carriers.[36]

107; Ronald O'Rourke, "China's Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress," CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, updated July 20, 2007), Order Code RL33153; and David Lague, "U.S. Military Officials Wary of China's Expanding Fleet of Submarines," *International Herald Tribune,* February 7, 2008.

36. Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing Huiyilu* [Memoirs of Liu Huaqing] (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 2004), pp. 478–480. See also Liu's early speeches on the aircraft carrier in Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing Junshi Wenxuan* [Selected military works of Liu Huaqing] (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe), pp. 267–272, 472–474, 495–497, 563–566. See also Andrew S. Erickson and Andrew R. Wilson,

Through the 1980s and early 1990s, China's civilian leadership refused Liu's effort to make development of an aircraft carrier a national effort. In the mid-1990s, however, President Jiang Zemin approved the research and development of the capability to build an aircraft carrier.[37] The pace of the effort increased after 1996, and in January 2007 Huang Qiang, spokesman for the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense, reported that China possessed the capability to build an aircraft carrier.[38] Then, in November 2008 Gen. Qian Lihua, director of the Ministry of Defense Foreign Affairs Office, declared that the world should not be surprised if China built an aircraft carrier. And in December 2008, following the deployment of two Chinese destroyers to the Somali coast for antipiracy operations, the ministry of defense spokesman, Huang Xueping, reported that China would now "seriously consider" construction of an aircraft carrier.[39]

In the past, support in China for a blue-water navy carrier was mostly confined to the navy. Naval officers have sought a carrier-centered navy for many reasons beyond simply nationalism, including normal interservice rivalries, budget politics, and the intrinsic interest of navies to expand their capabilities. What is new is that support for a naval buildup has spread to the provinces and to all sectors of Chinese society, including to universities, government think tanks, industrial circles, the political elite, and the general public. Debates over maritime policy are now conducted in China's leading academic journals.[40] At an April 2007 Peking University conference of university scholars, government analysts, and military officers, a majority of the participants supported construction of a large blue-water navy. One scholar reported that approximately one-half of his colleagues at Qinghua University supported construction of a carrier. The mayor of a major Chinese city offered

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"China's Aircraft Carrier Dilemma," *Naval War College Review,* Vol. 59, No. 4 (Autumn 2006), pp. 13–45.

37. Interview by author, Beijing, April 23, 2007. Much of the analysis in this article of Chinese policy is based on extensive interviews conducted by the author during visits to Beijing between 2007 and 2009 with senior civilian and military specialists on international security affairs and Chinese foreign policy. For reasons of privacy, Chinese interlocutors are not identified by name in this article.

38. Li Hanping, "Hunqian Mengrao 50 Nian: Huashuo Zhongguo Hangkong Mujian" [A fifty-year dream: Speaking of a Chinese aircraft carrier], *Zhongguo Junzhuanmin* [Chinese defense conversion], No. 2 (2007), p. 10.

39. Mure Dickie and Martin Dickson, "China Hints at Aircraft Carrier Project," *Financial Times,* November 16, 2008, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d59c34fe-b412-11dd-8e35-0000779fd18c.html?nclick_check?1; Li Xiaokun and Cui Xiaohuo, "Govt Mulls Aircraft Carriers," *China Daily,* December 24, 2008; and Edward Wong, "China Signals More Interest in Building Aircraft Carrier," *New York Times,* December 23, 2008.

40. See, for example, the debate between Ye Zicheng and Ni Lexiong in *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World economics and politics], No. 2 (2007), and No. 11 (2007).

his city's financial backing to build an aircraft carrier.[41] Industrialists support an aircraft carrier to promote China's shipbuilding industry, its development of science and technology, and its emergence as a value-added exporter.[42]

Popular support within China for a large navy has been growing, especially since the international relief effort for the victims of the 2004 Indonesian tsunami. According to interviews, support for an aircraft carrier has now become the "mainstream" view. A mass-market edition of Mahan's *The Influence of Seapower upon History* is marketed with a cover banner that asks in large type, "Does China need an aircraft carrier?" and with a foldout map highlighting U.S. naval facilities along China's coastal perimeter.[43] When Chinese military officers give public presentations, they are pressed to explain when China will build a carrier. More and more Chinese have offered their own personal funds to support construction of an aircraft carrier.[44] China's Soviet-era aircraft carrier, the *Minsk,* is a popular tourist attraction. Thirty-three thousand visitors toured the *Minsk* in just seven days during the 2006 Chinese New Year holiday.[45] Talk shows on Chinese Central Television (CCTV), China's national television network, focus on the merits of an aircraft carrier; the popularity of televised debates on maritime policy led CCTV to air additional programs on the subject. Among the most popular television programs in China in recent years was the December 2006 CCTV program "The Rise of the Great Powers." It stimulated widespread public discussion over the lessons of history for China's emergence as a great power. According to the documentary, all successful great powers have possessed a large blue-water navies.[46]

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41. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 22, 2007; April 25, 2007; December 11, 2007; and January 8, 2008. See also "Zhongguo Heping Fazhan de Diyuan Zhengzhi Huanjing: Xueshu Yantaohui Jiyao" [Geopolitical environment of Chinese peaceful development: Summary of academic seminar], *Guancha yu Jiaoliu* [Observation and exchange], No. 9 (Beijing: Research Center on China and the World, Peking University, August 5, 2007).
42. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 20, 2007; and April 23, 2007.
43. Aerfeileide Saiye Mahan [Alfred Thayer Mahan], *Lun Haiquan* [On naval power] (Xian: Shanxi Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2007).
44. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 25, 2007; and December 10–12, 2007.
45. "Soviet-Era Minsk Carrier Put up for Auction in Shenzhen," Xinhua, February 22, 2006, in WNC, doc. no. 200602221477.1_aa2500217a4ee0fe; and interview by author, Beijing, December 11, 2007.
46. See the transcript of the CCTV talk show *Fangwu Xin Guancha* [New observations on defense], http://blog.people.com.cn/blog/log/showlog.jspe?log_id?1199442054658309&site_id?43809. On the "Rise of the Great Powers," see Chinese Central Television, *Daguo Jueqi: Yuan Chuang Jing Bianben* [The Rise of the Great Powers: The original exact script] (Beijing: Zhongguo Minzhu Fazhi Chubanshe, 2007). For a discussion of the program, see "TV Docu Stimulates More Open Attitude to History, China, the World," Xinhua, November 26, 2007, in WNC, doc. no. 200611261477.1_c53e00c9f57f9c2e; Irene Wang, "Propaganda Takes Back Seat in Fêted CCTV Series," *South China Morning Post,* November 27, 2006; and Chua Chin Hon, "New Chinese TV Documentary Ventures Where Few Dare Tread," *Straits Times* (Singapore), December 9, 2006. See also Andrew S. Erickson and Lyle J. Goldstein, "China Studies the Rise of Great Powers," in Erickson,

China's late 2008 antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden stimulated even greater mass interest in an aircraft carrier. The cover story of *World Knowledge*, the foreign ministry's biweekly magazine, focused on China's growing maritime interests. It reported that the "largest-ever discussion of Chinese maritime power was enthusiastically developing on the web, in the media, research seminars, policymaking circles, and even in casual street conversation." This widespread national conversation focused on "the long-held dream of so many people" that China would "build its own aircraft carrier."[47]

