

PR China's Pursuit of a Blue-Water Navy⁸⁰

Introduction

The development of the navy and the extension of connected capacities is one of the focuses of the military evolution in the People's Republic of China (later on: China). The directions of the improvement appear to be clear, though achieving their aims are a question of decades, not years. These Chinese steps, the progress they make, new ship classes they develop, advanced technologies they produce will take the upcoming decades to reach their goals – even if sometimes the Western media exaggerates the potential threat posed by the Chinese army.

The paper shortly presents the geopolitical environment of the country, after that analyses the necessity of a blue-water navy, the development they have already started and tries to project ahead their capacities and the relevance of that future Navy.

Geopolitical Environment

Although China is not a landlocked country, its potential to enter the world market is limited – to the South China Sea, through which Beijing can facilitate its trade. The historical ties, political realities made it harder (or even impossible) for China to trade through mainland neighbours: the break-up with the Soviet Union (including Central Asia) closed the routes towards Europe, the relations with India made it impossible to use southern ways, the situation in Southeast Asia and the location of South Korea, Japan and the presence of the US Army in these countries let no other option for Beijing.



Graph 1. China's Geopolitical Environment
Source: cdn.shopify.com, edited by the author

So the South China Sea and the maritime trade routes are exceptionally important for China, especially in the recent decades, achieving outstanding economic successes. To fuel its economy and to supply the oil consumption of the

⁸⁰ The Project under the Registration Number "EFOP-3.6.3-VEKOP-16-2017-00007" named "From a Talent to a Young Researcher – Supporting Activities of the Researcher Career in Higher Education" is co-funded by the European Union in the framework of the Széchenyi 2020 Program.

terribly growing number of cars, China imports from various oil exporters of the world, among the biggest are Saudi Arabia, Angola,⁸¹ Iran, Oman, Iraq, Sudan and Russia. Although Beijing imports oil via pipelines from Russia and Central Asia, approximately the 80% of the imports arrive on China's most important trade route on the Indian Ocean via the South China Sea. Of course it is not just about raw materials. China can reach the market with its export goods through the Indian Ocean as well.

Beijing feels, its trade through the Ocean is vulnerable and would be in danger during a global crisis.

Beijing has several national and international objectives according to its maritime trade routes. First of all, it is elemental to secure these waterways to feed the economy to maintain the economic growth (and the supremacy of the Communist Party). To reach this, Beijing supports the principle of the free waterways, but its main sea line of communication (SLOC) is vulnerable. This trade route erecting from African, European and Middle Eastern markets via the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Strait (or other Straits in the region) and the South China Sea is threatened by several actors. The South China Sea is important for China as a Gate to the raw materials and also as a potential oil and gas producer area, and the shipping through the sea is endangered by the different claims of the countries in the region. The Malacca Strait as a narrow route is dangerous because of pirates and the closing of the Strait would add expensive extra kilometers to the route. Beijing fears that its objectives will be jeopardised by the emerging India on the Indian Ocean, and the trade route is also under threat at the Strait of Hormuz and at the Horn of Africa where piracy is 'crucial' than ever.

Recently China's ability to defend and secure its SLOC is limited, the Chinese Navy is still limited in size, scope and equipment and Beijing is unable to maintain presence far from its borders, especially on international waters. To solve its weaknesses, China cooperates with regional countries to secure the routes, develops additional trade routes to diversificate and builds up international ports and bases that could be used for Chinese vessels to dock and to control the waters and routes. But their ultimate goal is to be able to react by their own, with the help of their well-equipped navy.⁸²

