

CHAPTER 2

MILITARY AND SECURITY ISSUES INVOLVING CHINA

SECTION 1: YEAR IN REVIEW: SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Introduction

This section reviews aspects of China's national security and foreign affairs that have emerged since the Commission published its previous Annual Report in November 2013. It also addresses the People's Liberation Army's (PLA's) most significant activities of the year, and the evolving U.S.-China security relationship. The statements and assessments presented here are based on Commission hearings, briefings by U.S. and foreign government officials, the Commission's fact-finding trips to Asia, and open-source research and analysis. For a full treatment of China's military modernization, see Chapter 2, Section 2, "China's Military Modernization." For an in-depth discussion of how China's security and foreign policies impact East Asia, see Chapter 3, Section 1, "China and Asia's Evolving Security Architecture."

China's Major National Security and Foreign Policy Developments in 2014

Since the publication of the Commission's 2013 Annual Report, China's national security and foreign policy apparatuses have established several new institutions, norms, and policies designed to advance China's expanding and evolving interests.

China Establishes a "Central National Security Commission"

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee announced at its November 2013 Third Plenary Session that it would establish a Central National Security Commission to "perfect national security systems and strategies in order to ensure national security."*¹ The Central National Security Commission's status as an agency under the Central Committee makes it the most comprehensive security policy-making body in the Chinese government.

* China's Central National Security Commission is comparable to the United States' National Security Council insofar as both bodies deliberate and coordinate national security policies. A key difference between the two is that the former is a Party organization while the latter is a government organization. Further, China's Central National Security Commission appears to have a much broader mandate, particularly on domestic issues, than the U.S. National Security Council.

Chinese President Xi Jinping heads the Central National Security Commission, which convened for the first time in April 2014.

The Central National Security Commission's broad mandate allows it to establish and direct policy over a wide range of issues, which include political security, homeland security, military security, economic security, cultural security, societal security, science and technology security, information security, ecological security, resources security, and nuclear security.² Its four responsibilities with respect to each of these issues are "stipulating and implementing state security strategies, pushing forward the construction of the rule of law system concerning state security, setting security principles and policies, [and] conducting research."³

The Central National Security Commission's mandate covers both internal and external security issues; however, official Chinese statements, Chinese academics and policy experts, and Chinese state media indicate it likely will focus on the former.⁴ According to Fudan University Associate Dean Shen Dingli, the Central National Security Commission's internal focus suggests President Xi has determined "domestic factors [will] pose the most substantial challenge to [China's] national security for decades to come."⁵ For an in-depth discussion of China's internal security challenges, see Chapter 2, Section 3, "China's Domestic Stability."

By establishing the new Central National Security Commission, President Xi seeks to (1) improve the coordination of China's national security decision making, and (2) consolidate his control over China's national security agenda.

First, the Central National Security Commission's high-level status and its oversight of China's vast and convoluted security policy-making apparatus appear designed to overcome stovepiping, turf battles, and other bureaucratic obstacles to effective and efficient policy making.* President Xi, citing inadequate "security work systems and mechanisms," argued the Central National Security Commission was needed to "strengthen centralized, unified leadership over national security work."⁶

Second, and relatedly, the Central National Security Commission appears designed to improve President Xi's ability to personally control China's national security activities. Although much of the Central National Security Commission's composition is unknown to foreign observers, at least two of President Xi's political allies—Cai Qi and Meng Jianzhu—are rumored to hold prominent positions,† which they likely will use to support President Xi's security priorities. Placing his close associates on the Central National Security Commission also allows President Xi to minimize the influence of political rivals in the national security decision-making process.⁷

*The Central National Security Commission's portfolio of security issues overlaps with several of China's leading small groups. Leading small groups are the CCP's ad hoc policy and coordination working groups, the membership of which consists of Chinese political elites. The work and activities of the leading small groups are generally not transparent, and it is unclear whether or how the new Central National Security Commission will restructure, govern, or marginalize existing leading small groups for national security issues.

†Cai Qi is the former deputy governor of Zhejiang Province; Meng Jianzhu is a Politburo member and in 2012 succeeded Zhou Yongkang as secretary of the CCP's Central Politics and Law Commission, which oversees legal and law enforcement issues. The only confirmed members of the Central National Security Commission besides President Xi are two of his fellow Politburo Standing Committee members, Premier Li Keqiang and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhang Dejiang.

In addition to providing the means to advance his control over China's national security policy, President Xi's ability to establish the Central National Security Commission in the first place is indicative of his remarkably swift consolidation of power since he became General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CCP in 2012. For at least ten years, Chinese leaders had tried and failed to establish similar national security bodies; it is, therefore, particularly meaningful that President Xi was able to secure support from the multiple stakeholders required to finally establish the Central National Security Commission.*

Xi Administration Signals a More "Active" Foreign Policy

Another indication of President Xi's consolidation of power is his success in articulating and directing a much more proactive foreign policy than his predecessors. In March 2014, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a high-profile press conference on foreign policy issues during which he said, "'Active' is the most salient feature of China's diplomacy in the past year. . . . In 2014, China will continue to pursue an active foreign policy."⁸ Foreign Minister Wang's remarks are consistent with the Xi Administration's early steps to redefine China's relationship with the world, including its efforts to promote a "new type of major-country relationship" with the United States, which was a key theme of U.S.-China relations in 2013.†

China's foreign policy under President Xi appears to represent a break from former paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy tenet to "hide capacities and bide time." "Hide and bide"—the idea that China should seek to develop its economy and society successfully, respond to global events calmly and humbly, and conceal its military capabilities—has served as the basis for China's foreign policy decision making since the early 1990s. President Xi's policy shift is driven by a confluence of factors, including China's expanding regional and global interests; China's growing number of foreign policy actors, some of whom favor a more active global role for China; and China's increasing confidence in its ability to use economic and military tools to achieve its foreign policy objectives.⁹

*In an interview for the *Wall Street Journal*, senior advisor and Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies Christopher K. Johnson said of the Central National Security Commission's establishment, "I think this is huge. They've been talking about this forever and Xi Jinping has gone and done it in his first year in office. . . . He's showing that he controls all the levers of power." Jeremy Page, "China Deepens Xi's Powers with New Security Plan," *Wall Street Journal*, November 12, 2013. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304644104579193921242308990>. See also Marc Julienne, *How Far Will the NPC Go in Implementing Reform: The New Central National Security Commission* (European Council on Foreign Relations, March 2014), p. 6. http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ChinaAnalysis_March2014.pdf; and Yun Sun, "PacNet #81: China's New 'State Security Committee': Questions Ahead," *Pacific Forum CSIS*, November 14, 2013. http://csis.org/files/publication/Pac1381_0.pdf.

†Beginning in 2012 and increasingly throughout 2013, Beijing called for a "new type of major-country relationship" with the United States. Official Chinese statements claim the "new type" relationship intends to promote stable relations between China and the United States and avoid the kind of deleterious competition that typically plagues relationships between dominant powers and rising powers. The Obama Administration since late 2013 has sometimes invoked the concept (which it usually refers to as a "new model" of relations) when discussing bilateral ties with China. Caitlin Campbell and Craig Murray, *China Seeks a "New Type of Major-Country Relationship" with the United States* (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, June 25, 2013). http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China%20Seeks%20New%20Type%20of%20Major-Country%20Relationship%20with%20United%20States_Staff%20Research%20Backgrounder.pdf; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2013 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2013, p. 229; and U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Information Programs, "U.S., China Agree to 'New Model' of Relations, Kerry Says." <http://iip.digital.usembassy.gov/st/english/inbrief/2013/09/20130919283179.html>.

China's "Peripheral Diplomacy"

A key element of China's new, active foreign policy is the concept of "peripheral diplomacy." Peripheral diplomacy, which emphasizes China's relations with countries in its immediate neighborhood, was the topic of a high-level foreign policy meeting held in October 2013 by the Politburo Standing Committee and attended by other high-level officials.¹⁰ The event was the highest-level foreign policy meeting since 2006. In it, President Xi said China should "strive for obtaining an excellent peripheral environment for our country's development, bring even more benefits of our country's development to peripheral countries, and realize common development."¹¹ Beijing's emphasis on strengthening ties with neighboring countries has been ongoing since the first year of the Xi Administration, during which 12 of the 22 countries visited by President Xi and Premier Li Keqiang were China's close neighbors.¹²

China's focus on building positive relations with its neighbors has manifested in several new diplomatic initiatives, including the "Silk Road Economic Belt," the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road," and the "Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor."¹³ Notably, each of these three initiatives heavily emphasizes economic cooperation and integration. Although the initiatives are in their early stages, Beijing's enthusiasm and initial steps toward implementation indicate China's emphasis on peripheral diplomacy is not merely rhetorical.

Silk Road Economic Belt: During a trip to Kazakhstan in late 2013, President Xi proposed establishing a Silk Road Economic Belt from China through Central Asia to Europe for the purpose of enhancing regional economic and cultural integration (see Figure 1).¹⁴ Soon thereafter, representatives from 24 cities in China, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan signed an agreement to establish the Silk Road Economic Belt.¹⁵ According to President Xi, the Silk Road Economic Belt should seek to "build policy communication" in the region by having "full discussions on development strategies and policy response[s]"; "improve road connectivity" between the Pacific Ocean and the Baltic Sea; "promote unimpeded trade" by removing trade and investment barriers; "enhance monetary circulation" by settling trade in local currencies; and "increase understanding between our people" by encouraging people-to-people exchanges.¹⁶

China also likely intends for this new regional arrangement to facilitate access to Central Asian natural resources, particularly oil and natural gas,* and encourage economic development and stability in China's underdeveloped and restive Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.¹⁷ In addition, Beijing also likely seeks to emphasize to foreign observers its largely positive and peaceful relations with its western neighbors while diverting attention from its coercive actions against many of its East Asian maritime neighbors,

*China's quest for energy security is a primary driver of its engagement in Central Asia, a region rich in oil and natural gas. For a discussion of China's energy engagement with Central Asia, see House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, *Hearing on the Development of Energy Resources in Central Asia*, written testimony of Dennis Shea, May 21, 2014. http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Shea_Testimony_China%E2%80%99s%20Energy%20Engagement%20with%20Central%20Asia%20and%20Implications%20for%20the%20United%20States_0.pdf.