Over the past decade, Chinese leaders have increasingly bolstered their prestige with high-profile programs that serve various national interests but that are also symbols of great power status. They use the state-controlled media to promote popular pride derived from such grand projects as the Three Gorges Dam, the largest dam in the world (despite its many environmental and demographic problems); the recent completion of the Beijing air terminal, the largest air terminal in the world; the development of a jumbo jet to rival Boeing's 747 aircraft and the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company's A380 "double-decker" aircraft; and the domestic development of the Shanghai-to-Beijing high-speed train. China's space program is an especially strong focus of the government's campaign. It includes plans for a manned-lunar excursion, an orbiting space station, and exploration of Mars. The leadership promoted its legitimacy through the hosting of the 2008 Olympics and extensive media coverage of China's "coming out" on the world stage. The Chinese media paid widespread attention to China's 2007 antisatellite test, its expanded development of a scientific research station around the highest point of Antarctica, and its development of a third research station in Antarctica.[48]

Goldstein, and Carnes Lord, eds., *China Goes to Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009).

47. "Zhongguo de Haiyang Quanyi he Haijun" [China's maritime rights and navy], *Shijie Zhishi* [World knowledge], No. 1 (2009), pp. 16–17.

48. Anne-Marie Brady, "The Beijing Olympics as a Campaign of Mass Distraction," *China Quarterly,* No. 197 (March 2009), pp. 1–24; and Suisheng Zhao "The Olympics and Chinese Nationalism," *China Security,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 48–57. On the jumbo jet, see "China to Manufacture Large Aircraft," Renmin Ribao, February 6, 2007, WNC, doc. no. 200702061477 .1_d90f00b93e81b8b8; "China's 1st Jumbo Jet to Take Off in 8 Yrs," Xinhua, March 6, 2009, http:// www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-03/06/content_7549092.htm; and "China Launches Homegrown Jumbo Jet Company," Xinhua, May 11, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com .cn/china/2008-05/11/content_6675923.htm. On the space program, see "Xifang Pingshuo Zhongguo Taikong" [West comments on China's space ambition], *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global times], January 10, 2008; "Scientific Exploration, Not Competition, Says China's Lunar Probe Chief Commander," Xinhua, October 24, 2007, in WNC, doc. no. 200710241477.1_1e0400ef270c0905; "New Rocket Set to Blast Off in 2013," *China Daily,* November 20, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-11/20content_6265340.htm; "China to Launch 15 Rockets This Year," Xinhua, January 7, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-01/07/content_6376371.htm; and "Xifang Pingshuo Zhongguo Taikong Xiongxin" [The West comments on China's space ambitions], *Huanqiu Shibao,*

The 2006 China-Africa summit held in Beijing was a major media event that purportedly established China's world leadership.

Military nationalism has become increasingly important to the Chinese Communist Party's domestic prestige. China's contribution to antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden in 2009 received prominent and prolonged coverage in the Chinese media. The Chinese media also gave extensive coverage to the 2009 naval procession in the East China Sea on the sixtieth anniversary of the PLA Navy, and it reported widespread Chinese support for an aircraft carrier. On its sixtieth anniversary on October 1, 2009, China held its largest-ever military parade with extensive displays of advanced Chinese weaponry.[49]

Chinese academics, government analysts, and military officers believe that in this nationalist environment, it will be difficult for Chinese leaders to continue to defer construction of China's first aircraft carrier without degrading their nationalist credentials. A senior Chinese intelligence officer remarked that the leadership can "hardly resist the pressure" from society.[50] In addition, the PLA Navy has taken advantage of popular nationalism and growing impatience for Taiwan unification to develop its reputation as the defender of Chinese interests and to strengthen its demands for an aircraft carrier and a larger budget.[51] In this environment, analysts believed that following the August 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2008–09 economic crisis, the aircraft carrier would be China's next high-profile nationalist project. It would enable the government to "show the flag" to the Chinese people and enhance its prestige.[52]

A wide spectrum of Chinese observers in the military, academia, government think tanks, and the intelligence community now believes that the Chinese leadership has already succumbed to the combination of mass nation-

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January 10, 2008, p. 1. On Antarctica, see "China Prepares for Expansion of Antarctic Base," Xinhua, November 5, 2007, in WNC, doc. no. 200711051477.1_cb8d003e5444c1d7; "China to Build Third Station on Top of Antarctica by 2009," Xinhua, January 30, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-01/30/content_6430503 .htm; and "Chinese Explorers Trek to Build Third Antarctic Base," December 18, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-12/18/content_7320076 .htm. See also interviews by author, Beijing, April 26, 2006; December 11–12, 2007; and January 9, 2008.

49. In addition to extensive coverage in Xinhua and Huanqiu Shibao, see the cover stories in *Shijie Zhishi* on January 1, 2009, and on April 16, 2009; and "Weihu Hexie Haiyang de Zhongguo Jiandui" [China's fleet protects harmonious oceans], and "Renmin Haijun Zhanlue Lishi Zhuanbian" [Historical transformation of the strategy of the people's navy], *Liaowang,* April 20, 2009, pp. 34–37. On the parade, see Christopher Bodeen, "China Plans Largest-ever Military Parade," Associated Press, February 11, 2009.

50. Interview by author, Beijing, December 12, 2007.

51. Interviews by author, Beijing, December 10–12, 2007; and May 20, 2009.

52. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 20, 2007; April 22–23, 2007; April 25–26, 2007; December 11–12, 2007; and May 21, 2009.

alism and military pressure and that the decision to construct an aircraft carrier is irreversible.[53] Thus, the issue is no longer if, but when, China will build one. Xu Guanyu, director of China's Arms Control and Disarmament Association, reported in late 2007 that "it has almost been decided that the Chinese Navy will build carriers."[54] Civilian and military analysts believe that President Hu Jintao will order construction of China's first aircraft carrier prior to the end of his presidency in 2012.[55]

NATIONALISM, GREAT POWER PRESTIGE, AND CHINESE NAVAL AMBITIONS

Chinese naval nationalism and aspirations for an aircraft carrier are expressed in a wide range of non-PLA publications, including national and provincial university and government publications. They are also expressed in interviews with Chinese think tank analysts and with university academics. These nationalist demands reflect two distinct arguments. The first is an explicit demand for status. China's nationalists seek the prestige and respect enjoyed by great powers throughout history, including by dynastic China. They believe that not until China possesses a blue-water navy, and in particular an aircraft carrier, will it enjoy such prestige and respect. The second argument is a pseudo–national interest argument. Nationalists argue that China's import of oil and other natural resources requires a blue-water navy to enable China to secure its sea-lanes of communication. They also argue that challenges to Chinese maritime sovereignty require construction of an aircraft carrier. Yet these arguments do not reflect analysis of Chinese security. Rather, underlying these alleged national interests arguments is naval nationalism.