Cooperation or Uncertainty

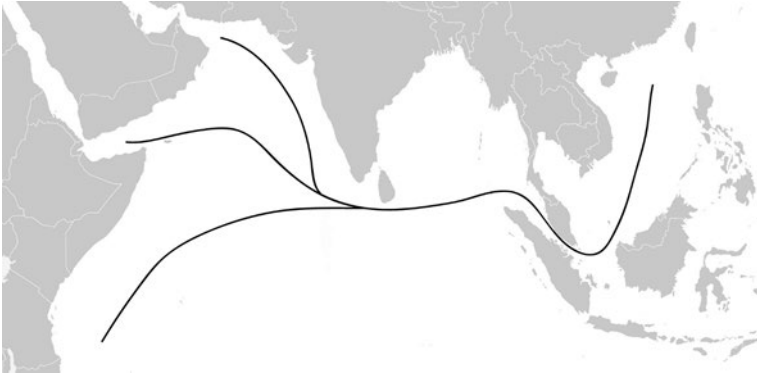
While international cooperation can guarantee the safety of the trade routes, as the reaction of global actors on piracy at Somalia shows⁸³, a global power has to be able to react by his own - the traditionalist view claims in China. This logic still builds upon Alfred Mahan's view on Sea Power, and the *mahan's logic* is still recognisable at the Chinese Navy (Till, 2012: 66). According to this view, the powerful navy you have, the easier it is to control and use freely the waters.

81 Besenyő 2007.

82 This sections already published: Vörös 2012. See more about this maritime trade route in that paper.

83 See more: Besenyő – Kiss 2009; Vörös 2012.

“Whether they will or not, Americans must now begin to look outward. The growing production of the country demands it.” – a quote originating from Alfred Mahan from the late 19th, early 20th century. Just replace ‘Americans’ with ‘Chinese’ and the outdated Mahan’s logic introduces itself.



Graph 2. Trade route through the Indian Ocean

Source: Edited by the author

On one hand, the need to secure trade routes is understandable. In case of an international crisis, disruption of trade could danger the economy and the political system. On the other hand, uncertainty is not just a one-way street: growing number of fregatts and submarines on one side means growing fear and uncertainty on the other. And that spiral may lead to conflicts. About uncertainty I have already noted:

“China has growing influence on shipping lanes throughout the Indian ocean, leading several countries to express unease about the safety of oil and supply shipments in the region. Beijing wants to safeguard its maritime lines of trade, and to reach this aim, they started to develop a blue-water navy. [China] faces with the emerging India looking for the same sources, with Delhi developing and upgrading its navy. India’s situation and aspirations are similar to Beijing’s. India also has a rapidly developing economy and also relies heavily on imported oil and as estimates suggests, Delhi would need to import more than 90% of its oil demand in two decades.”⁸⁴

As we will see, Beijing is not refusing cooperation, but the goals of their developments are undoubtedly pointing towards a future, where they are able to defend their sea line of communications by their own.

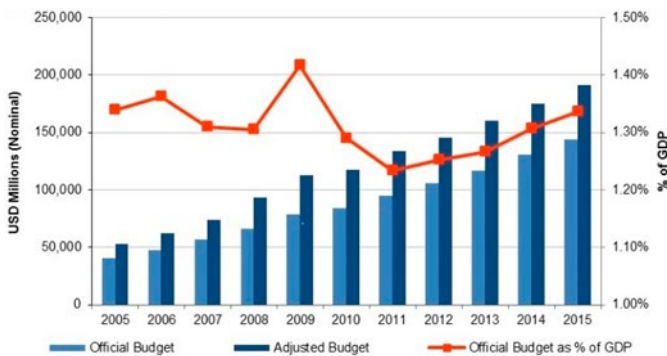
84 Vörös 2012.

Army Development

The development of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a complex, ongoing process, started in the 80s realizing their army falling behind international standards. The improvement is slow, complex (focusing on the technologies, training, on the Navy, Air Force, etc.) and there are endless number of monographs and papers about it. What is important for us, is the scale of this development, the reactions, and the share of the Navy, especially the evolution of the blue-water capacities.

The military budget of China is growing in a shocking way, with 10-16% per year⁸⁵, serving ammunition for western websites and news centers about the threat China poses. The facts, that the military budget of the country is still less than half of the US's expenditures, or that the money they are spending on the army, is proportionally less from year to year, according to their total expenditures⁸⁶, are not really mentioned.