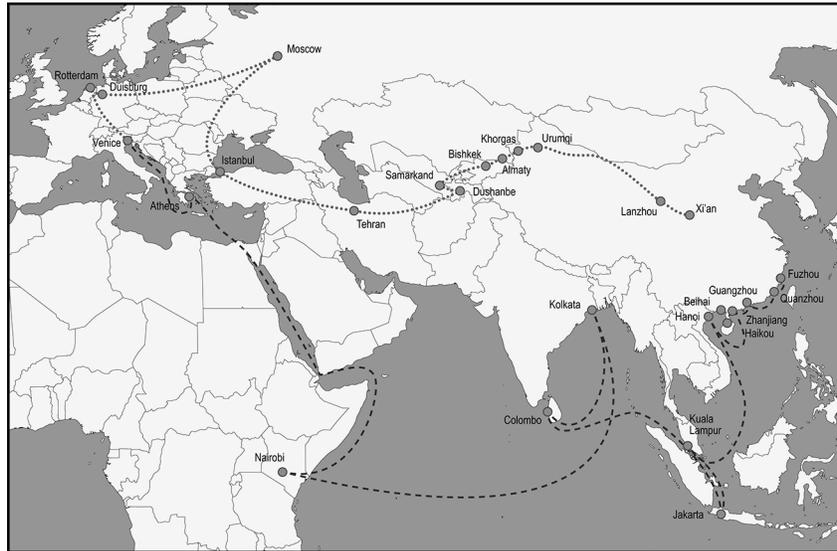
discussed below.¹⁸ Uncertainty about the impact U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan will have on the region may be another factor behind Beijing's efforts to bolster its presence in Central Asia. China in recent years has steadily increased economic, political, and security engagement with Afghanistan and has indicated it intends to play a stabilizing role in Afghanistan in the future.*

21st Century Maritime Silk Road: Soon after President Xi proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt, he introduced its corollary, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, a maritime thoroughfare running from China's coast through maritime Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean to Africa and the Mediterranean Sea (see Figure 1).¹⁹ Thus far, there is no agreement formalizing participation in the initiative. According to Chinese state-run media, a Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson stressed that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is an "open" initiative and that China welcomes "suggestions from other countries to perfect it."²⁰

Projects associated with the Maritime Silk Road will focus on maritime transport infrastructure.²¹ The arrangement also likely will serve as a symbolic banner under which China and other countries along the route can extol cooperative efforts in the political realm and by which China can reassure its maritime neighbors—many of which have territorial disputes with China—that it seeks to play a cooperative, rather than confrontational, role in Asia's maritime commons.²²

* China has demonstrated a growing interest in stability and security in Afghanistan. For example, in 2012, Zhou Yongkang—then China's top security official—visited Afghanistan, where he signed economic and security agreements, including one to send 300 Afghan police officers to China for training. Mr. Zhou had been the highest-ranking official to visit the country in 46 years. More recently, China established a diplomatic position of Special Envoy for Afghan Affairs, "so as to step up the communication with Afghanistan and all parties concerned and safeguard lasting peace, stability and development of Afghanistan and the region." In the near term, however, China is unlikely to take on a military role in Afghanistan like that of the United States. China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei's Remarks on the Foreign Ministry's Establishment of the Special Envoy for Afghan Affairs," July 18, 2014. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1175878.shtml; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2012 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2012, p. 320; and Michael Martina, "China Will Not Fill U.S. Void in Afghanistan: Official," Reuters, July 21, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/21/us-china-afghanistan-idUSKBN0FQ12I20140721>.

Figure 1: China's Proposed "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road"



This map, adapted from one featured on the website of Chinese official media outlet Xinhua, traces China's proposed "Silk Road Economic Belt" (the northern section of the loop), and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" (the southern section of the loop). Locations are not exact. For the original map, see Xinhua (English edition), "New Silk Road, New Dreams." <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/newsilkway/index.htm>.

Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor: According to officials from participating countries, the BCIM Economic Corridor is meant to "advance multi-modal connectivity, harness the economic complementarities, promote investment and trade and facilitate people-to-people contacts."²³ Like the Silk Road Economic Belt, BCIM aims to bring economic development, mostly in the form of transport infrastructure, to rural regions in each of the participating countries.²⁴ Beijing and New Delhi in particular probably will seek to use BCIM as a way to cooperate and build trust to attempt to defuse simmering bilateral political and security tensions.

China Establishes Development Bank with Other BRICS Countries

To complement and reinforce its efforts to increase its influence in peripheral regions, China also is strengthening its global presence by contributing to the New Development Bank, which was established in July 2014 by BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The bank, meant to fund "infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging and developing countries,"²⁵ is headquartered in Shanghai and has an initial subscribed capital of \$50 billion, which later will be increased to \$100 billion.²⁶ (By comparison, the World Bank has \$232 billion in capital.)²⁷ China, having provided 41 percent of the initial \$50 billion in capital for the bank, likely will enjoy a higher degree of control over how money is spent than the other BRICS

countries. Several observers welcomed the creation of the New Development Bank and heralded its potential to fill infrastructure gaps in low- and middle-income countries. Others, however, have questioned the credibility of the institution (and the countries it represents) as a globally responsible leader.²⁸ For example, China's lending practices sometimes attract criticism for undermining good governance and environmental sustainability in recipient countries.²⁹

China's New Foreign Aid White Paper

When Foreign Minister Wang extolled China's "active" foreign policy in early 2014, he noted that one of its central characteristics was "playing the role of a responsible, big country."³⁰ One manifestation of China's efforts to play this role is its foreign aid programs. Although China has had such programs for decades, it appears to have made foreign aid a higher priority since 2011, when it released its first foreign aid white paper.* The white paper, China's most authoritative publication on the subject, noted China's total foreign aid through 2009 reached around \$40 billion and had increased by almost 30 percent year-on-year between 2004 and 2009.³¹ China's second foreign aid white paper, which was released in July 2014 and covers the years 2010 through 2012, during which China appropriated about \$14.4 billion in aid,† notes "China will continue to increase the input in foreign assistance" in the future. The paper does not, however, provide any details on China's future foreign aid budget.³²

The 2014 white paper identifies two objectives for Chinese foreign aid: improving people's livelihood (primarily through projects in the areas of agriculture, education, and public welfare) and promoting economic and social development (primarily through infrastructure development). Infrastructure development accounted for almost half (45 percent) of China's allocated foreign aid from 2010 to 2012.³³

China's foreign aid has been and will continue to be an important foreign policy instrument for Beijing. China's "no strings attached" giving, along with its emphasis on solidarity among developing countries, South-South cooperation,‡ and "win-win" relationships, appeals to recipient governments that often resent the conditionality typical of foreign aid from Western countries and lending institutions. China's particular brand of foreign aid bolsters its reputation among governments in the developing world, particularly in Africa, which received 52 percent of Chinese aid from 2010 to 2012.³⁴ Beijing almost certainly will continue to use foreign aid and

*The Chinese government has released dozens of white papers over the years on a variety of economic, foreign policy, political, military, and social issues. These papers serve both informational and propaganda purposes.

†Official Chinese statistics generally blur the distinction between development finance and aid, often referring to them both as "aid." Yun Sun, *China's Aid to Africa: Monster or Messiah?* (The Brookings Institution, February 2014). <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/02/07-china-aid-to-africa-sun>.

‡China's foreign policy in recent years has increasingly emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation, which the United Nations defines as "a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, subregional or interregional basis." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, "What Is South-South Cooperation?" http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/about/what_is_ssc.html.

other means to cultivate the perception that China is a friend to the developing world.³⁵

Though recipient governments have warmly welcomed China's foreign aid, human rights groups and local populations in recipient countries have been critical.³⁶ China has gained a reputation for using Chinese companies and workers for its foreign aid projects instead of empowering local businesses and people, and for not respecting labor, safety, or environmental regulations in the course of its foreign aid projects.³⁷ Whether the Chinese government is willing and able to improve upon this model will shed light on China's progress toward becoming a truly "responsible" global leader.

China's effort to project an image of itself "playing the role of a responsible, big country" is at odds with its increased aggressiveness toward its neighbors and willingness to flout international laws and norms. Further, its commitment to "playing the role of a responsible, big country" only seems to be a salient feature of China's foreign policy when "being responsible" is in Beijing's own narrow national interests.³⁸ Indeed, China's foreign policy rebranding obscures the fact that one of China's fundamental foreign policy objectives—to preserve China's economic growth and the continuity of CCP rule—has not changed. Foreign Minister Wang suggested as much when he said the primary purpose of China's foreign policy is to "serv[e] the efforts of comprehensively deepening reform in China," "creat[e] a more enabling external environment for domestic reform and development," and "creat[e] more favorable conditions for the transformation and upgrading of China's economy."³⁹

In the near term, China's foreign policy almost certainly will feature more robust external engagement, particularly with its neighbors in Asia. However, Beijing is unlikely to fundamentally reorient its external relations to take on greater responsibility for regional and global challenges. Instead, Beijing will continue to marshal its diplomatic capabilities to advance China's own interests, sometimes at the expense of other countries. Nowhere in China's external relations is this clearer than in China's management of its territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas.

Key Developments in China's Maritime Territorial Disputes in 2014

Since the Commission published its 2013 Annual Report, China has increasingly used coercion to consolidate control over its territorial claims in the South and East China Seas.* Although China's actions are consistent with a pattern of assertiveness in its maritime disputes since approximately 2009, Beijing until late 2013 often justified this assertiveness by claiming it was merely responding to rival claimants' efforts to secure territorial gains in disputed waters. For example, China defended its sharply increased air and maritime presence near the East China Sea's Senkaku Is-

* For the Commission's assessment of the economic implications of China's maritime disputes, see Chapter 1, Section 1, "Year in Review: Economics and Trade." For past Commission assessments of China's objectives, strategies, and behavior related to its territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas, see U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2013 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2013, pp. 266–294; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2012 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2012, pp. 215–242; and U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2011 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2011, pp. 166–172.

lands in 2012, claiming it was in response to Japan nationalizing the islands. Similarly, when the Philippines deployed a naval ship to the South China Sea in response to illegal Chinese fishing activities at Scarborough Reef in 2012, China responded opportunistically by establishing a near-constant maritime presence in and around the Reef. After the Philippine ships exited the Reef as part of a U.S.-mediated deal for both countries to simultaneously leave the area and reduce tensions, China apparently reneged on the agreement, keeping its ships at the Reef.⁴⁰ Since then, China has effectively controlled access to the Reef.⁴¹

Since late 2013, however, China has been more willing to advance its sovereignty claims without using a perceived provocation by a rival claimant to justify its actions. Ely Ratner, senior fellow and deputy director of the Asia Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, explained:

Although China began acting more assertively after perceiving its ascension to great power status in the wake of the global financial crisis, Beijing still felt compelled to justify its muscular movements in Asia as necessary reactions to the provocations of “troublemakers” in the region. Sure, China was standing strong, but arguably in response to the adventurism of others. It was more retaliatory than overtly belligerent.