GREAT POWER STATUS AND SEA POWER. Chinese military publications directed at a popular readership exaggerate the maritime capabilities of countries that rival China for great power status or of countries that possess less claim than China to great power status, including the capabilities not only of Britain, France, and Russia, but also of Brazil, India, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand.[56] But China's nonmilitary publications are equally assertive that

53. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 20, 2007; April 22–23, 2007; April 25–26, 2007; December 10–12, 2007; and January 8–9, 2008.
54. Quoted in Tim Johnson, "As Military Balks, Chinese Public Pushes for Aircraft Carriers," McClatchy-Tribune News Service, November 7, 2007, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/homepage/story/21181.html.
55. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 20, 2007; April 22–23, 2007; April 25–26, 2007; December 10, 2007; December 12, 2007; and January 8–9, 2008.
56. "Yindu Hangkong Mujian de Fazhan" [Development of Indian aircraft carriers], *Guofang* [National defense], September 2006, pp. 74–75; "Shijie Haijun Wuqi Zhaunbei Fazhan Xin Liangdian" [New bright spots in the development of world military equipment], *Junshi Keji Zhoukan* [Military science and technology weekly], March 30, 2005; "Yindu Hangmu Fazhan Jihua" [Indian aircraft carrier development plan], *Xiandai Junshi* [Contemporary military affairs], August 2001, pp. 20–22;

China must develop an ambitious carrier-based navy in response to the modest naval programs of secondary states. An article in a leading academic journal argues that Japan's naval capabilities justify China's naval buildup. Japan is allegedly expanding its maritime capabilities to enable it to extend its naval war zone from East Asia into the Persian Gulf.[57] A scholar observes that China should expand its naval power because it lacks the capabilities of India and South Korea, and it should not remain "backward."[58] A think tank analyst argues that because Brazil, India, and Thailand each possess a carrier, China should possess one. A senior scholar says that it is "humiliating" that the navies of not only the United States but also of India and Japan can sail the South China Sea, while China's navy lacks such a capability.[59]

Chinese nationalists are dissatisfied that China is the only permanent member of the United Nations Security Council that lacks the maritime capability to participate in crisis intervention, disaster relief, and rescue at sea. Although U.S. rescue operations benefit from the presence of a carrier, such operations primarily depend on small ships and amphibious capabilities and do not demand construction of a carrier. Nonetheless, China's naval nationalists were embarrassed by the contrast between the Australian and U.S. leadership of the 2004 Indonesian tsunami maritime rescue mission and China's peripheral role, and the mere presence of a U.S. carrier has justified their demands for a Chinese carrier. They also find it humiliating that China cannot defend its citizens working abroad from violence, whether in Ethiopia, France, or Lebanon. China needs a global naval capability to protect its citizens, just as the British Navy protected British citizens in China in the nineteenth century.[60] China, one analyst observed, has a fifth of the world's population, and it should exercise leadership in global maritime issues. It is "embarrassing" that China does not possess an aircraft carrier. Expressing the view of many Chinese intellectu-

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"Yindu Haijun Fengfeng Huohuo Zou Dayang" [Indian navy urgently moving toward the oceans], *Xiandai Jianchuan* [Contemporary ships], July 2006, pp. 16–19; "Taiguo you ge 'Dongmeng Diyi Jian'" [Thailand has ASEAN's first vessel], *Dangdai Junshi* [Military affairs], August 2005, pp. 26–28; and Gu Tongyang and Wang Weihong, "Hangmu Youyi de Yatai Zhanlue Qiju" [Asia-Pacific Chessboard with aircraft carriers on patrol], *Junshi Keji Zhoukan,* July 20, 2005.

57. Liu Xinhua and Tai Yi, "Shixi 21 Shiji Chu Zhongguo Jueqi suo Mianlian de Haiyang Zhanlue Huanjing" [Analysis of the strategic environment that the rise of China faces on the early 21st century], *Shijie Jingji Yanjiu* [World economy], No. 4 (2004), pp. 9–10; and Gu and Wang, "Hangmu Youyi de Yatai Zhanlue Qiju." On Japan's helicopter carriers, see also Norimitsu Onishi, "Bomb by Bomb, Japan Sheds Military Restraints," *New York Times,* July 23, 2007.

58. Interview by author, Beijing, April, 22, 2007.

59. Interviews by author, Beijing, April, 23, 2007; April 25, 2007; December 12, 2007; and January 9, 2008.

60. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 24–25, 2007. See also Yang Yong, "Fahui Lu Hai Jianbei Youshi shi Daxing Hai Lu Fuhe Guojia de Biran Xuance" [Giving full play to having superiority on both land and sea is the inevitable choice of a large land-sea country], *Heilongjiang Shehui Kexue* [Heilongjiang social science], No. 3 (2004), p. 28.

als, he argues that China needs a large navy and an aircraft carrier for "honor and face."[61]

Naval nationalism is also reflected in a "lessons of the past" analysis: "In recent history the oceans have brought our people so much pain and humiliation," including "ceding territory and payment of indemnities."[62] Although the decline of China's land power capability explains China's succession of military losses in the nineteenth century to Great Britain and Japan, Chinese nationalists blame China's lack of maritime power. One author argues that the belief that during a peaceful era a country should focus on economic development and avoid the high costs of military development is "extremely dangerous," and whoever says this "does not remember the painful lessons from the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese war. Everyone knows that defeat in the Sino-Japanese war led to the backwardness and decline of our Chinese people and seriously blocked China's modernization process." The lesson for Chinese nationalists is clear: China must follow Mahan's advice and possess sea control capabilities.[63] One scholar argues that China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war and Japan's subsequent occupation of China prove that "ignoring the oceans is a historical error we committed, and now and even in the future we will pay a price for this error."[64] Similarly, scholars at Jinan University in Shandong Province argue that the decline of the Chinese Navy caused China's defeat in the 1839–42 Opium War and led to the "series of treaties that humiliated the nation and forfeited its sovereignty."[65]

Chinese nationalists thus maintain that realization of China's historical destiny depends on possession of a carrier-based navy. Researchers from an influential national security think tank point out that "naval power is a symbol of a country's comprehensive power." Those periods "when the Chinese people have focused on the oceans are the periods of greatest strength, . . . those countries that are at the front ranks of comprehensive national power are naval powers." The authors argue that "development of naval power is a close link to the rise of China's comprehensive national power."[66] Zhang Wenmu, a

61. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 23–25, 2007.
62. "Zhongguo de Haiyang Quanyi he Haijun," p. 17.
63. Ni Lexiong, "Haiquan yu Zhongguo de Fazhan" [Naval power and China's development], in Guo Shuyong, ed., *Zhanlue Yanjianglu* [Lectures on strategy], (Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2006), p. 113. See also Ni Lexiong, "Fazhan Qiangda de Haishang Liliang, Fei wei Baquan" [Developing great sea power is not hegemony], *Lingdao Wenzhai* [Leaders' digest], July 2006, pp. 63–64. For a Chinese discussion of the role of China's ground force weakness in Sino-Japanese conflict, see Ye Zicheng, *Luquan Fazhan yu Daguo Xingshuai* [Development of land power and great power rise and decline] (Beijing: Xinxing Chubanshe, 2007), pp. 104–106.
64. Yong, "Fahui Lu Hai Jianbei Youshi shi Daxing Hai Lu Fuhe Guojia de Biran Xuance," p. 26.
65. Cao Yunhua and Li Changxin, "Meiguo Jueqi de Haiquan Yinsu Chutan" [A preliminary analysis of the naval factor in the rise of the United States], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia-Pacific], No. 5 (2006), p. 28.
66. China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Issue Group on Sea Lane Security

widely read advocate of Chinese naval power, maintains that the focus of U.S.-China strategic conflict is naval power, that the aircraft carrier is the most important element of naval power, and that in the twenty-first century naval power is the decisive pillar for the fate of nations. He argues that without sea power China cannot guarantee its "equal use with other world powers" of international resources and markets. Naval power is not just a military resource, but it is the "concentrated expression of a country's comprehensive national power."[67] A leading academic argues that an aircraft carrier "symbolizes national power" and that it would promote international "respect" for China's national strength.[68] Other researchers assert that for China to be "victorious in the new round of international conflict in the twenty-first century," it must revive its maritime power and strengthen the "nation's maritime culture."[69]

Chinese nationalists place recovery of "lost territories" at the top of their agenda, and they argue that the aircraft carrier is a prerequisite to realizing their irredentist goals. Their foremost territorial justification for a carrier is the reunification of Taiwan, despite the greater effectiveness of Chinese land-based capabilities (including aircraft and missiles) in the Taiwan theater. Zhang Wenmu argues that protection of Chinese sovereignty against U.S. hegemony in the Taiwan Strait is an important focus of Chinese naval power. He claims that for China to win the war over Taiwan, it must control the sea-lanes so that the PLA can carry out amphibious operations.[70] Another analyst similarly argues that only when China possesses sea control will it be able to compel Taiwan to return to China.[71] To Chinese nationalists, Taiwan is important not only because it is coveted by the United States as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier," but also because China must have "the confidence and determination to declare to the world" that Taiwan is an aircraft carrier that no country can take away from China. Chinese blue-water naval power will enable China to unify Taiwan and gain control over the "Taiwan aircraft carrier."[72]

NAVAL NATIONALISM AND A PSEUDO–NATIONAL INTEREST STRATEGY. China's naval nationalists argue that security interests, primarily maritime sovereignty

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and International Cooperation, *Haishang Tongdao Anquan yu Guoji Hezuo* [Sea lane security and international cooperation] (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 42–43.

67. Zhang Wenmu, "Shengcun, Fazhan, Haiquan" [Survival, development, sea power] *Dangdai Junshi Wenzhai* [Digest of military affairs], No. 8 (2006), http://www.51dh.net/magazine/html/399/399284.htm.

68. Interview by author, Beijing, April 22, 2007.

69. Cao and Li, "Meiguo Jueqi de Haiquan Yinsu Chutan," p. 28.

70. Zhang Wenmu, "Zhihaiquan Shi Guojia Xingshuai Guanjian, Zhongguo Bixu Zouxiang Haiyang" [Sea control is key to the rise and fall and nations, China must move toward the oceans], *Huanqiu Shibao,* January 15, 2007.

71. Ni Lexiong, "Zhihaiquan—Jiejue 'Taidu' de Guanjian" [Sea control—The key to resolving "Taiwan independence"], *Lingdao Wenzhai,* No. 6 (2004).

72. Yong, "Fahui Lu Hai Jianbei Youshi shi Daxing Hai Lu Fuhe Guojia de Biran Xuance," p. 28.

and protection of imports of natural resources, require that China develop power-projection capabilities. But China's naval nationalists do not establish that Chinese interests require naval power projection or that a carrier-based navy can make China more secure. Rather, their assertions of national interest serve naval nationalism. They are characterized by expansive definitions of Chinese global security interests, extreme assessments of the threats to Chinese interests, and grand expectations of China's ability to develop expanded military power to protect Chinese interests.

Growing Chinese import of oil is a widespread nationalist argument for expanded power-projection capability. But Chinese coal, hydropower, nuclear power, and domestic sources of oil and natural gas supply China with nearly all of its energy requirements. China relies on imported oil for less than 10 percent of its total energy usage, and an increasing share of this oil comes across land borders with Central Asia and Russia. The International Energy Agency forecasts that through 2030 oil will remain a marginal Chinese energy resource and suggests that domestic oil production will be sufficient to fuel China's commercial transport sector.[73] Moreover, if China's oil supply is threatened, the threat comes from the U.S. Navy. But Chinese advocates of expanded naval power do not assess the power-projection capability necessary to neutralize the U.S. threat and whether China can develop such a capability, especially if the United States continues to develop its maritime capability.[74] Thus, China's naval nationalists merely assert that development of a blue-water navy will make China more secure, without critical examination of either the necessity or the feasibility of such a project.

One government analyst argues that Chinese economic development has created an "overseas interest in protection of uninterrupted expansion" of imports. China must turn its vision toward the global arena and rely on its own military capability to protect the stability of its sea-lanes and its "resource security." It requires the capability to project power in distant oceans.[75] A Chinese government analyst argues in *World Knowledge* that China's military capability is "far from sufficient to guarantee reliable and secure energy supplies." China's growing global interests "demand that the Chinese mili-

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73. International Crisis Group, "China's Thirst for Oil," Asia Report, No. 153 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, June 9, 2008); Daniel H. Rosen and Trevor Houser, "China Energy: A Guide for the Perplexed" (Washington, D.C.: Petersen Institute for International Economics, May 2007); and International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook, 2007* (Paris: International Energy Agency, 2007), pp. 262–264, 286–305.
74. See Mark Cozad, "China's Regional Power Projection: Prospects for Future Missions in South and East China Seas," in Kamphausen, Lai, and Scobell, *Beyond the Strait*, pp. 312–313.
75. Wang Yizhou, "Heping Fazhan Jieduan de Zhongguo Guojia Anquan: Yixiang Xin de Yicheng" [Chinese national security in the period of peaceful development: A new agenda], *Guoji Jingji Luntan* [International economic review], Nos. 9–10 (2006), pp. 8–9.

tary be capable of 'going global'" and that it possess "long-range delivery capability."[76]

Chinese nationalists seek expanded naval power to undermine the United States' ability to blockade Chinese oil shipments through the Malacca Strait, but they fail to acknowledge that during wartime the United States could also impose a "distant blockade," including at the Strait of Hormuz.[77] The cover story of *Liaowang* commemorating the six hundredth anniversary of Zheng He's first voyage argues that there "exists a great risk that China's sea-lanes can be cut off at any time." China faces a "Malaccan Strait dilemma." The Malaccan Strait is "China's oil lifeline, but the Chinese Navy is too far away. If something unexpected happens, it would cause enormous harm to China's security." Thus, China must increase its maritime power to correspond to its "national status," so that it can "break a maritime blockade against China and . . . have an influential presence in key maritime regions and in critical straits and sea-lanes."[78] Another author argues that the U.S. naval presence in Singapore and its dominance of the Malaccan Strait threaten Chinese oil security. Moreover, in a Taiwan crisis China would lack the ability to "control" the Malaccan Strait, and the implications for Chinese security would be "disastrous."[79] One analyst makes the improbable argument that to deal with U.S. maritime dominance and the vulnerability of the Malaccan Strait, China should acquire naval facilities and expand its naval power in the Indian Ocean and into the Persian Gulf, where, he argues, it would face no resistance.[80]