Of course, the pace of the growing is huge and there is the possibility that the official figures are far from the truth: the defense spending is far from transparent, the official numbers don't include such categories of expenditure (expenses for strategic forces, military-related research and development, etc.) which should be included in these numbers. The real budget can be 40-72% higher, than the official numbers.⁸⁷



Graph 3. Chinese Military Budget

Source: *janes.com*

One thing is clear from the development: we cannot expect dramatic changes, China's plans are for the long term, and the whole process may take several decades. The question is not if China is going to have a blue-water navy, but when and what quality they are going to have.

They are building up capacities (mostly by their own), which can defend the country and their trade routes from non-traditional threats. As Kang Geng, the political commissar of the South Fleet said in 2009: "China has thousands of enterprises spreading over the globe. We must seriously consider how to effectively protect [them]"⁸⁸.

85 Liff – Erickson 2013: 808.

86 Liff – Erickson 2013: 809.

87 Vörös 2014.

88 Till 2012: 224.

China's New Defense White Paper, 2015

On 26th May 2015 Chinese government released its newest defense white paper, entitled 'China's Military Strategy'. As Caitlin Campbell Senior Policy Analyst from US Security and Foreign Affairs notes in her brief, although these White Papers, public strategies published by nation states and international actors are there to make their developments transparent and their steps clear and less threatening, this White Paper "contains no major revelations about China's military strategy or modernization".⁸⁹

On the other hand, there are some interesting points about the changing strategic thinking. The White Paper rejects the priority of mainland capacities, turns towards maritime military in relation with seas and oceans.⁹⁰ The Paper introduces the concept of active defense, communicating that they have recognized the new threats "and anticipates its most likely conflict scenarios will take place at sea".⁹¹ Campbell introduces the active defense concept as well:

"According to the DWP, <the strategic concepts of active defense> are <adherence to the unity of strategic defense and operational and tactical offense; adherence to the principles of defense, self-defense and post-emptive strike; and adherence to the stance that 'we will not attack unless we are attacked, but we will surely counterattack if attacked.'>".⁹²

Modernization of the Navy – Focusing on the Blue-water capacities

The history of the Navy (People's Liberation Army Navy - PLAN) started in 1949 – but its role remained limited thanks to the doctrine, prioritizing regular forces. Modernizatory processes are originating from the 80s, focusing on homeland construction capacity and technology in order to create active presence on regional waters. Blue-water goals were among the future plans.

The first decades of development were slow and inefficient – the lack of doctrinal background and the still prioritized regular army blocked the renewal of the Navy. As we could see, on doctrinal level the change was slow and just in the recent years they realized the importance of the Navy.

The evolution of the PLAN is also a slow, but more and more successful process. Military and navy officials decided about parallel progress, buying new technologies (from abroad) and initiating Chinese production capacity.

Development started with the renewal of destroyer and frigate class ships.

89 Campbell 2015: 1.

90 Háda 2015: 4.

91 Campbell 2015: 1.

92 Campbell 2015: 1.

“Chinese destroyers lacked the AAW capability to defend themselves beyond the range of land-based anti-aircraft missile batteries. With this in mind, China did not possess a ‘blue water’ navy. In order to expand the effective range of its naval forces and to acquire the ability to project power farther out to sea, the PLAN needed modern warships that could both protect themselves and defeat an opponent.”⁹³

Beside buying two Sovremenny-class destroyers from Russia, the production of their new destroyer-class, Type 051 had started. Type 051-class ships (a total of 16) were never competitive, lacked modern technologies – but helped the PLAN in one way: providing precious information and experience in production. The next class was the Type 052, with several sub-classes (like 052B, 051B, 051C, 052C and 052D). While still trying to develop the destroyer they need and which is capable of using modern techniques, the Navy built a dozen of ships in these sub-classes until reaching the quite modern 052C and the so-called *game changer*, 052D. Game changer, since that is the first destroyer of PLAN which makes it possible to expand its area of operations further out at sea. “The Type 052D is a true blue water navy warship. Its hull and propulsion provide good seaworthiness, maneuverability and speed. Her AESA radar has obviously been improved with the most advanced such radar that China has produced”.⁹⁴ They have already finished nine (planning at least 12), out of which three is already active: on the South China Sea. Although not connected to blue-water capabilities, testing and actively using these destroyers on regional waters can help future applicability. Type 052Ds on the South China Sea