As Beijing made a habit of tempering and justifying its behavior, leading Western analysts developed terms like “reactive assertiveness” and described Chinese revisionism as “cautious and considered.” ... [Since late 2013] however, China’s efforts to alter Asia’s geography have become unequivocally self-initiated. ... China is changing the status quo in Asia because it wants to and thinks it can. Xi Jinping is a confident and powerful leader with a high-priority to-do list, and he’s increasingly enabled with greater capabilities and the institutions to deploy them. Mix in an economic slowdown and a healthy dose of nationalism and you have a recipe for revisionism.⁴²

The three most significant manifestations of this new, even more assertive turn are China’s establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea in November 2013; its relocation of an oil rig to waters disputed by Vietnam in the South China Sea in May 2014; and its ongoing attempts to prevent the Philippines from resupplying its military outpost at Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea.

China Establishes an ADIZ in the East China Sea: China’s Ministry of Defense in November 2013 declared an ADIZ over a portion of the East China Sea. The new East China Sea ADIZ is the boldest of China’s recent attempts to demonstrate control, sovereignty, and administration of disputed areas in the East China Sea. Beijing claims the ADIZ, which includes airspace over areas claimed by Japan and South Korea, is necessary to “[protect] state sovereignty and territorial and airspace security” in the East China Sea.⁴³

Putting China's ADIZ in Context

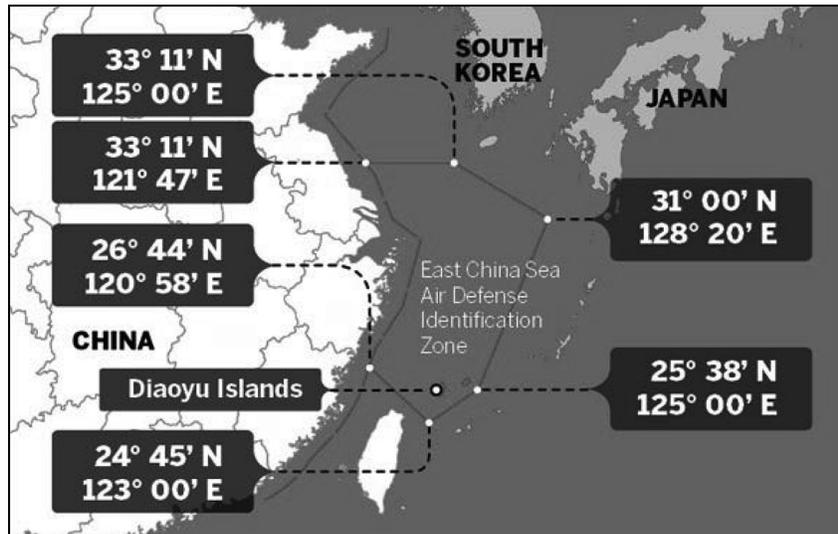
An ADIZ is a publicly-declared area established in international airspace adjacent to a state's national airspace in which civil aircraft must be prepared to submit to local air traffic control and provide aircraft identifiers and location. Its purpose is to allow a state the time and space to identify the nature of approaching aircraft prior to entering national airspace in order to prepare defensive measures if necessary.⁴⁴ The United States established the first ADIZ during the Cold War, and today several countries maintain ADIZs for security reasons.⁴⁵

ADIZs are not prohibited or otherwise explicitly addressed in international law.⁴⁶ This allows states significant flexibility in defining their own ADIZs. For example, unlike most (but not all) countries with ADIZs, China has stated it will apply its ADIZ regulations not only to aircraft intending to enter its sovereign airspace but also to foreign aircraft transiting or operating in the ADIZ that do not intend to enter its sovereign airspace.* The U.S. government opposes this expansive interpretation of the rights of a country to regulate activity in an ADIZ.⁴⁷

Because ADIZs have no explicit basis in international law, states are not legally obligated to comply with other countries' ADIZ requirements.⁴⁸ However, "states tend to recognize them because doing so can enhance security and safety by providing clear rules and areas for the operation and possible interception of aircraft near territorial airspace," according to Michael D. Swaine, senior associate at the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.⁴⁹

*According to Mark Stokes, executive director of the Project 2049 Institute, China's Air Force Shanghai Base likely will be the principal implementing body for the ADIZ, with the PLA Air Force Third Radar Brigade and the PLA Navy Second Radar Brigade providing ground-based radar surveillance in the northern and southern sections of the ADIZ, respectively. Mark Stokes, "China's ADIZ System: Goals and Challenges," *Thinking Taiwan*, April 24, 2014. <http://thinking-taiwan.com/chinas-adiz/>.

Figure 2: China's ADIZ in the East China Sea



Source: Xinhua (English edition), "Statement by the Government of the People's Republic of China on Establishing an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone," November 23, 2013. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-11/23/c_132911635.htm.

The United States, Japan,* South Korea, Australia, the European Union, and others criticized China's newly established ADIZ.†⁵⁰ According to Evan Medeiros, senior director for Asian Affairs at the U.S. National Security Council, "We [the United States] do not accept, we do not acknowledge, we do not recognize China's declared ADIZ."⁵¹ Nevertheless, in response to a question about China's ADIZ during a November 2013 press conference, the U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesperson said, "The U.S. government generally expects that U.S. carriers operating internationally will operate consistent with NOTAMs (Notices to Airmen) issued by foreign countries. Our expectation of operations by U.S. carriers consistent with NOTAMs does not indicate U.S. government acceptance of China's requirements for operating in the newly declared ADIZ."⁵²

Beijing likely perceived several potential advantages to establishing an ADIZ:

*The United States and Japan submitted a letter to the United Nations' civil aviation regulator, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), requesting a review of whether China's ADIZ conforms to ICAO regulations on the safe passage of civilian aircraft. ICAO is expected to consider the letter but it is unclear whether it will respond. NHK Online (English edition), "Japan Asks UN Aviation Body about China's Air Zone," March 11, 2014. Open Source Center transcription. ID: JPR2014031130022028.

†The U.S. Senate also affirmed its opposition to the ADIZ in July 2014 when it passed a bipartisan resolution condemning "coercive and threatening actions or the use of force to impede freedom of operations in international airspace by military or civilian aircraft, to alter the status quo or to destabilize the Asia-Pacific region." Reaffirming the Strong Support of the United States Government for Freedom of Navigation and other Internationally Lawful Uses of Sea and Airspace in the Asia-Pacific Region, and for the Peaceful Diplomatic Resolution of Outstanding Territorial and Maritime Claims and Disputes, S. Resolution 412, 113th Cong., 2nd Sess., July 10, 2014.

- Establishing an ADIZ is a relatively low-cost, low-risk way to bolster China's territorial claim. An ADIZ requires relatively little financial investment, can be established unilaterally, is loosely defined and not explicitly addressed in international law, and provides China the opportunity to augment its growing collection of maps and legal documents that attempt to justify its maritime territorial claims.⁵³
- Establishing an ADIZ puts the onus on foreign countries and foreign aircraft operating in international airspace to decide whether to recognize and comply with China's ADIZ requirement and creates a situation in which foreign aircraft (especially passenger aircraft) are motivated to comply in an effort to mitigate safety risks. As noted above, even the United States, which does not recognize China's ADIZ, for safety reasons has indirectly advised U.S. commercial airlines to comply with it.*
- Beijing likely judges its ADIZ helps China achieve parity with Japan and to a lesser extent South Korea. Both Japan and South Korea have decades-old ADIZs in disputed airspace in the East China Sea and view entry by foreign military aircraft in their respective zones as triggering mechanisms for military responses.⁵⁴ Beijing almost certainly perceived this as advantageous for Japan and South Korea, and sought to "level the playing field" by establishing its own ADIZ.
- China likely views its ADIZ as a public relations tool. By publicizing data on "intrusions" into its ADIZ, China can paint itself as a victim rather than an aggressor.⁵⁵ Conversely, for every aircraft that complies with China's ADIZ requirements, China probably judges its body of evidence justifying its administration of airspace in the ADIZ grows.†

Since establishing its ADIZ, China appears to have dramatically increased its military and government air presence near disputed areas of the East China Sea. According to the Chinese Ministry of Defense website, China "controlled the flight activity of 800 foreign

*Japan does not recognize China's ADIZ, and the Japanese government in November 2013 requested that Japanese airlines refrain from submitting flight plans to Chinese authorities when operating in China's ADIZ. However, remarks by Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in a December 2013 press conference suggest this request was somewhat flexible. He said, "Japan's commercial airplanes take necessary measures which facilitate the easy identification of the number of flights, location information, etc. These airplanes are equipped with two-way radio telephone apparatus, automatic answering equipment among other devices, which enables communication at any time." Tim Kelly, "Japanese Airlines to Stop Giving China Flight Plans through New Zone," Reuters, November 26, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/26/us-japan-airlines-china-idUSBRE9AP0US20131126>; Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Press Conference by Minister of Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida," December 13, 2013. http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000030.html.