Zhang Wenmu's arguments especially reflect the intermingling of nationalism and security. He claims that U.S. hegemony blocks China's ability to protect its global interests and that China must pursue rapid and large-scale development of its navy. Its "fate is connected to naval modernization." If China were to encounter "special circumstances," its inability to protect its oil imports would inflict great harm on "people's lives, on China's economic mo-

76. Wang Yizhou, "Heping Fazhan Jieduan de Guojia Anquan" [National security in the period of peaceful development], *Shijie Zhishi,* No. 23 (2006), p. 51.
77. For a discussion of the military aspects of such an operation, see Gabriel B. Collins and William S. Murray, "No Oil for the Lamps of China?" *Naval War College Review,* Vol. 61, No. 2 (Spring 2008), pp. 81–83.
78. Liu Jiangping and Feng Xianhui, "Zou Chuqu: Kuayue 600 Nian de Duihua" [Going out: A dialogue across 600 years], *Liaowang,* July 11, 2005, pp. 14–19.
79. Li Xiaojun, "Lun Haiquan dui Zhongguo Shiyou Anquan de Yingxiang" [On the influence of maritime power on Chinese oil security], *Guoji Zhengzhi* [International politics], Vol. 6, No. 4 (July 2004), pp. 18, 20. Chinese President Hu Jintao reported discussed China's "Malaccan dilemma" in a 2003 economic work conference. See Wen Wei Po (Hong Kong), January 14, 2004, in WNC, doc. no. 200401151477.1_943f0015d65415c2.
80. Ye Hailin, "Xiang Xi ye Shi Haiyang" [There also ocean to the west], *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* [International herald leader], February 25, 2009, http://news.xinhuanet.com/herald/2009-02/25/content_10892346.htm.

mentum, and even on national defense." Although China has signed many contracts for oil shipments, without a maritime defense capability, it cannot guarantee the validity of the agreements: "If the United States lightly applies pressure, it can carry out a coup, and within one day it can turn agreements into waste paper." Thus, "without a maritime military power-projection capability, . . . protection of overseas trade is only a sheet of empty words." China must possess a sea control capability, and the aircraft carrier is the "most important instrument of realizing sea control." "Without an aircraft carrier, we will not have a voice on any important issue that concerns us," and "without an aircraft carrier, an interruption of natural resource imports would plunge China's economy into a crisis, blocking the rise of China."[81]

Other authors argue that China must have a large navy because it is "incurring serious transgressions of its maritime rights, and the emerging trend is complicated and acute."[82] The dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea is increasingly an emotional issue for Chinese nationalists.[83] Yet this dispute has gone on for more than forty years; the islands are too small to facilitate power projection; and valuable resources have yet to be discovered in the surrounding waters. Most important, Chinese nationalists do not acknowledge that U.S. maritime power enables the smaller countries to challenge Chinese sovereignty claims.[84] Thus, similar to the security of sea-lanes of communication, securing Chinese sovereignty in the South China Sea will require sufficient naval power to undermine U.S. maritime superiority.

Nonetheless, one scholar argues that the development of naval power will enable China to "deter" challenges to its sovereignty over the Spratly Islands. Another says that China needs a large navy to deal with Philippine and Vietnamese occupation of the Spratly Islands.[85] Similarly, in the South China Sea, "only when China can protect its naval rights and interests and maintain great naval power will it have respect from its adversaries." The rise of China is at stake: "If China does not have maritime power, then it will lose much of its right to development; if China protects its legitimate maritime power, then it will be able to defend its legitimate right to development."[86] A senior scholar

81. Zhang Wenmu, *Shijie Diyuan Zhengzhi zhong de Zhongguo Guojia Anquan Liyi Fenxi* [Analysis of Chinese national security interests in world geopolitics] (Jinan: Shandong Renmin Chubanshe, 2004), pp. 1–2, 10–11, 216, 293–294, 302–303.
82. Liu and Tai, "Shixi 21 Shiji Chu Zhongguo Jueqi suo Mianlian de Haiyang Zhanlue Huanjing."
83. See the discussion of the Spratly Islands in "Nansha Jundao: Zhongguo Yongyou Wuke Zhengbian de Zhuquan" [Spratly Islands: China possesses undisputable sovereignty], *Shijie Zhishi*, No. 5 (2009).
84. See Cozad, "China's Regional Power Projection," pp. 313–314.
85. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 22, 2007; December 12, 2007; and January 9, 2008.
86. Li, "Lun Haiquan dui Zhongguo Shiyou Anquan de Yingxiang," p. 19.

at the Chinese Communist Party Central Party School argues that once China has an aircraft carrier, it can control the islands in the South China Sea, have secure access through the Strait of Malacca, enter the oceans, and become a maritime power.[87]

NAVAL NATIONALISM AND MANAGING THE UNITED STATES

Nearly all Chinese security analysts concur that China's security is increasingly dependent on vulnerable sea-lanes. More moderate "naval pragmatists" argue, however, that the cost for China of pursuing blue-water maritime power is excessive. They contend that the United States will be determined to maintain its maritime superiority, that China lacks the resources to compete in a great-power naval competition, and that an effort to build a blue-water, power-projection navy will undermine Chinese security. Therefore, China should focus its limited resources on its submarine-based access-denial capability, while maintaining great power cooperation to secure its access to global resources. One senior academic described the aircraft carrier as a "black hole" for Chinese funds and argues that China could better use its resources to acquire additional submarines.[88] China's authoritative military publications frequently remind their readers that land powers face considerable difficulty in developing maritime power and that interrupting and securing sea-lanes, as well as occupying small coral islands (e.g., the disputed Spratly Islands), are very difficult operations. They often advocate that China focus on more realistic objectives, including development of asymmetric maritime capabilities. Some military analysts tend to be dismissive of "amateurs" who advocate naval power.[89]

China's naval pragmatists also stress the damage that a carrier program would inflict on Chinese diplomacy. They argue that whereas a carrier would have minimum benefit for Chinese security, it would undermine China's peaceful rise strategy by accentuating the role of "hard power" in Chinese di-

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87. Ma Haoliang: "China Needs to Break through the Encirclement of First Island Chain; Nansha Cannot Afford to Be 'Harassed,'" *Ta Kung Pao,* February 21, 2009, in OSC, doc. no. CPP20090221708020.

88. See, for example, Ye Zicheng, "Zhongguo de Heping Fazhan: Luquan de Huigui yu Fazhan" [China's peaceful development: The return and development of land power], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi,* No. 2 (2007); Shiping Tang, "Zai Lun Zhongguo de Zhanlue" [Reconsideration of China's grand strategy], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and management], No. 4 (2001); Xu Bianyu, "Haiquan de Wuqu yu Fansi" [Long-standing errors concerning naval power and a reconsideration], *Zhanlue yu Guanli,* No. 5 (2003); and Cao and Li, "Meiguo Jueqi de Haiquan Yinsu Chutan."