“sends a clear message to other claimants to disputed South China Sea islands and waters that China has the power and intention of backing their claims with force if necessary. These vessels also act as a strong access/area denial tool with their capable AESA radars and powerful AAW and ASW capabilities. With these vessels, the PLAN can create a large air defense umbrella over Chinese military operations and building projects in the region.”⁹⁵

Still talking about destroyers, they have been working on an even larger and powerful destroyer, the Type 055. If the 052D is the game changer, 055 is the *joker* at the PLAN, an absolute up-to-date technology:

93 “Military Analysis: The Type 052D Class Guided Missile Destroyer.” 2016. *South Front*.

94 “Military Analysis...” 2016.

95 “Military Analysis...” 2016.

“Although called a destroyer, a design displacement of over 10,000 tons (some sources suggest a displacement as large as 14,000 tons) would put the vessel into the category of a guided missile cruiser (CG). The vessel would most likely be designed as a fleet command vessel and powerful air defense platform for a future aircraft carrier strike group.”⁹⁶

Frigates are also under development. Type 053-class was the first Chinese product, copied from Soviet Riga-class. The class is still active (14⁹⁷), but has several handicaps. The improved frigate class is the Type 054 and 054A. Two and twenty-two ships have already been deployed in these classes. Type 054A-class is an outstanding Chinese product – though “its hull form, its engines, and most of its major weapons and sensors systems were directly derived from foreign models or technology”.⁹⁸ PLAN actively uses these ships on its anti-piracy mission (more about this mission later on) since 2008 and no reports have arrived about engine failures or other mechanical problems, making it a reliable ship.

“[The Type 054A] represents an exponential improvement in the quality and capability of the PLAN’s frigate force, [...] [it] has performed well handling lower intensity long-range mission. In this regard, it has arguably surpassed the capabilities of the French Lafayette-class frigate that influenced its original design [and its successor], the Type 054B will likely improve upon this design through. Key changes [...] include larger hull size to accommodate equipment additions, a vertical launch system that is physically larger capable of launching larger missiles and holding more missiles [...]. It is also likely that the Type 054B will use a more capable radar system and a longer range anti-air missile.”⁹⁹

The PLAN has also introduced a new class, the corvette Type 056 class in 2012 and already produced 25 ships¹⁰⁰, with many more to come. Corvettes are mid-range ships, especially built for littoral duties and anti-piracy missions – meaning they are not suitable for blue-water operations, might show up in a mission at the Gulf of Aden, but the main goal is to use them on the regional seas.

For blue-water missions, a Navy needs submarines.

“Despite its already impressive size, the PLAN submarine fleet is one of the fastest growing and modernizing forces in the world, with the ONI estimating that the submarine force will eventually expand to include 75 vessels. Other reports indicate that China’s submarine fleet totals up to 70 boats, with plans to add 20 more within the next 10 years.”¹⁰¹

96 “Military Analysis...” 2016.

97 “Chinese Naval Power.” 2016. *South Front*.

98 Collins – Erickson 2015.

99 Collins – Erickson 2015.

100 “Chinese Naval Power.” 2016.

101 “China Submarine Capabilities.” 2016.

According to the most recent information, China has 66 active submarines, 57 diesel attack (out of which 12 Kilo-class submarines are considered modern), 4 nuclear attack SSN and 5 nuclear ballistic missile submarine.¹⁰²

According to the diesel submarine fleet, beside the Russian Kilo-s, there are several Chinese-made submarines as well, out of which the Type 039 is an interesting example of PLAN modernisation. They had serious problems deploying the submarines, and still outdated, though they are very quiet during slow speed: a very famous incident occurred in 2006, a Type 039 surfacing at a distance within firing range of the US Kitty Hawk battle group. The next generation is the Type 041, according to reports, as quiet as its Western (or Russian) counterparts, still is a station of a long road, which will lead to have excellent diesel submarines.