† This approach has worked for Japan, a country that regularly documents noncompliant aircraft intrusions into its own ADIZ. According to Eric Heginbotham, a political scientist at the RAND Corporation, "Japan has used its ADIZ . . . as an effective public relations and diplomatic tool vis-à-vis China. The Japanese Ministry of Defense publishes detailed statistics on scrambles to intercept aircraft within its ADIZ, together with details of some of those events (such as aircraft tracks and photographs). In recent years, the Japanese Ministry of Defense has highlighted a steadily increasing number of intercept missions against Chinese aircraft in Japan's ADIZ." Eric Heginbotham, "The Foreign Policy Essay: China's ADIZ in the East China Sea," *Lawfare* (Blog), August 24, 2014. <http://www.lawfareblog.com/2014/08/the-foreign-policy-essay-chinas-adiz-in-the-east-china-sea/>.

war planes”* in the ADIZ in the month after the ADIZ was established, and sent surveillance, early warning, and fighter aircraft on 87 flights to patrol the ADIZ.⁵⁶ Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) fighter jet scrambles against Chinese patrols in Japan’s own ADIZ—an imperfect but useful indicator of China’s growing air presence above contested waters in the absence of reliable Chinese statistics—markedly increased after China established its ADIZ. JASDF fighter jets scrambled against China’s aircraft 138 times between October and December 2013, the highest ever number of scrambles against China and 58 more times than in the quarter preceding the establishment of the ADIZ.⁵⁷ Chinese air incursions around Japan in the six months between October 2013 and March 2014 increased 78 percent over the previous six-month period.⁵⁸

China’s ADIZ is problematic in several ways. First, the ADIZ announcement exacerbated the strained bilateral relationship between Japan and China during a period of heightened tension over the East China Sea. Second, China appears to have announced the ADIZ without prior consultation or coordination with other countries.⁵⁹ According to U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, this “adds to tensions, misunderstandings, and could eventually [lead to] dangerous conflict.”⁶⁰ Third, China’s expansive interpretation of a state’s right to establish and enforce an ADIZ (described above) and its willingness to establish an ADIZ above contested maritime territory demonstrate China’s inclination to contravene international norms intended to cultivate a safe environment for international flight in order to advance its own narrow interests. (This also raises questions about whether international aviation law is sufficiently developed to address sovereignty and other political disputes between countries.) Fourth, the Chinese government has not made clear how it would employ what it refers to as “defensive emergency measures” in its ADIZ.⁶¹ This lack of clarity over rules of engagement combined with existing geopolitical frictions elevates the risk of operational miscalculation or accidents among civilian and military aircraft, including those of the United States.

Two close encounters between the PLA Air Force and the Japan Self-Defense Force in China’s ADIZ in 2014 illustrate this last point. The first incident, which occurred in May, involved Chinese SU-27 fighter jets that flew within 170 feet of a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) OP-3C surveillance plane and within 100 feet of a JASDF YS-11EB electronic intelligence aircraft.⁶² A second incident occurred in June, when Chinese SU-27 fighter aircraft again flew within 100 feet of a JASDF YS-11EB and within 150 feet of a JMSDF OP-3C.⁶³

Beijing’s November 2013 announcement that it plans to establish additional ADIZs “at an appropriate time after completing preparations” led some observers to speculate China will declare an ADIZ in the South China Sea, where China has maritime disputes with Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Taiwan.⁶⁴ This

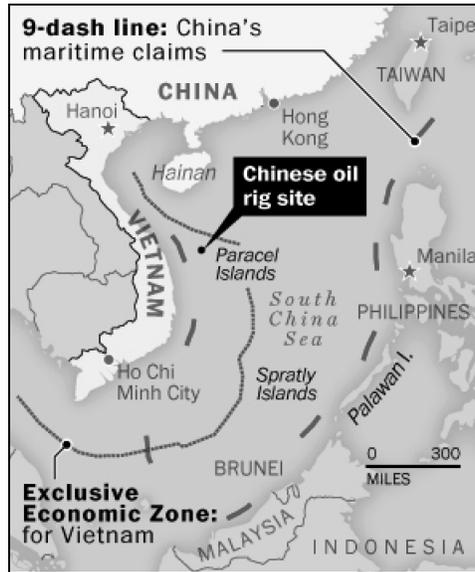
*The Chinese Ministry of Defense does not clarify what it means by “controlled,” but the term likely refers to monitoring and identification activities. Michael D. Swaine, “Chinese Views and Commentary on the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ECS ADIZ),” *China Leadership Monitor* 43 (March 2014): 22. <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CLM43MSCarnegie013114.pdf>.

likely would yield fewer risks than in the East China Sea due to the smaller number of aircraft operating in the South China Sea. However, it would escalate tensions among the claimants and violate the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, a 2002 document in which China and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) declare they will “exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability.”⁶⁵ According to Dr. Medeiros, such a move would be viewed “as a provocative and destabilizing development that would result in changes in [the United States’] presence and military posture in the region.”⁶⁶

China Tows an Oil Rig into Disputed Waters near Vietnam: Between May and July 2014, Chinese state-owned oil company China National Petroleum Corporation towed China’s only ultradeepwater oil rig *Haiyang Shiyou 981* to locations 130–150 nautical miles (nm) off the coast of Vietnam into waters disputed by the two countries.^{* 67} This marked the first time China has deployed an oil rig to another country’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) † without obtaining permission.⁶⁸ According to the government of Vietnam, over 100 escort vessels, including military ships, accompanied the rig. In the weeks after the rig was deployed, both China and Vietnam accused the other of harassing its vessels in the waters surrounding the rig, with Vietnam claiming China Coast Guard vessels rammed and fired water cannons at Vietnamese law enforcement vessels, injuring dozens of Vietnamese officers and sinking one Vietnamese fishing boat.⁶⁹ China subsequently sent three smaller rigs to the South China Sea, at least one of which also appears to have been towed into waters contested by Vietnam.⁷⁰

*Although China National Petroleum Corporation was operating the rig while it was stationed near Vietnam, the rig is owned by another Chinese state-owned oil company, China National Offshore Oil Corporation.

†According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a coastal state is entitled to an EEZ, a 200-nautical-mile zone extending from the coastline of its mainland and from the coastline of any territorial land features. Within this zone, the state enjoys “sovereign rights” for economic exploitation, (such as for oil and natural gas exploration and exploitation) but not full sovereignty. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, “Article 56: Rights, Jurisdiction, and Duties of the Coastal State in the Exclusive Economic Zone.” http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part5.htm; United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, “Article 121: Regime of Islands.” http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part8.htm.

Figure 3: Location of China's Oil Rig in Vietnam's EEZ

Source: Adam Taylor, "The \$1 Billion Chinese Oil Rig that Has Vietnam in Flames," *Washington Post*, May 14, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/05/14/the-1-billion-chinese-oil-rig-that-has-vietnam-in-flames/>.

Vietnam stated China's behavior "seriously infringed Vietnam's sovereignty . . . and went against the spirit and wording of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the [South China Sea] and related regulations in international law."⁷¹ Thousands of Vietnamese citizens responded by looting and setting fire to factories and businesses thought to be Chinese-owned in cities across Vietnam, resulting in several casualties.*⁷² The U.S. Department of State noted that "China's decision . . . is provocative and raises tensions. This unilateral action appears to be part of a broader pattern of Chinese behavior to advance its claims over disputed territory in a manner that undermines peace and stability in the region."⁷³ Others, including several foreign ministers from ASEAN countries, issued statements explicitly or implicitly condemning China's actions.⁷⁴

After drawing ire from Vietnam and the international community for two months, China unexpectedly announced *Haiyang Shiyou 981* had concluded its activities one month ahead of schedule after successfully finding oil and gas reserves and would relocate to waters approximately 68 nm from China's island province, Hainan.⁷⁵ China may have decided to remove the rig from disputed waters early in an effort to minimize criticism of China at the approaching August ASEAN Regional Forum.⁷⁶

* Reports on the number of casualties range from four to 21. Gregory B. Poling, *Recent Trends in the South China Sea and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2014), p. 5. http://csis.org/files/publication/140728_Poling_TrendsSouthChinaSea_Web.pdf; Kate Hodal and Jonathan Kaiman, "At Least 21 Dead in Vietnam Anti-China Protests over Oil Rig," *Guardian*, May 15, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/15/vietnam-anti-china-protests-oil-rig-dead-injured>.

China's decision to deploy the rig to disputed waters demonstrates the Chinese government's willingness and ability to use state-owned oil companies to achieve political and national security objectives. In fact, *Haiyang Shiyou 981's* political and strategic purposes were foretold at its 2012 unveiling, when it was referred to by officials as "mobile national territory" and a "strategic instrument."⁷⁷

China Challenges the Philippines' Control over Second Thomas Shoal: China in March 2014 sought for the first time to block access by the Philippines to its military outpost on Second Thomas Shoal, a contested land feature in the South China Sea located approximately 120 nm from the Philippine coast and more than 800 nm from the Chinese coast.⁷⁸

In what the Philippines government called "a clear and urgent threat to the rights and interests of the Philippines," China Coast Guard ships prevented Philippine civilian supply ships from replenishing Philippine marines aboard the *Sierra Madre*, a warship the Philippines intentionally grounded in 1990 on Second Thomas Shoal.⁷⁹ After being blocked by the China Coast Guard ships, the Philippines was forced to airlift supplies to its outpost.⁸⁰ Three weeks later, Chinese ships again sought to block a resupply mission to the *Sierra Madre* by sailing close to the Philippine resupply ship and blocking its path. The supply ship eventually completed the mission by sailing through waters too shallow for the Chinese ships to enter.⁸¹ Since then, the Philippine Navy has regularly air-dropped supplies to the *Sierra Madre* via parachute.⁸² It is not clear whether additional attempts have been made to resupply the ship by boat. In addition to blocking access to the *Sierra Madre*, Chinese vessels also reportedly blocked or chased away Filipino fishermen from waters near Second Thomas Shoal at least eight times between December 2013 and March 2014,⁸³ and marines aboard the *Sierra Madre* observed what appeared to be three Chinese unmanned aerial vehicles hovering above the Shoal in July and August.⁸⁴

China's efforts to deny the Philippines access to the grounded vessel represent a new step in a now-familiar Chinese strategy to use Coast Guard and other nonmilitary vessels to establish a regular or constant presence in contested waters, intimidate other claimants, and gradually change the status quo. The PLA Navy backs up these operations from a distance, typically deploying destroyers and frigates 60 to 100 nm from China Coast Guard and other non-military ships.⁸⁵ Policy makers in Beijing probably were emboldened by China's success in effectively wresting control of Scarborough Reef from the Philippines in 2012 and seek to achieve a similar outcome at Second Thomas Shoal. China likely will persist in its activities near the Shoal with the objective of increasingly imposing costs on the Philippines' continued efforts to sustain the *Sierra Madre* and maintain control over the Shoal.