89. See Zhang Yuliang, *Zhanyi Xue* [Study of military campaigns], pt. 4 (Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 2006); Ge Dongsheng, *Guojia Anquan Zhanlue Lun* [On national security strategy] (Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 2006), pp. 222–231; Liu Zhongmin, "Zhong Mei Haizhan zhi Shuo Shi Wudao" [Talk of China-U.S. naval war is misleading], *Huanqiu Shibao,* March 12, 2008, p. 11; and interviews by author, Beijing, January 8, 2008; and May 8, 2009.

plomacy. After nearly thirty years of successful management of the "rise of China," they are concerned that construction of a power-projection navy would undermine both U.S.-China relations and China's relationship with Southeast Asian countries. Foreign ministry officials tend to oppose construction of an aircraft carrier, sensitive to the impact on Chinese diplomacy. But in the current nationalistic environment, they have minimal influence on defense policy. In addition, they recognize that they cannot offset the pressure from Chinese society.[90]

Chinese nationalists dismiss the potential costs of a naval buildup. Rather than address the challenge of simultaneous development of land and maritime capabilities and of naval competition with the United States, naval nationalists assert that China should devote equal resources to both theaters. Some nationalists argue that because China faces challenges from both Russia and the United States and because it confronts many neighbors on both land and sea, it must simultaneously pursue land and naval capabilities and that failure to develop both land and sea power will constrain China's great power role in world affairs.[91] One author argues that China's strategic orientation toward both land and sea is a geopolitical advantage and that the development of large-scale ground and naval forces serves Chinese comprehensive power and is the optimal deployment of Chinese forces.[92] Another author acknowledges that the U.S. network of global naval bases is a strategic advantage for the U.S. Navy, but this simply requires that China build an aircraft carrier with greater displacement than U.S. carriers.[93]

China's challenge to the maritime status quo would likely elicit a U.S. response that not only would offset China's buildup but also could contribute to costly U.S.-China tension. Nonetheless, following the onset of the global financial crisis and the U.S. recession in 2008, many Chinese nationalists believe that the United States is a declining power and that China has the opportunity to develop a powerful navy.[94] Moreover, they argue that China has "no choice but to build a navy centered on the aircraft carrier"; it cannot allow U.S. strategic advantages to inhibit Chinese naval planning. One author states, "If

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90. Chinese foreign ministry official and other Chinese foreign policy analysts, interviews by author, Beijing and Stockholm, December 12, 2008; May 20, 2009; and May 25, 2009.
91. Interview by author, Beijing, April 25, 2007; and Fang Kun, "Zhanlue Diyuan yu Zhongguo Haijun Jianshe" [Strategic geography and Chinese naval construction], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi,* No. 8 (2004), p. 47.
92. Yong, "Fahui Lu Hai Jianbei Youshi shi Daxing Hai Lu Fuhe Guojia de Biran Xuance," pp. 26–27.
93. Wang Wei, "Hangmu, Haiquan Shidai Daguo de Xuanze" [Great power choices during the era of aircraft carriers, naval power], *Xiandai Jianchuan* [Contemporary ships], No. 11 (2005), p. 21.
94. Interviews by author, Beijing, May 20, 2009; and Bonnie Glaser and Lyle Morris, "Chinese Perceptions of U.S. Decline and Power," *China Brief,* Vol. 9, No. 14 (July 9, 2009).

this logic prevails, if there came a time when the United States occupies a strategic location on the Chinese mainland, should China then be compelled not to develop an army?"[95] Chinese scholars acknowledge that the determination of the United States to protect its maritime supremacy could lead it to inflict a "Copenhagen" on the PLA Navy.[96] Nonetheless, China "should not be afraid of drawing fire against itself so that China's national security is completely constrained by external conditions and it is powerless." If the "hegemon" so "dreads Chinese naval power that it would launch a preventive attack, this simply proves . . . that China must definitely develop a powerful maritime force."[97] Ultimately, China's naval buildup could lead to U.S.-China tension that could exceed tension over Taiwan, but China "has to do what it has to do." It cannot "seek to please the United States. . . . Why should China build weapons that the United States does not care about?" Rather, it should build the very weapons that the United States "cares most about."[98]

China's naval nationalists are equally cavalier about the constraints on the country's maritime capability posed by its coastal geography. On the one hand, an access-denial strategy is well suited to China's coastal geography. China's submarine force can take advantage of the protection the islands offer to challenge hostile ships operating near China's coast. On the other hand, Japan's home islands and its Ryukyu Islands together form an island chain that extends from China's northern waters south to Taiwan, so that secure Chinese access to the open seas is limited to the south of the Taiwan Strait. Thus, a maritime power could lie in wait for Chinese ships seeking the open seas, much the way the British Navy blockaded German harbors during World War I and Russian harbors in the Crimean War, and Japan blockaded Russian ships at Port Arthur in Manchuria in 1904–05.

China's naval nationalists insist, however, that China have the capability to break out of this island chain to reach the open seas. Scholars at Wuhan University in Hubei Province contend that China must control the channels through these islands. The United States used these islands to try to "strangle" and "shackle" the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War. Today, these islands "constitute a serious danger and a great challenge," and require China to develop a blue-water maritime capability.[99] Similarly, the "first island

95. Yong, "Fahui Lu Hai Jianbei Youshi Shi Daxing Hai Lu Fuhe Guojia de Biran Xuance," p. 29.
96. "Copenhagen" refers to Britain's 1807 preventative war against the Danish fleet. See Jonathan Steinberg, "The Copenhagen Complex," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (July 1966), pp. 23–46; and Thomas Munch-Petersen, *Defying Napoleon: How Britain Bombarded Copenhagen and Seized the Danish Fleet in 1807* (Gloucestershire, U.K.: History, 2007).
97. Interviews by author, Beijing, April 22, 2007; and April 24, 2007; and Ni, "Haiquan yu Zhongguo de Fazhan," p. 116.
98. Interview by author, Beijing, April 24, 2007.
99. Liu and Tai, "Shixi 21 Shiji Chu Zhongguo Jueqi suo Mianlian de Haiyang Zhanlue Huanjing,"

chain," including the Ryukyu Islands, constitutes a "blockade wall" that obstructs access to the Pacific Ocean and "encircles the rise of the Chinese nation and of its maritime rejuvenation." China must possess a powerful navy to "break through" this encirclement and open up a "lifeline" into the Indian Ocean.[100]

China's Naval Nationalism and U.S.-China Maritime Competition

China's naval nationalism and its development of an aircraft carrier will have distinct strategic and political implications for the U.S.-China relationship, with consequences for U.S. management of China's naval program, as well as for U.S.-China diplomatic relations.