PLAN has 4 nuclear powered attack submarines (SSNs), two Type 091 and two Type 093 class, more modern submarines. Both classes are their own products (there were no countries willing to sell a nuclear submarine to Beijing), Type 091 is way outdated. In the case of 093, even if it is a recent design, there are concerns about its noise-level. There are sources which claim, that its noise level is equal to western nuclear submarines built at the end of the seventies, others refuse to accept this, but according to future plans, a new hull-design just a few years later they introduced the class, foreshadows problems with the Type 093. Type 095 and 097 classes are already under planning, with the 095 to be the one they can use in the future for possible blue-water operations, with more advanced and more quiet nuclear reactor.

They have 5 SSBNs, nuclear ballistic missile submarines. They have one Type 092 class submarine, already out of date, and four Type 094 submarines. Each of these submarines can mount 12 ballistic missiles, which allows China to target parts of the US for the first time. News about the class are ambiguous: they can provide deterrent force, but according to the *Military Today*, the Type 094 class “boats are as noisy as Soviet submarines of the 70s, [while] some sources claim that these Chinese ballistic missile submarines were plagued with various problems and design flaws”.¹⁰³ They are planning to have a fleet of five to ten 094 class submarines, though (of course) Type 096, the successor is already under development, and if there are problems, with the recent class, that might change the plans of the Navy. Thomas Spypek suggests that it is most likely that China would have four to six 096 nuclear submarines operational by 2020.¹⁰⁴ According to *Global Security*,

“Type 096 will be somewhat larger than the Type 094, and carry a larger number of missiles, [...] it will be the quietest, most heavily-armed submarine the Chinese Navy has ever built. The design will incorporate technological advancements to provide improvement in ship quieting”.¹⁰⁵

102 “Chinese Naval Power.” 2016.

103 “Jin Class.” *Military Today*.

104 Spypek [é.n.].

105 “Type 096 ballistic missile submarine.” *Global Security*.

Its hull will be similar to US SSBNs according to guesses.

Summarizing the huge submarine fleet, it is visible, that the PLAN is investing a lot in the undersea fleet, but, according to analyst Ben Ho, their quality is still inferior:

“The key issue is to what extent can the Chinese catch up with the Americans in the realm of undersea warfare? Opines Owen R. Cote perceptively in a 2011 study: <The Chinese are still far from that position, but as in other areas, it would almost certainly be a mistake to assume that they won’t eventually get there if they decide to try>.”¹⁰⁶

A blue-water navy is non-existent without an aircraft carrier. The story of the ex-Varyag-now-Liaoning carrier is well known by experts interested in China’s military moves. The question is about the future of this type of ship in the PLAN. The Liaoning, with an active status, is a training ship – not more. And for a decent blue-water navy, they would need at least three carriers, beside the training ship Liaoning, in order to keep up presence at their marine interests. This number matches to US strategies about carriers. Du Wenlong, military expert

“offered the view that one is too little, two not enough, and three might just meet the demand. If China had only one aircraft carrier, it would not conform to China’s status as a world power, nor to the demands imposed by the length of the coastline. Considering China’s ocean environment, two aircraft carriers are not enough to safeguard marine interests. If China has three aircraft carriers, they can maintain a sustained combat capability: maintenance, safeguarding and patrol respectively.”¹⁰⁷

There is an aircraft carrier-program in the Chinese Navy, but the details were secret for years. There were news in 2013 about a nuclear powered carrier, just a few weeks after they “announced” further two (beside Liaoning) carrier with regular engines.¹⁰⁸ Finally Senior Colonel Yang Yujun, spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense of China confirmed in a news conference the construction of a second carrier:

106 Ben 2015.

107 “How many aircraft carriers should China have?” 2014. *Global Times*.