The presence of a Philippine Navy ship (albeit a grounded one) and Philippine Marines stationed at Second Thomas Shoal raises the stakes for both countries, as well as the United States. Should Chinese vessels seek to use force against the *Sierra Madre* and the marines stationed there, the United States could decide to inter-

vene on the behalf of the Philippines, with which it shares a mutual defense treaty. This treaty provides, among other things, that:

*Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes. . . . [A]n armed attack on either of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific.*⁸⁶*

The treaty’s application to “armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the Pacific” is clearly relevant to the ongoing situation at Second Thomas Shoal. However, the treaty’s language is purposefully vague in its prescription for a response to “an armed attack.” For example, should Chinese government or military vessels attack the *Sierra Madre*, the United States could respond in any number of ways—diplomatic, military, or otherwise—to meet its treaty commitment of “act[ing] to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes.”⁸⁷

In addition to these particularly strident new demonstrations of assertiveness, China continued to gradually assert control and grow its physical presence in disputed waters in 2014 in the following ways:

- *China Ramps Up Land Reclamation in the South China Sea:* China in 2014 made significant progress on various land reclamation projects on Johnson South Reef, Johnson North Reef, Cuateron Reef, Gaven Reef, and Fiery Cross Reef, all of which are Chinese-controlled outposts in the disputed Spratly Islands (see Figure 4, below). In addition to dredging sand to make islands where there previously were none (see Figure 5, below), China appears to be expanding and upgrading military and civilian infrastructure—including radars, satellite communication equipment, antiaircraft and naval guns, helipads, and docks—on some of the islands.⁸⁸

*President Obama reaffirmed the mutual defense treaty during an April 2014 visit to the Philippines, saying, “For more than 60 years, the United States and the Philippines have been bound by a mutual defense treaty. And this treaty means that our two nations pledge . . . our ‘common determination to defend themselves against external armed attacks, so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone.’ . . . In other words, our commitment to the Philippines is ironclad and the United States will keep that commitment, because allies never stand alone.” Jim Garamore, “From Bataan to Typhoon, Obama Praises U.S.-Philippine Alliance,” American Forces Press Service, April 29, 2014. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122141>.

Figure 4: China's Major Land Reclamation Projects in the South China Sea

Locations are not exact. Map adapted from James Hardy et al., "China Goes All Out with Major Island Building Project in Spratlys," *IHS Jane's 360*, June 20, 2014. <http://www.janes.com/article/39716/china-goes-all-out-with-major-island-building-project-in-spratlys>.

These land reclamation projects appear intended to bolster the legal standing of China's South China Sea claims ahead of an International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea ruling requested by the Philippines.⁸⁹ The Philippines has asked the tribunal to declare whether certain land features in the South China Sea are islands (which can generate full EEZs) or smaller land features (which can only generate territorial seas out to 12 nm).^{*} China may perceive that if it can demonstrate that the remote South China Sea outposts it occupies are true islands, rather than mere rocks or reefs, it will strengthen the legal and practical justification for its vast territorial claims (see Figure 5, below).[†]

^{*} According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, "an island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide" and which may generate an EEZ. However, "rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own" cannot generate territory beyond territorial seas out to 12 nm. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, "Part 8: Regime of Islands." <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention/agreements/texts/unclo/clos/indx.htm>.

[†] According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, artificial islands are not considered true islands, and thus cannot generate their own territorial seas or EEZs. United

Moreover, these infrastructure improvements are enhancing China's ability to sustain its naval and maritime law enforcement presence in the South China Sea. This is particularly the case at Fiery Cross Reef, where a five-square mile project has been under construction intermittently since 1988. According to IHS Jane's, Chinese facilities there serve as "base" for conducting land reclamation projects elsewhere in the Spratly Islands and host communications equipment, a greenhouse, a wharf, a helipad, and coastal artillery.⁹⁰ Andrew S. Erickson, associate professor at the U.S. Naval War College, and Austin M. Strange, PhD student at Harvard University, suggest Fiery Cross Reef could eventually sustain a PLA Navy command and control center twice the size of Diego Garcia, a U.S. naval base in the Indian Ocean.⁹¹

China also appears to be constructing an airstrip at Johnson South Reef. The Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs in May 2014 released a series of photographs demonstrating the progress of Chinese land reclamation activities there (see Figure 5, below).

Although Vietnam, the Philippines, the United States, and other countries have criticized China's land reclamation projects, a Chinese Ministry of Defense spokesperson defended them, saying, "China's activities on relevant islands and reefs of the [Spratly] Islands fall entirely within China's sovereignty and are totally justifiable."⁹²

Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, "Part 5: Exclusive Economic Zone." http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part5.htm.

Figure 5: China's Land Reclamation Activities at Johnson South Reef, March 2012–March 2014



Photographs of China's land reclamation activities on Johnson South Reef, from top to bottom, taken in March 2012, February 2013, February 2014, and March 2014. Image adapted from Pia Lee-Brago, "Photos Reveal Stages of China Reclamation at Reef," *Philippine Star*, May 16, 2014. <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2014/05/16/1323659/photos-reveal-stages-china-reclamation-reef>.

- *China Asserts Greater Control over Fishing Activities in the South China Sea:* In January 2014, the government of China's island province, Hainan, enacted new measures requiring all foreign ships to obtain approval from the Chinese government before entering "maritime areas" within the 770,000 square nm of Hainan's claimed jurisdiction.⁹³ In March, the Party Secretary for Hainan Province commented that Chinese authorities enforce the regulations "if not every day then at least once a week," noting that "the majority [of perceived incursions by foreign fishing vessels in China's claimed waters] are dealt with by negotiating and persuasion."⁹⁴ China does not regularly publicize arrests of foreign fishermen, but media reports

suggest Chinese authorities frequently arrest or otherwise harass foreign fishermen operating in Hainan's claimed waters.⁹⁵ It is unclear whether the new regulations have led to an increase from previous years in arrests of foreign fishermen in Hainan's claimed waters.

Although the new measures do not appear to set forth new policy, subtle linguistic differences from previous iterations of the regulations suggest Hainan is taking a more pronounced stance regarding perceived foreign infringements on China's "maritime rights and interests."⁹⁶ Whether Hainan's new regulations are the result of directives from the central government is unclear, but given the regulations' politically sensitive nature and implications for China's relationships with its neighbors, Beijing likely had a role in shaping the new measures.

Figure 6: Hainan Province's Claimed Maritime Jurisdiction



The shaded areas of the map represent Hainan Province's claimed maritime jurisdiction. Locations are not exact. Map adapted from Open Source Center, "China: Hainan Province Requires Foreign Fishing Vessels to Gain Permission before Entering Waters," December 20, 2013. ID: CHO2013122036238672.

- *China Continues Air and Sea Patrols around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea:* China continues to strengthen its military and law enforcement presence near the Senkaku Is-

lands with increased patrols by PLA Navy surface ships and PLA Air Force fighters in the East China Sea, the continuation (albeit at a lower rate than in 2013) of patrols by China's maritime law enforcement ships in disputed areas,⁹⁷ and the beginning of long-range air strike training in the East China Sea in late 2013.⁹⁸ China uses these highly visible operations to assert its territorial claims, deter Japan from challenging its claims, provide the PLA and maritime law enforcement agencies with valuable operational experience in the East China Sea, and hone China's military options in the event its strategy to consolidate its East China Sea claims through coercion fails.

Developments in Cross-Strait Relations

Relations between China and Taiwan remained stable in 2014 as the two sides tried to sustain progress on economic and other cooperation agreements. Despite the cross-Strait rapprochement, China's military modernization continues to focus on improving its capabilities for Taiwan conflict scenarios that include U.S. intervention.⁹⁹ This modernization program is designed to hedge against a failure of China's cross-Strait diplomatic strategy; deter Taiwan from taking steps toward *de jure* independence; signal to the United States that China is willing to use force against Taiwan if necessary; and enhance China's ability to deter, delay, or deny any U.S. intervention in a cross-Strait conflict. Meanwhile, Taiwan continues to struggle to maintain a credible deterrent capability.¹⁰⁰ For a thorough discussion of economic, political, diplomatic, and military developments in the cross-Strait and U.S.-Taiwan relationships, see Chapter 3, Section 3, "Taiwan."

PLA Exercises and Training

PLA exercises accomplish multiple objectives, which include training in core warfighting competencies, integrating new weapon systems and tactics, developing and refining integrated joint operations command structures and concepts, evaluating crew and platform proficiencies, and demonstrating to other countries that China can project power in Asia and beyond. From late 2013 to 2014, high-profile exercises and patrols included the following:

Mission Action 2013

From September to October 2013, China conducted a major exercise known as Mission Action 2013, which involved about 50,000 troops from China's ground, naval, and air forces as well as extensive civilian assets. The exercise is the latest in the Mission Action series, which began in 2010 and is designed to demonstrate and test the PLA's ability to mobilize large numbers of troops across large distances for power projection in a high-intensity, long-duration campaign.¹⁰¹

Based on the types of activities conducted, official Chinese media reporting, and the PLA units involved, Mission Action 2013 likely simulated a Taiwan invasion scenario. The exercise had three phases: the first and third phases concluded with multi-service amphibious landing operations and the second phase culminated in a long-range air assault. Mission Action 2013 was led by elements

from the Nanjing and Guangzhou military regions, which would be heavily involved in any potential military course of action against Taiwan, and the PLA Air Force. The exercise attests to more robust preparations for potential wartime contingencies.¹⁰²

Highlights of the exercise include the following: the use of advanced information systems, such as the “Information Command Platform,” to provide a near-real-time picture of battlefield conditions and allow commanders to issue orders rapidly to multiple units at the same time while on the move; long-range maneuvers by troops via road, rail, military and civilian air, and navy and ground force ships; two joint amphibious landing drills that were supported by civilian transport ships; and a joint long-range air assault drill with almost 100 aircraft.¹⁰³

Maneuver-5 Exercise

From October 18 to November 1, 2013, the PLA Navy held a sophisticated, large-scale training exercise that spanned China’s near seas and distant seas.* The PLA Navy’s largest blue water exercise to date, it marked the first time the PLA Navy has conducted coordinated combat drills in the Western Pacific with elements from all three of its fleets: the North Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet, and South Sea Fleet.[†]¹⁰⁴

Operational highlights of the exercise include the following:

- *Interoperability between Fleets:* Maneuver-5 demonstrated the PLA Navy’s increasing ability to coordinate air, sea, and underwater elements from all three PLA Navy fleets.¹⁰⁵ During the exercise, the PLA Navy used China’s regional satellite navigation system, Beidou-2, to facilitate communication and provide guidance and tracking data to participating units.¹⁰⁶ In one instance, a shipboard helicopter provided over-the-horizon targeting information to a destroyer to enable simulated long-range strikes against a target ship.¹⁰⁷
- *Readiness in Realistic Combat Conditions:* Throughout the deployment, the PLA Navy used “ad hoc” scenarios to train shipboard commanders to react to events as they occurred. These scenarios were designed to enhance tactical commanders’ flexibility and responsiveness to changing conditions at sea.¹⁰⁸ PLA Navy Commander Admiral Wu Shengli said the exercise was designed to “[be] combat-realistic to the maximum extent, set combat-realistic scenarios to the maximum extent, [and test] the maximum performance effects of weaponry and equipment.”¹⁰⁹ Traditionally, PLA Navy tactical commanders during exercises have relied on a predetermined exercise script, strict rules of engagement, or explicit orders from higher echelons to guide their actions.¹¹⁰

* China typically defines its “near seas” as waters within the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea. China typically describes its “distant seas” as waters outside of its near seas.