China's naval ambitions and U.S. maritime security

China's naval buildup will not pose a challenge to U.S. maritime security. The construction of a carrier, other ships in the strike force, and their onboard equipment and technologies will all strain China's defense budget, especially given the multiple other missions assigned to the PLA. Within the PLA there has been substantial resistance to construction of a carrier both from the army and from navy submariners, who advocate continued focus on the access-denial strategy. Within PLA academic institutions, the aircraft carrier has become so controversial that it can no longer be openly discussed in informal conversations.[101]

Taking into account the number of aircraft required to outfit a carrier and the aircraft attrition rate during the protracted training period required to master landing a jet on a carrier, China will have to purchase many advanced aircraft for a carrier. Moreover, the United States requires three carriers to be assured of having one carrier on deployment. The cost of operating a carrier strike force is also very high, including fuel costs and the expense of basic maintenance and of supply at sea. The combined expense for China of building at least three carriers, the associated smaller ships, and advanced aircraft will thus be tremendous, especially as it maintains a large ground force to guarantee both territorial security and domestic political stability. In this respect, the

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pp. 7–8. See also Che Xianming, "Cong Junshi Shijiao Kan Woguo de Nengyuan Anquan" [Chinese energy security seen from the military angle], in Ba Zhongtan, *Daguo Xingqi zhong de Guojia Anquan, Disanjie Guojia Anquan Luntan Lunwenji* [National security of rising powers, collected essays of the third session of the national security forum] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 203–204.

100. Liu and Feng, "Zou Chuqu," p. 18.

101. Chinese foreign policy analysts and military officer, interviews by author, Beijing, December 11, 2008; and May 21, 25, 2009.

constraints on China's maritime capability will be similar to those encountered by France, Germany, and Russia when they sought maritime power.

Moreover, before China can acquire effective carrier-based power projection capabilities, it will need to develop aircraft for the carrier. Yet China's defense industry cannot manufacture advanced engines.[102] In addition, its domestically manufactured aircraft require long runways for takeoff and cannot withstand the stress of landing on a carrier. The Su-27s and Su-30s that China has purchased from Russia also cannot operate on a carrier. Thus, China has expressed interest in purchasing the Su-33 from Russia.[103] But until China can develop an independent maritime air capability, it will lack a maritime warfighting capability. Development of the maritime command, control, communications, computers, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities required to defend the carrier and enable sophisticated targeting by the carrier's aircraft will also pose a long-term challenge to China's maritime capability.

Management and operation of a carrier strike force will pose especially significant challenges to China's naval command. Management of an aircraft carrier is an extremely complex organizational activity, and organizational requirements have been a major impediment to the diffusion of carrier capabilities since World War II.[104] On the one hand, the United States has been operating carrier task forces for nearly seventy years. On the other hand, the Chinese Army cannot carry out effective airlift inside China; force projection at sea will be far more difficult, and it will take decades before China's naval leadership can master the challenges associated with operating a carrier task force and managing aircraft landings in all weather conditions.[105] In December 2008 China deployed destroyers to engage in antipiracy operations off the Somali coast, but it limited the ships' operations to patrolling within the narrow shipping channel. Pilot skill will be another obstacle to Chinese maritime power

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102. Erickson and Wilson, "China's Aircraft Carrier Dilemma." On China's aviation industry, see Evan S, Madeiros, Roger Cliff, Keith Crane, and James C. Mulvenon, *A New Direction for China Defense Industry* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005), pp. 155–204.

103. Kim Nødskov, "Aircraft Carriers: China's Way to Great Power Status?" (Copenhagen: Institute for Strategy, Royal Danish Defense College, 2008), pp. 16–19; and "China Considers Next-Generation Su-33s for Aircraft Carrier Programme," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 28, 2008, http://www.janes.com/news/defence/systems/jdi/jdi081028_1_n.shtml.

104. For a comprehensive discussion of the organizational impediments to the spread of carrier capabilities, see Michael Horowitz, "The Spread of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics," unpublished manuscript, University of Pennsylvania, 2009. For a discussion of the organizational complexities of managing a carrier, see Gene I. Rochlin, Todd R. La Porte, and Karlene H. Roberts, "The Self-Designing High-Reliability Organization: Aircraft Carrier Flight Operations at Sea," *Naval War College Review*, No. 90 (Autumn 1987), pp. 76–90.

105. See the discussion of Chinese force projection in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Jake Hooker, "Quake Revealed Deficiencies of China's Military," *New York Times*, July 2, 2008; and Wendell Minnick, "China's Gator Navy Makes Marginal Strides," *Defense News*, January 12, 2009.

projection. Chinese pilots have minimal annual flight time, and extensive at-sea training will be necessary to master carrier landings. Yet extensive training will raise the cost of operating a carrier; for many years aircraft losses will be high. China's naval leadership will also be challenged by the logistical difficulties of managing a small city at sea.

The many significant obstacles to Chinese development of a capable carrier-based force explain Adm. Timothy Keating's casual offer of assistance to China's carrier program.[106] China's aircraft carrier will provide an attractive target for U.S. forces, while diverting resources from the development of its far more capable submarine-based access-denial capability.

China's challenge to U.S. maritime security will also be limited by current U.S. qualitative and quantitative superiority and ongoing U.S. modernization. The United States can respond to Chinese naval nationalism by building its next generation of power-projection platforms and of maritime attack capabilities, just as prior naval powers have responded to similar challenges. If necessary, unlike China, the United States can prioritize maritime power in its security policy and defense spending. Thus, China's surface ships, especially its aircraft carriers, will remain vulnerable to successive generations of U.S. subsurface ships and to carrier-deployed aircraft and land-based aircraft in East Asia.

THE CHALLENGE TO U.S.-CHINA COOPERATION

China's naval nationalism will not challenge U.S. maritime security, but it will challenge U.S.-China diplomatic cooperation. Chinese leaders will fund development of a limited power-projection navy to promote China's international status and domestic political prestige and legitimacy, but the United States will focus on neither Chinese intentions nor its short-term capabilities. Rather, the United States' focus will be on Chinese acquisitions and the possible long-term implications for U.S. security. The political dilemma for the United States will be to meld an appropriate strategic response to China's constrained naval buildup with a diplomatic strategy that can manage both American nationalism and Chinese naval nationalism to constrain bilateral political tension and enable continued overall diplomatic cooperation.

Chinese aircraft carrier construction will suggest Chinese interest in introducing offensive power-projection capabilities into maritime East Asia, with implications for U.S. security and the regional balance of power. As China develops its carrier program and builds a second and third carrier, the United States will likely respond with an intensified buildup of its own maritime ca-

106. See Timothy J. Keating, transcript of press roundtable, U.S. Embassy, Beijing, China, May 12, 2007, http://www.pacom.mil/speeches/sst2007/070512-keating-china_press.shtml.

pabilities. This was the Reagan administration's response to the limited Soviet maritime buildup in the 1980s, when it funded development of the 600-ship navy and implemented the U.S. Navy's maritime strategy. In response to China's twenty-first-century naval buildup, there will be widespread U.S. official and public support for increased naval spending and acquisitions.

China's naval nationalism, however, does not require the United States to radically increase defense spending or fundamentally alter the U.S. Navy's acquisition schedule. Rather, a measured U.S. military response to China's naval nationalism, including continued deployments of naval platforms to the western Pacific Ocean, ongoing defense cooperation with U.S. regional allies, and an increased presence of U.S. aircraft carriers in regional harbors can establish U.S. resolve to maintain the United States' maritime supremacy in the western Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea and its commitment to the regional balance of power. Most important will be timely acquisition of the next generation of power-projection surface ships to succeed the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. This will be a necessary signal to Chinese leaders of the futility of their expansive and costly naval ambitions. Such a signal is especially important given China's emergence as a global economic power, its growing confidence in the wake of the 2008–09 U.S. recession, and its corresponding assessments of U.S. decline. It will also be a signal to regional security partners of the United States' commitment to their security.