108 See more: Vörös 2014.

“Relevant authority started the research and development of China’s second aircraft carrier, which is currently under independent design and construction. [...] The second aircraft carrier is designed independently by China and is being built in Dalian. It has a conventional power plant with a displacement of 50,000 tons. It will carry J-15 fighter jets and other ship-based aircraft, and the fixed-wing aircraft on-board will adopt ski-jump take-off mode. Various types of equipment will be installed to meet the needs of fulfilling its missions. The design and construction of the second aircraft carrier, having drawn on a lot of useful experience from the scientific tests and training of the first aircraft carrier, Liaoning, will have new improvements in many aspects.”¹⁰⁹



Graph 4. China's first domestic carrier under construction in Dalian shipyard

Source: [http://www.debatepolitics.com/military/](http://www.debatepolitics.com/military/239422-chinas-first-domestic-carrier-under-construction.html)

[239422-chinas-first-domestic-carrier-under-construction.html](http://www.debatepolitics.com/military/239422-chinas-first-domestic-carrier-under-construction.html)

But we have to remember, one is too little, two is not enough, three they need at least. To projected active status of this soon-to-be-a-carrier hull after the sea trials is around 2020-2022. A possible second carrier they started to build in Jiangnan shipyard, though this was not confirmed so far, and it is not expected to have three carriers by 2030.

With the Liaoning as a training ship, PLAN already put together China's very first Carrier Battle Group and photos were made available on China-Defense blog.

109 Defense Ministry's regular press conference on Dec. 31. Ministry of National Defense, PRC, 31.12.2015.



Graph 5. Carrier Battle Group, China

Source: <http://china-defense.blogspot.hu/2014/01/photo-op-of-year-plans-1st-carrier.html>

Three destroyers, three frigates, three (Type 093) submarines and an amphibious assault ship (which is useless in a carrier battle group). As several analysts noted, the picture shows the weaknesses of the PLAN: lack of experience, missing logistics which makes the Carrier Battle Group unserviceable far from the ports¹¹⁰ and limited arms systems.

As we have already analysed, China is about to have excellent destroyers and frigates, still far from such submarines and the proper carriers yet to come. In the case of logistic ships, China has Type 903A support ships, but they are small, only have a few and PLAN is using them for counter-piracy missions at the Gulf of Aden, as we will see. Of course they are planning the next generation of support ships, possibly in order to serve in a carrier battle group: the Type 901.

“Thirty-one-and-a-half meters wide and over 200 meters long, the first Type 901 class supply ship will have a full displacement of around 40,000-45,000 tons. That’s a similar size to the U.S. Navy’s 49,000-ton Supply class replenishment ships, which can carry over 17,000 tons of jet and ship fuel, and 1950 tons of ammunition.”¹¹¹

110 “The true secret to American naval power is not the numerous and powerful front-line warships, but the less visually impressive vessels that you rarely see on TV or read about in the news. They are logistics ships, including tankers, dry stores vessels and ammunition ships. The Pentagon’s three-dozen active combat-support vessels, manned mostly by civilian mariners, busily crisscross the globe, carefully plotting their courses to regularly meet up with the carriers and other task forces in order to refuel and resupply them. Without logistics ships, the U.S. Navy would never venture far from its major home ports in Virginia, Florida, California and Hawaii. These vital but unattractive supply vessels occasionally enjoy the privilege of appearing in carrier battle group photo ops.” “China Flaunts First Carrier Battle Group Photo Op.” 2014. *War is boring*.

111 “Giant New Supply Ship Extends China’s Reach at Sea.” 2015. *Popular Science*.



Graph 6. Type 901

Source: http://htka.hu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/type_901.jpg

As we could see China has steadily modernized its navy over the past decades in order to have Blue-water Navy capabilities (of course beside the aim of having a Navy which can control and dominate the countries regional seas). They already have, or are planning ships which are on par with western navies, though finishing the process still take one or two decades. As David Axe noted on War is Boring: PLAN “acquired a lot of new equipment in recent years but is still learning and growing – and still trails the U.S. Navy by nautical miles.”¹¹²

Implications on the future

When trying to project the steps by PLAN, the presence at the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somali coast does help a lot. The United Nations Security Council adopted several resolutions (before and in 2008) calling on all countries to help patrol the gulf and waters off Somalia, where piracy has endangered shipping in one of the world’s busiest sea lanes. Beijing was among the first states to react – sending a Task Force to the region.

