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# Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM) Development: Drivers, Trajectories, and Strategic Implications

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audiences are contained within the nation-state structure. When war is a contest between two sides, the audiences are easy to identify, and traditionally these audiences understand the outcome of the war in terms of the contest between the armed forces of the sides. When multiple strategic audiences, some of them not contained within or associated with nation-states, do not understand or interpret the military outcome in the same way, “the military outcome does not provide a stable basis upon which to define a conflict’s outcome.” Simpson argues that “strategic confusion can result when conflicts characterized by competition between many actors in a fragmented political environment are shoehorned into a traditional concept of war, which is two polarized sides.” The information revolution and advances in communications and social media have exacerbated this problem, forcing overlap not only between the tactical and strategic levels of war but between the tactical and policy levels as well.

Simpson describes war as a competition between strategic narratives. Accordingly, planners at all levels should be targeting strategic audiences as centers of gravity. It is a matter not so much of the Clausewitzian dictum that war is designed to compel your enemy to do your will but of compelling your target audience to understand your message. *War from the Ground Up* provides case studies for this proposition ranging from the coalition effort in Afghanistan in 2006 to the British strategy in the Borneo conflict in the mid-1960s. The author also addresses other insurgencies throughout the narrative, including the conflict in Sri Lanka and Russian operations in Chechnya, and refers to the work of prominent authors who

have weighed in on the changed nature of warfare in the twenty-first century, such as David Kilcullen, Colonel Gian Gentile, and Antonio Giustozzi. A visiting defense fellow at Oxford in 2011, Simpson fuses a firm grasp of traditional humanities and philosophy with his experience in Afghanistan.

He has provided us with what may be one of the most important books on strategy in a long time. No short review can do justice to this remarkable book, which should be read by all military officers and policy makers, as well as anyone involved with the planning and execution of military operations.

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Erickson, Andrew S. *Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM) Development: Drivers, Trajectories, and Strategic Implications*. Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation, 2013. 110pp. \$18

Andrew S. Erickson is a leading authority on Chinese naval developments. His research and linguistic abilities are matched by his careful, systematic analysis. In this work Erickson thoroughly surveys the existing literature in English and Chinese addressing Beijing’s efforts to deploy antiship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) able to strike large warships at ranges of more than a thousand miles.

The author credits China with developing ASBMs as part of its strategy of “using the land to control the sea.” However, this represents a misinterpretation of naval history. While it is true that “a ship’s a fool to fight a fort,” it is also true that no nation has successfully defeated a naval force with land power alone. Examples include President Thomas Jefferson’s

construction of coastal forts and of a fleet of inshore gunboats to fight Britain's global navy, and the successful U.S. amphibious campaign against Japan's island bastions in World War II.

Erickson's key question is, How successful is China's ASBM system? He concludes that a functioning ASBM has been developed by Beijing but that final operating capacity remains a work in progress. Erickson highlights a crucial weakness in China's efforts to deploy such a complex system of systems when he describes the "tremendously complex and difficult process" of ensuring "extremely close coordination" among several branches and agencies in a Chinese bureaucracy notable for lacking that attribute.

The ASBM-warhead issue is not satisfactorily addressed in the literature. Why would a U.S. commander assume that an incoming ballistic missile is armed with a conventional warhead and not a nuclear one? Employing ASBMs poses a possibly insuperable danger of escalation from conventional to nuclear warfare. As Erickson points out in his conclusion, "PLA sources reveal overconfidence in China's ability to control escalation, which is itself an extraordinary danger."

The author's conclusion that an aircraft carrier group "would have a large electromagnetic signature" ignores the progress made in the 1980s in operating under dramatically reduced electronic emissions conditions. Also, the author errs if he attributes to China a unique policy of "asymmetry" in the development of weapons designed to counter U.S. military strengths. Any intelligent military does that. I also question the author's conclusion that the United States is "on the 'wrong end of physics'" with respect to matching China

militarily, in view of his inability to describe countermeasures presently under development or in force.

However, these are minor criticisms of a thoughtful evaluation of current Chinese efforts to defend the homeland and exert control over the waters Beijing believes vital to national-security interests. Also impressive is Erickson's appreciation of the possibility of "deeply destabilizing" strategic effects of successful Chinese maritime control strategies on the Asian political situation—that is, a successful ASBM will not simply be a tactical weapon. This is a book that every naval officer and civilian analyst must read.

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Nordquist, Myron H., and John Norton Moore, eds. *Maritime Border Diplomacy*. Boston, Mass.: Martinus Nijhoff, 2012. 366pp. \$146.98

In 2011 the thirty-fifth annual conference on the law of the sea and oceans policy was held in Bali, Indonesia. The conference attracted (as it always does) an impressive array of presenters and attendees. The editors offer with this work a compilation of the papers presented. Perhaps because they made no concessions to make the presentations "accessible," the result is something of a rarity—a compilation that remains interesting and useful. Each of the seven sections has much to recommend it. All are potentially useful, and the "Dispute Settlement Mechanisms" section is especially well presented.

This collection is a fascinating spectrum of topics ranging from specific cases, such as the "2008 China-Japan Agreement on Cooperation for the