The challenge for the United States will be to develop a measured military response to China's naval nationalism while avoiding unnecessary and costly bilateral tension. This will not be easy. The combination of Chinese naval nationalism and the U.S. military response may suggest a naval arms race. Moreover, unlike China's development of its ground forces or even its development of an access-denial capability, its development of carrier-based naval capabilities will resonate with the American public and over time promote a perception of China as a credible threat to U.S. security. An aircraft carrier will not only be an important symbol to the Chinese people of their country's great power status, but it will also be an important signal to Americans of China's intention to challenge U.S. maritime security. Exaggerated assessments of Chinese naval power have already emerged in Washington policy debates and in local public opinion.[107] In a domestic political environment in which both China and the United States are experiencing naval nationalism, American policymakers' ability to develop the United States' China policy free from the

107. See, for example, "Opening Remarks of Senator Jim Webb at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing on Maritime and Sovereignty Disputes in Asia," July 15, 2009, http://www.webb.senate.gov/newsroom/record.cfm?id=315847; Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for

influence of nationalism, politicized public opinion, and partisanship will be difficult.

U.S. policymaking will be further politicized by the likelihood of repeated high-profile U.S.-China maritime incidents. Chinese mapping of the ocean floor with nuclear-powered submarines operating in the Ryukyu Islands have led to accusations of Chinese violations of Japanese sovereignty.[108] Chinese submarine surveillance of U.S. aircraft carriers and U.S. surveillance of Chinese submarines will contribute to increased tension. Incidents such as the surfacing of a Chinese submarine in the vicinity of a U.S. aircraft carrier in November 2007, as well as tensions such as those between the U.S. surveillance ship *Impeccable* and Chinese ships in March 2009 and between U.S. naval vessels and Chinese fishing boats in May 2009, may become more frequent as the Chinese and U.S. navies continue to engage in close-in surveillance of each other's ships.[109] China's assertion of maritime claims that challenge the United States' interpretation of its right to naval access to China's exclusive economic zone under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea may also cause persistent maritime conflict.[110]

U.S.-China naval competition has the potential to politicize the full agenda of U.S.-China relations and challenge cooperation on a wide range of issues, including cooperation on nuclear nonproliferation on the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan issue, bilateral economic issues, and human rights. The challenge for both the United States and China is for each to develop policy to manage its own as well as the other's nationalism in order to maintain diplomatic cooperation even as they engage in naval competition. Critical to this effort will

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the Twenty-first Century Power Plays in the Indian Ocean," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 88, No. 2 (March/April 2009), pp. 16–32; Hugh Lessig, "Keeping 11 Carriers to Be Tough Fight," *daily.press.com,* January 10, 2009; Steve Liewer, "China's Military Rebirth Prompts U.S. Response," *San Diego Union-Tribune,* February 17, 2009; Drake Bennett, "The (Smaller, Faster, Cheaper) Future of Sea Power," *Boston Globe,* April 19, 2009; James Holmes, "A Chinese Aircraft Carrier," *Providence Journal-Bulletin,* February 8, 2009; and Bill Gertz, "Inside the Ring," *Washington Times,* June 1, 2007.

108. Peter A. Dutton, "International Law and the November 2004 '*Han* Incident,'" *Asian Security,* Vol. 2, No. 2 (August 2006), pp. 87–101.

109. On the surfacing of the Chinese submarine, see Matthew Hickley, "Oops! Who Let That Chinese Sub in Here?" *Daily Mail,* November 10, 2007. On the March 2009 incident and Chinese surveillance, see Thom Shanker and Mark Mazzetti, "China and U.S. Clash on Naval Fracas," *New York Times,* March 10, 2009; and Mark J. Valencia, "Tempting the Dragon" (San Francisco, Calif.: Northeast Asia Peace and Security Project, Nautilus Institute, March 12, 2009), http://www .nautilus.org/fora/security/09020Valencia.html. On China's growing maritime assertiveness, see Dennis Blair, director of national intelligence, testimony before the U.S. Senate, 111th Cong., 1st sess., March 10, 2009, quoted in Deborah Tate, "U.S. Intelligence Official Says China Adopting More Aggressive Military Posture," VOANews.com, March 10, 2009, http://www .voanews.com/english/2009-03-10-voa76.cfm.

110. Peter Dutton and John Garofano, "China Undermines Maritime Laws," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* Vol. 172, No. 3 (April 2009), pp. 44–47.

be early and active U.S. engagement of the PLA Navy and development of U.S.-China operational-level maritime confidence-building measures. Such measures can include bilateral joint military exercises and implementation of an incident-at-sea agreement. They can also entail less politically sensitive but no less constructive maritime cooperation on humanitarian relief, rescue-at-sea, and antipiracy operations. Such measures can reduce the likelihood of inadvertent escalation of maritime incidents. They also can signal U.S. and Chinese audiences of ongoing cooperation and thus avoid exacerbating both U.S. and Chinese nationalism and contribute to ongoing cooperation on the full agenda of U.S.-China relations. Because China's naval nationalism presents a minimal challenge to U.S. maritime security, maintaining U.S.-China cooperation amid strategic competition is not only feasible but can support a wide range of U.S. interests.

Conclusion

Neither maritime overreach by continental powers nor the ensuing naval competition between land powers and maritime powers reflects the structural imperatives of anarchy and a drive for ever more security. There is little evidence that land power challenges to the interest of maritime powers are driven by rational, security-driven states making cost-benefit analyses. The prevalence of commerce-raiding/*guerre de course* and access-denial strategies establishes the ability of continental powers to adjust to the geopolitical constraints on naval power with optimal maritime policies. Land power pursuit of extensive maritime power reflects the effect of nationalism, of the demand for great power status and domestic legitimacy, on a state's evaluation of its capabilities and interests and on its policymaking process. This is as true for contemporary Chinese naval policy as it had been for French, German, and Russian/Soviet naval policy, as well as for Japan's simultaneous pursuit of land and maritime empires.

As China begins development of a carrier-centered naval capability, U.S.-China military competition will increase. But there is nothing intrinsic to great power maritime rivalry that makes such competition inherently unmanageable. German and Russian pursuit of maritime power contributed to great power war, just as Japanese pursuit of maritime power contributed to escalated U.S.-Japan tension prior to World War II. But post-1815 nineteenth-century French naval aspirations contributed to short-term and moderate Anglo-French naval arms races, followed by stable political and economic cooperation. The impact of U.S.-China maritime conflict can be similarly contained.

The influence of China's naval nationalism on international politics will reflect enduring asymmetric geopolitical constraints on U.S. and Chinese maritime capabilities. And it will reflect the constraining impact of nuclear weapons on great power use of force. But it will also reflect developments in Chinese nationalism and in the military and political response of the United States to China's emerging naval policy. Optimal U.S. management of China's rising power nationalism will require policies that facilitate ongoing cooperation amid growing naval competition.