The PLAN’s participation is juicy at first sight: they are acting unilaterally, but parallel with international groups and efforts. As Andrew Erickson and Austin Strange noted,

“multilateral coordination mechanisms have enabled China to maintain its status as an independent public goods provider while actively strengthening bilateral naval relations and helping build a 21st-century architecture for global maritime governance”.¹¹³

This means that they are operating separately from international task forces in the region, like Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), NATO’s Operation Ocean Shield or the EU’s Operation Atalanta, but they are closely cooperating with these forces. This type of participation is not unique, beside China, India, Japan and Russia also decided to join in this way.

112 “China Flaunts First Carrier Battle Group Photo Op.” 2014.

113 Erickson – Strange 2013.

The first Chinese naval escort Taskforce left in 2008, and the participation is so successful, that on the 7th April 2016, already the 23rd Taskforce had left for the Gulf of Aden and off Somali coast.¹¹⁴

Usually these Taskforces are consisted of three ships: 2 destroyers or frigates (in most of the cases, 1-1 from each type) and a support ship. Two Type 054A frigates and a Type 903A support ship left the Chinese port Zhouzhan in April.

According to the Chinese news agency, the former 22 Taskforces

“have provided escort for 6,139 Chinese and foreign merchant ships in 922 batches. Besides, they have fulfilled various missions successfully including providing escort for the evacuation of Chinese nationals from Libya and ships transporting Syria’s chemical weapons in the Mediterranean Sea, offering emergency water supply assistance to Maldives and evacuating Chinese and foreign personnel from conflict-jolted Yemen.”¹¹⁵

So what are the implications on the future?

First of all, these Taskforces and the operation of the PLAN in the region are the signs of capacity-improvement. These missions and the time spent on international waters will consent to a successful development, providing invaluable information for the Navy.

Secondly, their independent participation might be worrying, but we have to note one thing: “PLAN’s coordination with Western antipiracy forces suggests that China can contribute in parallel with, rather than threaten to destabilize, existing maritime governance mechanisms in the Far Seas.”¹¹⁶ So even if the will to develop an independent and well-equipped navy is there, the possibility is still there to have China as a cooperative partner in international missions.

Conclusion

China depends on preventing trade routes – in order to be able to pursuit economic growth through exporting goods, and to import the much needed energy. At present, Beijing lacks the naval power necessary to protect its sea lines of communication: they fear that during an international security crisis the main maritime routes could be in danger, which would endanger their economy.

The country has a few options to react on this possible threat, like cooperating with international actors, states and organizations, but as a parallel activity, they are about to develop a navy that can maintain presence at important chokepoints, can react on possible incidents, and is able to defend Chinese interests.

114 “23rd Chinese naval escort taskforce leaves for mission.” 2016. *Chinmil.com.cn*

115 Ibid.

116 Erickson – Strange 2013.

The modernizing steps are clearly implicating the directions of the development: to develop blue-water capacities within the Chinese Navy. How and what they are developing, where and how they are cooperating and testing their techniques, shows, their ultimate goal is to gain this power – in the future. This project is definitely not a short-term commitment, they can only have successes in the mid- and long-run and by navy-standards, they have just started to act.

But Beijing should not forget, having a powerful navy is not equal with safety, and bigger power might come with more threats and can create wider uncertainty.

Maybe that is why, the PLAN started a world-tour: the 21st Taskforce, after finishing its actual mission at the coasts of Somalia, left for a global relationship-building tour in Africa, Europe, US and Asia. A Type 052C guided-missile destroyer, a Type 054A guided-missile frigate and a Type 903 fleet oiler support ship visited Sudan, Egypt, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the US and Indonesia as a goodwill project.



Graph 7. A Type 052C destroyer (152) in Finland

Source: yle.fi

Beside working on partnerships, the global tour can also advertise: World, we are coming to the oceans.