† The PLA Navy’s three fleets are its principal operational and administrative command entities. The North Sea Fleet, headquartered in Qingdao, is responsible for the Yellow Sea and the Bohai. The East Sea Fleet, headquartered in Ningbo, is responsible for the East China Sea, including the Taiwan Strait. The South Sea Fleet, headquartered in Zhanjiang, is responsible for the South China Sea, including the contested Spratly and Paracel Islands.

- *Ability to Operate in Distant Seas and “Break Through” the First Island Chain:* The Maneuver-5 exercise was the eighth PLA Navy long-distance surface deployment of 2013 and showcased the PLA Navy’s growing ability to operate in distant seas.¹¹¹ Chinese media claimed the Maneuver-5 exercise marked “the first time the three PLA [Navy] fleets simultaneously [passed] through the first island chain* to carry out a joint exercise in the Western Pacific.”¹¹² PLA Senior Colonel Du Wenlong said, “The [PLA Navy] has cut up the whole island chain into multiple sections so that the so-called island chains are no longer existent.”¹¹³ Beijing almost certainly views its familiarity with and ability to operate in the Western Pacific as key to interdicting U.S. forces in a potential conflict.

PLA Navy Conducts First-Ever “Combat Readiness Patrol” in the Indian Ocean

In January and February 2014, a three-ship Chinese surface action group carried out a sophisticated training exercise spanning the South China Sea, eastern Indian Ocean, and Philippine Sea. The deployment marked the first time the PLA Navy has conducted what official Chinese sources refer to as a “combat readiness patrol,” or “blue-water training,” in the Indian Ocean. Although the PLA Navy has made forays into the region since at least 1985,¹¹⁴ its presence there has increased considerably over the last five years.¹¹⁵ The PLA Navy used the 23-day deployment to improve operational proficiencies for antisubmarine warfare, air defense, electronic warfare, and expeditionary logistics; train to seize disputed islands and reefs in the South China Sea; enhance its ability to conduct integrated and multi-disciplinary operations; and demonstrate to the Indo-Pacific region that China’s combat reach now extends to the eastern Indian Ocean.¹¹⁶

The surface action group consisted of the *Changbaishan* YUZHAO-class amphibious transport dock (LPD), the *Wuhan* LUYANG I-class guided-missile destroyer (DDG), and the *Haikou* LUYANG II-class DDG. At approximately 20,000 tons, the YUZHAO LPD is China’s largest indigenously built ship class.† During the deployment, the *Changbaishan* embarked China’s only

*The first island chain refers to a line of islands running from Japan, the Senkaku Islands, Taiwan, and the west coast of Borneo to Vietnam. The second island chain refers to a line of islands running from the Kurile Islands through Japan, the Bonin Islands, the Mariana Islands, the Caroline Islands, and Indonesia. PLA strategists and academics have long asserted the United States relies primarily on the “first island chain” and the “second island chain” to strategically “encircle” or “contain” China and prevent the PLA Navy from operating freely in the Western Pacific. Hai Tao, “The Chinese Navy Has a Long Way to Go to Get to the Far Seas,” *International Herald Leader*, January 6, 2012. Open Source Center translation. ID: CPP20120109671003.

†The YUZHAO LPD can carry up to four YUYI hovercraft, 20 amphibious armored vehicles, 800 marines, and at least four helicopters. Given the ship’s size, range, and ability to support over-the-horizon operations using helicopters and hovercraft, it is well suited for amphibious assaults against islands and reefs in the South China Sea and Taiwan-controlled islands in the Taiwan Strait, as well as for search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and counterpiracy operations. See Chapter 2, Section 2, “China’s Military Modernization,” for more information on China’s YUZHAO specifically and China’s amphibious capabilities generally. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on PLA Modernization and Its Implications for the United States*, written testimony of Jesse Karotkin, January 10, 2014; IHS Aerospace, Defense, and Security, “Analysis: China’s Expanding Amphibious Capabilities,” October 2013; and Craig Murray et al., *China’s Naval Modernization and Implications for the United States* (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, August 26, 2013).

operational YUYI-class hovercraft, three helicopters, and one company of marines.¹¹⁷

Operational highlights of the exercise include the following:

- During the deployment, the PLA Navy conducted its first known transit through the Sunda, Lombok, and Makassar straits. These are international straits with regular flows of maritime shipping, albeit far less than the more economical route via the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. As with the Maneuver-5 exercise, these transits appear to be part of a concerted effort by the PLA Navy since 2013 to demonstrate its ability to “break through” the first island chain to operate in China’s “distant seas.”¹¹⁸
- Soon after the surface action group left port, it reportedly rendezvoused with multiple PLA Navy submarines for “submarine-vessel joint ‘enemy’ blockade breakout drills” in the South China Sea. It is unlikely the submarines accompanied the surface action group for the duration of the deployment. Official Chinese media coverage indicates increasing submarine involvement in PLA Navy surface deployments since at least 2010, signaling China is seeking to improve its ability to coordinate surface and submarine units at sea.¹¹⁹
- On January 22, the surface action group conducted amphibious assault training for small-island and reef seizures in the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, several of which are contested by China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The training included landing marines by shipborne helicopters and hovercraft. The PLA Navy’s use of YUZHAO LPDs in amphibious assault training since 2008 and the ship’s range and ability to support over-the-horizon assaults using helicopters and hovercraft suggest it would play a significant role in seizures of islands and reefs in the South and East China Seas or in an amphibious assault against Taiwan.¹²⁰

Separately, from December 2013 to February 2014, a SHANG nuclear-attack submarine conducted China’s first submarine combat readiness patrol to the Indian Ocean.¹²¹ China likely also used the deployment to test the submarine and its crew’s ability to operate for long durations at extended distances from China as well as to train for potential crises and wartime operations in the Indian Ocean. China informed Indian military officials that the submarine would be supporting the PLA Navy’s ongoing counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.¹²² In September 2014, a PLA Navy submarine made a port call in Colombo, Sri Lanka, which coincided with President Xi’s visit to the country.¹²³

PLA Conducts Series of Large-Scale Exercises from May to September 2014

From late May to late September 2014, the PLA held a series of large-scale exercises that involved the PLA ground, air, and naval

forces and all seven military regions.* A Chinese state-run newspaper said the exercises were “of a rare breadth and scale” and explained they were part of the PLA’s efforts to “hone its craft in simulating battles to prepare for potential challenges in a more convoluted international situation.”¹²⁴

- From late May to early September, the PLA held a cross-region mobility exercise, known as Stride-2014. The exercise featured seven separate parts, each led by a combined arms brigade from a different military region. Stride-2014 tested the participating forces’ ability to rapidly maneuver over long distances under simulated wartime conditions. Modes of travel included road, rail, and air.¹²⁵
- Beginning in late June, the PLA conducted a 100-day, two-part artillery exercise, known as Firepower-2014. Exercise participants included six artillery units from the Shenyang, Beijing, Jinan, and Guangzhou military regions; several PLA universities, including the Nanjing Artillery Academy and the Air Defense Forces Academy; multiple training bases; about 20,000 personnel from five military regions; and 1,000 pieces of main battle equipment.¹²⁶
- From late July to early August, the PLA Navy simultaneously conducted major exercises in at least three distinct maritime areas: the Gulf of Tonkin, which borders both China and Vietnam; the East China Sea; and the Yellow Sea. Although a Chinese Ministry of Defense spokesperson characterized the exercises as routine annual training, several official Chinese media articles cited military experts claiming the scale of the naval activity was unprecedented.¹²⁷

Due to PLA requirements for Chinese airspace during these exercises, Beijing ordered 12 airports in eastern China, including two of the country’s busiest airports in Shanghai, to reduce flights by 25 percent from July 20 to August 15, resulting in the cancellation of hundreds of flights.¹²⁸

PLA Participation in Major Joint and Multinational Activities

The PLA participated in more exercises and drills with foreign militaries in 2014 than in any previous year since 2005, according to the U.S. Department of Defense and other sources.¹²⁹ Growing PLA engagement with worldwide militaries complements and augments Beijing’s broader foreign policy efforts, bolsters China’s international image, helps the PLA identify and address specific shortfalls in PLA operational capabilities by observing and absorbing best practices from foreign militaries, and in some cases allows the PLA to field test equipment and obtain hands-on experience operating in unfamiliar environments. As the PLA modernizes and

* China is geographically organized into seven military regions, whose headquarters serve as the administrative centers for the army, navy, and air force units contained within their boundaries. They are, in protocol order: Shenyang, Beijing, Lanzhou, Jinan, Nanjing, Guangzhou, and Chengdu.

becomes more capable and confident, it likely will increase its engagement with foreign militaries.

