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# The Impact of Chinese Naval Modernization and the Future of the United States Navy

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The first trial by combat of the new navy was against the French in the undeclared “Quasi-War” of 1797–1800, which was fought to protect American merchant shipping. The next naval action occurred in the Mediterranean during 1803–1805, when war was waged against the pirates of Tripoli. However, the true test for the Navy, of course, occurred during the War of 1812, when the value of the ships and their crews was proved beyond doubt. The author’s descriptions of the ships, their handling, and the combat actions is excellent, and his portrayal of the people is equally impressive. The positive and negative characteristics of the civilian leaders—including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison—as well as of the naval officers who became well known in American history (Stephen Decatur, William Bainbridge, Thomas Truxtun, Edward Preble, and James Lawrence) are all examined.

This is Ian Toll’s first book. It is a product of his sailing experience, interest in the period, writing skill, and thorough research. The result is an excellent work that should become a permanent part of the library of anyone with an interest in American naval history.

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O’Rourke, Ronald. *The Impact of Chinese Naval Modernization and the Future of the United States Navy*. New York: Nova, 2006. 106pp. \$79

Well written, succinct, and timely, this balanced assessment of Chinese naval weaknesses and strengths offers specific technological development and procurement alternatives to inform

Washington’s decision making. O’Rourke is a naval issues analyst for the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress. Specialists will want to consult his related product, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress*. First published in November 2006, the latter report has been updated regularly. Each report contains details that the other does not.

Like its CRS counterpart, O’Rourke’s present study draws on a variety of U.S. government analyses; congressional testimony; and articles from the media, think tanks, and academia. Additional details are provided in an appendix. Charged with presenting different points of view, with an emphasis on official analyses, O’Rourke cannot be held responsible for disagreements concerning the underlying assumptions or conclusions of his sources. It should also be emphasized that Beijing’s continuing reluctance to offer detailed information on the purpose or scope of many aspects of its rapid military development both raises concerns in Washington and makes it difficult for policy makers there to rule out worst-case scenarios.

O’Rourke has explicitly chosen to focus his report by limiting the attention paid to such issues of potential relevance to the U.S. Navy as China’s aerospace development. In light of recent significant Chinese achievements in this realm (including the acknowledged testing of an antisatellite weapon on 11 January 2007), however, such factors should perhaps be integrated into follow-on studies by O’Rourke and his colleagues. After all, China’s ability to project naval power farther from its shores will hinge on developing effective air defense for surface assets. Certain military

scenarios, such as those involving Taiwan, might motivate China to attempt to deter American intervention by the threat of nuclear strikes or damage to U.S. space assets.

O'Rourke's study raises important questions as the United States develops a new maritime strategy. If preventing Taiwan independence and promoting reunification is the present focus of China's naval development, what other national interests might fuel such development in the future? What is the proper balance for the U.S. Navy between supporting operations in the global war on terror and maintaining (if not increasing) its presence and operational capabilities in the vast, strategically vital Asia-Pacific region? What resources will be required to meet the latter requirements, and how should they be allocated? Finally, what fleet and basing architecture can best accomplish this at sustainable cost to taxpayers?

Critical procurement decisions with ramifications for years to come are being made in Beijing as China develops a new five-year plan. As this dual strategic crossroads looms ever larger, it is to be hoped that the two Pacific powers can reach an understanding about their respective regional roles and thereby keep competitive coexistence from degenerating into a new cold war.

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Wortzel, Larry M. *China's Nuclear Forces: Operations, Training, Doctrine, Command, Control, and Campaign Planning*. Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007. 51pp.

In *China's Nuclear Forces* Larry Wortzel has delivered an exceptional monograph that demands the attention of both nuclear strategists and China experts. The author, a leading authority on China, Asia, national security, and military strategy, is currently serving as a commissioner on the congressionally mandated U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. He previously served as the director of the Asian Studies Center and vice president for foreign policy at the Heritage Foundation. Wortzel's distinguished thirty-two-year career in the U.S. armed forces, during which time he served as both assistant Army attaché and then attaché at the American embassy in China, culminated with an assignment as director of the Strategic Studies Institute at the Army War College.

The title of this monograph promises an expansive scope, and Wortzel delivers quite ably. While the scale of the work is extremely helpful in keeping the various aspects and issues in perspective, the most important new contributions to understanding the evolving Chinese nuclear posture are Wortzel's treatments of "no first use" and nuclear command and control. As stated by the author, "The major insights . . . come from exploiting sections of . . . *A Guide to the Study of Campaign Theory*[,] . . . an unclassified 'study guide' for PLA officers on how to understand and apply doctrine." These insights, however, which Wortzel so adeptly lays forth, are corroborated in other reliable Chinese-language material.

It has become conventional wisdom among China scholars to take Chinese declaratory policy of "no first use" of nuclear weapons at face value, excusing away various past unofficial statements