Bibliography

- “23rd Chinese naval escort taskforce leaves for mission.” *Chinmil.com.cn*, 8 April 2016. http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2016-04/08/content_6997675.htm (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- “China Flaunts First Carrier Battle Group Photo Op.” 2014. *War is boring*, 1 January 2014. <https://warisboring.com/china-flaunts-first-carrier-battle-group-photo-op-af0f7d712e66#.nzbwmegpg> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- “China Submarine Capabilities.” 2016. NTI, 15 July 2016. <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/china-submarine-capabilities/> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- “Chinese Naval Power.” 2016. *South Front*, 6 January 2016. <https://southfront.org/chinese-naval-power/> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).

- Ben Ho Wan Beng: “The Chinese Submarine Threat.” *The Diplomat*, 10 December 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-chinese-submarine-threat/> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Besenyő János – Kiss Álmos Péter 2009. “Kelet-Afrika tengeri farkasai – a szomáliai kalózkodás fénykora.” *Afrika Tanulmányok* 3.3–4.
- Besenyő János 2007. “Harc az afrikai olajért, Kína gazdasági térnyerése a fekete kontinensen.” *Nemzetvédelmi Egyetemi Fórum* 9.4: 36–37. (<http://www.zmne.hu/Forum/07negyedik/afrika.htm>)
- Campbell, Caitlin 2015. “Highlights from China’s New Defense White Paper, ‘China’s Military Strategy.’” Brief, US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 1 June 2015.
- Collins, Gabe – Erickson, Andrew 2015. “The Type 054/054A Frigate Series: China’s Most Produced and Deployed Large Modern Surface Combatant.” *China SignPost*, 2 August 2015. <http://www.chinasignpost.com/2015/08/02/the-type-054054a-frigate-series-chinas-most-produced-and-deployed-large-modern-surface-combatant/> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Defense Ministry’s regular press conference on December 31. Ministry of National Defense, PRC, 31 December 2015. http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2015-12/31/content_4634720.htm (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Erickson, Andrew – Strange, Austin 2013. “China and the International Antipiracy Effort.” *The Diplomat*, 1 November 2013. <http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/china-and-the-international-antipiracy-effort/> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- “Giant New Supply Ship Extends China’s Reach at Sea.” 2015. *Popular Science*, 7 December 2015. <http://www.popsci.com/giant-new-supply-ship-extends-chinas-reach-at-sea> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Háda Béla 2015. “Útban egy nemzeti álom felé? – Kína 2015. évi katonai stratégiája.” *SVKK Elemzések* 9. NKE.
- “How many aircraft carriers should China have?” 2014. *Global Times*, 1 January 2014. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/836357.shtml#.UtT4lvTuLhI> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- “Jin Class.” *Military Today*. http://www.military-today.com/navy/jin_class.htm (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Liff, Adam P. – Erickson, Andrew S. 2013. “Demystifying China’s Defence Spending: Less Mysterious in the Aggregate.” *The China Quarterly* 216: 805–830.
- “Military Analysis: The Type 052D Class Guided Missile Destroyer.” 2016. *South Front*, 5 January 2016. <https://southfront.org/military-analysis-type-052d-class-guided-missile-destroyer/> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Skypek, Thomas M. “China’s Sea-Based Nuclear Deterrent in 2020: Four Alternative Futures for China’s SSBN Fleet.” https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/110916_Skypek.pdf (accessed: 30.08.2016.).

- Till, Geoffrey 2012. *Asia's Naval Expansion – An Arms Race in the Making?* IISS. New York: Routledge.
- “Type 096 ballistic missile submarine.” *Global Security*. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/china/type-096.htm> (accessed: 30.08.2016.).
- Vörös, Zoltán 2012. “The Achilles’ Heel of the Chinese Oil Consumption.” *Tradecraft Review Periodical of the Scientific Board of Military Security Office* 2012/2 (Special Issue): 38–47.
- Vörös, Zoltán 2014. *Kínai sakkjátszma. Tengeri kereskedelmi útvonalak és az energiabiztonság geopolitikája*. Pécs: Publikon Kiadó.