RIMPAC

Most significant among the PLA's international engagements in 2014 was its participation for the first time in the U.S.-led multinational Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) naval exercise. The biennial exercise is the largest maritime exercise in the world, and this year included 49 surface ships, 6 submarines, more than 200 aircraft, and more than 25,000 personnel from 22 countries.¹³⁰ China contributed the second-largest contingent to the exercise (behind the United States).¹³¹ The PLA Navy's decision to send a LUYANG II-class DDG, a JIANGKAI II-class missile frigate, and the *Peace Ark* hospital ship to the exercise* showcases China's desire to use its modern, domestically produced vessels for high-profile missions and international engagements to highlight the PLA Navy's modernization.¹³²

China's participation in RIMPAC began with a ten-day group sail from Guam to Hawaii with naval ships from the United States, Singapore, and Brunei. During the group sail, contingents from the four countries participated in "a number of exercises involving personnel exchanges, weapons firing, ship handling and maneuvering drills and communications exercises," according to Captain Patrick Kelly, commanding officer of the U.S. task force.¹³³ According to media sources, once the RIMPAC participants arrived in the waters off Hawaii, the PLA Navy participated in the following bilateral and multilateral activities with other navies: live-fire drills; † drills for maritime replenishment, small boat assault, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, tracking and surveillance of merchant vessels, multi-vessel interception and boarding, antipiracy, and maritime search and rescue;¹³⁴ military medical exchanges; and other bilateral and multilateral military and cultural activities.¹³⁵

According to the Chinese contingent's drill director, the PLA Navy had three goals for the exercise: to advance U.S.-China "new-type" military relations, to deepen cooperation and communication with participating navies, and to demonstrate the PLA's intent to protect and promote regional and global peace, security, and stability.¹³⁶

* Participation by the PLA Navy's *Peace Ark*, along with U.S. Navy hospital ship *Mercy*, marks the first participation of hospital ships in RIMPAC. The *Peace Ark* participated in medical subject matter expert exchanges, simulated disaster relief operations at sea, and hosted a military medical symposium attended by around 60 medical officials from participating countries. Hang Shaohu and Chen Weihua, "Visitors Tour Chinese Ships in Hawaii," *China Daily*, July 7, 2014. http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-07/07/content_17652596.htm.

† Official U.S. Department of Defense sources have characterized this activity as a "simple gunnery exercise" involving shooting large-caliber guns at targets. Responding to concerns about whether the gunnery exercise violates U.S. law prohibiting engagement in military-to-military activities with China that could "create a national security risk due to inappropriate exposure," (National Defense Authorization Act of 2000), Pentagon officials said, "Through many months of coordination, our expert planners and lawyers have ensured that China's participation in RIMPAC is in strict compliance with U.S. law" and concluded that "there's no violation of U.S. law, so no reason not to do it." *PLA Daily*, "The 'RIMPAC 2014' Exercise Carries Out Main Gun Firing Drills," July 15, 2014. Open Source Center translation. ID: CHR2014071525159222; Zhang Yunbi, "Timeline of China's RIMPAC 2014 Highlights," *China Daily*, August 4, 2014. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-08/04/content_18244900.htm; and Jeremy Page, "In Pacific Drills, Navies Adjust to New Arrival: China," *Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2014. <http://online.wsj.com/articles/in-rimpac-naval-drills-off-hawaii-militaries-adjust-to-new-arrival-china-1405527835>.

China sent an uninvited intelligence collection ship to monitor and gather information on the exercise.* Although Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, said deploying the intelligence ship inside the United States' EEZ "is within the law and it's [China's] right to do it," he admitted China's "introduction of the [intelligence ship] [was] ... a little odd."†¹³⁷ Indeed, the intelligence collection ship's presence was inappropriate and undermined the spirit of cooperation and transparency that RIMPAC seeks to cultivate.

China's deployment of the intelligence ship also runs counter to Beijing's insistence that foreign militaries provide notification and receive approval prior to operating in China's claimed EEZ. Beijing's naval presence in foreign EEZs indicates China's willingness to operate its military assets in a manner it currently protests. Beijing is unlikely to change its policy to one more aligned with that of the United States, and rather will continue to assert its authority to regulate U.S. military activities in its EEZ even as it increases its own military operations in foreign EEZs and disputed waters in the South and East China Seas.¹³⁸

Aside from its troubling decision to send an intelligence collection ship to the exercises, China's participation in RIMPAC enabled limited but meaningful progress in China's participation in regional security and U.S.-China military-to-military relations.¹³⁹ Michael O'Hanlon, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, explained that "in isolation [China's participation] doesn't do a great deal of good of course, but it provides the basis for more [cooperation]." ¹⁴⁰ All RIMPAC participants are routinely invited back, so China likely will participate again in 2016.¹⁴¹

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The PLA contributed to major humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts in the Asia Pacific twice in 2014: in response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and in the search for missing airliner Malaysia Airlines Flight 370. The PLA achieved a number of "firsts" with these two operations. As the PLA's HA/DR capabilities mature and as China seeks to portray itself as an effective leader in East Asia, China almost certainly will seek to play a more prominent role in responding to humanitarian crises and disasters in the region.‡

China provided limited HA/DR contributions to the Philippines in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in November 2013. China's *Peace Ark* arrived in the Philippines two weeks after the typhoon hit, marking the first time China sent a

* China had deployed a similar ship to observe RIMPAC in 2012, but China did not participate in that iteration of the exercise. Kimberly Hsu and Craig Murray, *China's Expanding Military Operations in Foreign Exclusive Economic Zones* (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, June 19, 2013), p. 1. http://origin.www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Staff%20Backgrounder_China%20in%20Foreign%20EEZs.pdf.

† One civilian expert compared China's behavior to "inviting a friend over for dinner and then having their buddy break in your back door to rob you." Andrew S. Erickson and Emily de La Bruyere, "China's RIMPAC Maritime-Surveillance Gambit," *National Interest*, July 29, 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/china%E2%80%99s-rimpac-maritime-surveillance-gambit-10970>.

‡ During the RIMPAC exercises, the commander of China's *Peace Ark* hospital ship told reporters, "The Chinese Navy will take part in more ... international humanitarian rescues." Rosalind Mathieson, "China's Navy Offers Messages in Soft-Power Display in Hawaii," *Bloomberg*, July 28, 2014. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-27/china-s-navy-shows-off-massage-techniques-in-soft-power-display.html>.

naval vessel overseas for a medical HA/DR mission.¹⁴² The *Peace Ark*'s helicopter transferred sick and injured people to and from the ship for medical treatment, and Chinese media reported the *Peace Ark*'s naval doctors treated 2,208 patients over the 16-day long mission.*¹⁴³

Following the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in March 2014, China deployed a large number of assets to conduct search and rescue operations. These assets included two IL-76 strategic airlifters, one Y-8 transport aircraft, two modern guided-missile frigates, two large amphibious ships, maritime law enforcement ships, and four helicopters.¹⁴⁴ China also tasked 21 satellites to assist in the operation.¹⁴⁵ The majority of passengers aboard the missing flight were Chinese citizens, and China's rapid response to the disaster likely reflected growing expectations in China for the PLA to protect Chinese citizens and commercial interests overseas.¹⁴⁶

During the search for the plane, China participated in several multinational and bilateral operations, providing China's untested HA/DR force with examples of best practices in the field. For example, the PLA Air Force detachment contributed to multinational air search operations under the coordination of the Royal Australian Air Force, with PLA Air Force aviators working with Australia's Headquarters Joint Operations Command to locate debris thought to be from the missing plane.¹⁴⁷ PLA Navy ships also coordinated their search efforts with those of other countries and for the first time cooperated at the tactical level with the Royal Australian Navy by embarking an officer on an Australian naval ship.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, a PLA Navy DDG conducted information and personnel transfers with an Australian naval ship.¹⁴⁹

Removal of Syrian Chemical Weapons

From January to June 2014, two PLA Navy JIANGKAI-II guided-missile frigates participated in 20 escort missions of the United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to remove chemical weapons from Syria to international waters for neutralization. The escorts were the first time China provided marine transport support for chemical weapons destruction and were undertaken jointly with navies from Russia, Denmark, and Norway.¹⁵⁰ China also reportedly provided ten ambulances and surveillance cameras to assist operations to bring Syria's chemical weapons to port.¹⁵¹ The PLA Navy was well placed to join in the escort mission due to its experience conducting naval escorts in the Gulf

*The *Peace Ark*'s accomplishments were overshadowed somewhat by political tensions related to China's maritime territorial dispute with the Philippines. International media criticized Beijing's initial \$100,000 donation to the relief efforts as too modest, with some observers suggesting China's limited response was a reflection of increased political tensions between the two countries. Perhaps in response to this criticism, China later pledged an additional \$1.64 million in aid and supplies. Brian Spegele, "China Offers Modest Aid to Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan," *China Real Time Report* (Blog), November 12, 2013. <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2013/11/12/china-offers-modest-aid-to-philippines-after-typhoon-haiyan/>; Jane Perlez, "China Offers Relatively Modest Aid for Typhoon Victims," *Sinosphere* (New York Times blog), November 11, 2013. <http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/11/china-offers-relatively-modest-aid-for-typhoon-victims/>; Hannah Beech, "China to Philippines: Here, Have a Measly \$100,000 in Aid," *Time*, November 13, 2013. <http://world.time.com/2013/11/13/china-to-philippines-here-have-a-measly-100000-in-aid/>; and "Typhoon Haiyan: China Gives Less Aid to Philippines than Ikea," *Guardian*, November 14, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/14/typhoon-haiyan-china-aid-philippines-ikea>.

of Aden since 2009. By virtue of this experience, PLA Navy ships involved in counterpiracy activities in the Gulf of Aden also have become familiar with the Mediterranean Sea through port calls and other activities.¹⁵²

From a political standpoint, China's role in the chemical weapons removal likely was motivated by Beijing's desire to demonstrate China's will and ability to play a positive role in addressing global security problems, particularly after being criticized by the international community in recent years for its refusal to condemn the Syrian government in the United Nations Security Council.¹⁵³

Counterpiracy Operations

Since January 2009, China has sustained a naval task group in the Gulf of Aden to conduct counterpiracy operations. This represents the PLA's largest overseas presence. As of August 2014, the PLA Navy had deployed more than 10,000 personnel in 18 successive two- or three-ship task groups over nearly six years. Chinese official media sources state the PLA Navy has protected more than 5,670 commercial ships from China and over 60 other countries over the course of more than 540 escorts. In the past year, PLA Navy special forces also conducted on-board escort missions for 18 ships and rescued one commercial vessel from a pirate attack.¹⁵⁴ In September 2014, the PLA Navy deployed a submarine to the Gulf of Aden to support its counterpiracy operations there.¹⁵⁵

In addition to its ongoing counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden,* the PLA Navy has conducted antipiracy drills with several other countries in 2014. In March, the 16th escort task force to the Gulf of Aden conducted joint antipiracy drills—including taskforce maneuvering, maritime replenishment, light signaling,† and anti-ship firing—with the European Union Combined Task Force 465.¹⁵⁶ In May, as part of a joint China-Russia exercise in the East China Sea, the PLA Navy and Russian Navy simulated antipiracy rescue operations.¹⁵⁷ In June, before sailing back to China following the completion of its escort responsibilities in the Gulf of Aden, the PLA Navy's 16th escort task force visited eight African countries and for the first time conducted antipiracy drills with the Cameroon Navy in the Gulf of Guinea.¹⁵⁸ The PLA Navy and the U.S. Navy are scheduled to hold the third in a series of annual joint counterpiracy exercises in 2014.¹⁵⁹ As this Report went to print, this exercise had not occurred.

14th Western Pacific Naval Symposium

China hosted the Western Pacific Naval Symposium for the first time in April 2014.¹⁶⁰ The Symposium was established in 1988 and now includes 21 members and three observers.‡ According to its

*For an overview of China's counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden since 2009, see U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2013 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2013, pp. 215 and 231; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2012 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2012, pp. 136, 143, 301, and 318; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2011 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2011, pp. 162–163; and U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2009 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2009, pp. 118–125.

†Light signaling refers to visual communication between ships using patterns of flashing lights.

‡The members of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium are Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea,

charter, the Symposium aims to “increase cooperation and the ability to operate together, as well as to build trust and confidence between Navies by providing a framework to enable the discussion of maritime issues of mutual interest, the exchange of information, the practice and demonstration of capabilities, and the exchange of personnel.”¹⁶¹

The most notable accomplishment of the two-day event, which was held in Qingdao, Shandong Province, was the unanimous approval of a Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES). According to the U.S. Navy, CUES, which China had opposed at previous iterations of the Symposium,^{*} is a voluntary and legally non-binding “agreement upon which the participating nations have a standardized protocol of safety procedures, basic communications and basic maneuvering instructions to follow for naval ships and aircraft during unplanned encounters at sea.”¹⁶² If observed consistently, CUES could significantly reduce the risk of miscommunication, miscalculation, and accidents at sea. Regional navies warmly welcomed CUES’ approval. U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jonathan Greenert remarked, “We’ve agreed to increase the standards that we will set at sea. We’ve agreed to establish proficiency in communications. We’ve agreed to establish common behavior at sea. We’ve agreed to prevent misunderstanding and miscalculations,” and Admiral Wu Shengli praised the agreement as a “milestone document.”¹⁶³

The Western Pacific Naval Symposium was not untouched by regional tensions, however. China declined to invite Japan to an international fleet review that it had planned to host in Qingdao following the Symposium. Although China maintained it was holding the review to celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the PLA Navy, U.S. officials said China had invited the U.S. Navy to participate in the review as part of the Symposium, not as a separate event. In response to China’s snub of Japan, the United States decided not to send its own ships to the fleet review, and instead participated as an observer. China ultimately cancelled its international fleet review, ostensibly due to the “special circumstances and atmosphere” of the international search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370.¹⁶⁴

Implications for the United States

With a few exceptions, the U.S.-China security relationship deteriorated in 2014. The rhetoric of a “new type of major-country relationship,” embraced by both countries in 2013, has not had a warming effect on bilateral ties and mutual suspicion and distrust persist.¹⁶⁵ This can be attributed in large part to the two countries’ competing visions for the future of Asia: whereas the United States seeks a stable and prosperous region in which it has a primary role in perpetuating the rules-based liberal order, China seeks to dis-

Peru, Philippines, South Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, the United States, and Vietnam. Bangladesh, India, and Mexico are observers.

^{*}At the 2012 Western Pacific Naval Symposium, for example, China opposed endorsing CUES because it was concerned the word “code” implied that the agreement was legally binding. Megha Rajagopalan, “China won’t swallow ‘bitter pill’ of ceding sovereignty rights: military official,” Reuters, April 23, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/23/us-china-military-idUSBREA3M0YY20140423>.

place U.S. primacy in East Asia and the Western Pacific and promote a new regional security architecture led by China and in which the United States plays a more limited role. (For an in-depth discussion of China's vision for Asian security, see Chapter 3, Section 1, "China and Asia's Evolving Security Architecture.")

In addition to longstanding policy differences between the United States and China over fundamental security issues (such as Taiwan), the relationship was strained most obviously in 2014 by China's destabilizing, unilateral, and coercive actions in the South and East China Seas and China's willingness to engage the United States in confrontational and dangerous air and maritime encounters.

As noted previously, China has pursued a more assertive approach to its longstanding territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas since 2009. China's efforts to justify and consolidate its claims directly undermine the values guiding U.S. policy in Asia: peace, stability, and the rule of law. Washington has a particular interest in the peaceful resolution of China's disputes with Japan and the Philippines, both of which are U.S. treaty allies.

U.S. and Chinese officials frequently exchanged barbs over the disputes in 2014, usually following a pattern in which U.S. officials would express concern and Chinese officials would respond by asserting Washington should stay out of "regional matters." In March, for example, the U.S. Department of State referred to China Coast Guard vessels' efforts to intimidate Philippine ships in the South China Sea as a "provocation" and the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded by saying "The U.S. comments ignored the facts, ran against its status as a non-claimant, and violated its commitment to not taking sides over the dispute."¹⁶⁶ Later, in response to a U.S. State Department proposal to "freeze certain actions and activities that escalate disputes and cause instability" in the South China Sea, the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated, China "hopes that countries outside the region strictly maintain their neutrality, clearly distinguish right from wrong and earnestly respect the joint efforts of countries in the region to maintain regional peace and stability."¹⁶⁷

China's most strident attempts to change the status quo in the South and East China Seas in the past year—establishing an ADIZ in the East China Sea, placing an oil rig in Vietnam's EEZ, attempting to block the Philippines' access to Second Thomas Shoal, and its land reclamation activities in the South China Sea—challenge U.S. efforts to de-escalate ongoing tensions in the Asia Pacific. Calls, however strongly worded, from the United States and other governments for China to cease using intimidation and coercion to achieve its territorial objectives have not deterred Chinese behavior.

In addition to antagonizing U.S. allies in East Asia, PLA aircraft and ships have on several occasions since late 2013 confronted U.S. military aircraft and ships in international airspace and waters in East Asia. On each of these occasions, Chinese military personnel engaged in unsafe, unprofessional, and aggressive behavior.

- In December 2013, U.S. Navy guided missile cruiser *Cowpens* and a PLA Navy amphibious landing ship came close to colliding in international waters of the South China Sea when the

Chinese ship approached to within 300 feet of the *Cowpens* and blocked its path. The *Cowpens* was forced to take evasive action to avoid a collision. Secretary Hagel referred to the Chinese ship's actions as "unhelpful" and "irresponsible," and warned that such behavior "could be a trigger or a spark that could set off some eventual miscalculation."¹⁶⁸

- In August 2014, an armed Chinese J-11 fighter jet crossed several times beneath a U.S. Navy P-8 surveillance plane. The Chinese jet then barrel rolled over the U.S. plane, passing within 20 to 45 feet. U.S. defense officials called the maneuver, which occurred over international waters in the South China Sea, "aggressive," "unprofessional," and a "deeply concerning provocation."¹⁶⁹ The Pentagon disclosed that this was one of four similar incidents since March in which Chinese military aircraft intercepted U.S. planes.

It is unclear whether these actions were tactical-level decisions made by the pilots or the commanding officer of the ship, operational-level decisions made by unit commanders, or actions ordered by higher authorities in Beijing to send strategic signals. Regardless, the PLA has demonstrated a pattern of provocative, aggressive, and dangerous behavior aimed at the U.S. military in maritime East Asia that creates the risk of miscalculation, escalation, and loss of life.

Although confrontation over maritime issues was the biggest contributor to U.S.-China tensions in 2014, other major impasses in the bilateral relationship persisted. Most prominent among these were cybersecurity and North Korea, both of which are addressed elsewhere in this Report.* Regarding the former, longstanding tension between Washington and Beijing over cyber issues continued to plague the relationship in 2014 when China in May suspended a bilateral Cyber Working Group after the U.S. Department of Justice indicted five PLA personnel for cyber espionage.[†]¹⁷⁰ Similarly, China and the United States made no measurable progress in cooperating on North Korea, despite the North's ever-growing threat to East Asian security.

Despite the steady deterioration of the bilateral security relationship between China and the United States, the bilateral military-to-military relationship is becoming increasingly institutionalized. The most visible manifestations of improving relations are more frequent and higher-profile combined and joint naval exercises and increased military engagements at every level between the U.S.

* See Chapter 1, Section 1, "Year in Review: Economics and Trade," for a discussion of China's cyber-enabled commercial theft aimed at the United States. For an assessment of China's cyber policies and their implications for the United States, see U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2013 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2013, pp. 243–265. For a discussion of China-North Korea relations and the role North Korea plays in U.S.-China relations, see Chapter 3, Section 2, "Recent Developments in China's Relationship with North Korea."

† Although U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry noted that conversations about cybersecurity at the 2014 U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue were "frank," it appears the United States made little progress convincing China to change its approach to cyberspace or deter Chinese cyber theft of U.S. intellectual property. In fact, the word "cyber" does not even appear on a 116-item list of "outcomes" of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue's Strategic Track discussions. U.S. Department of State, "U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue Outcomes of the Strategic Track," July 14, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/07/229239.htm>; Lesley Wroughton and Michael Martina, "China, U.S. to Boost Security Ties, but No Breakthroughs," Reuters, July 10, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/10/us-china-usa-idUSKBN0FF0Y520140710>.

Armed Forces and the PLA.¹⁷¹ Thus far, however, stronger military-to-military ties have done little to reduce distrust and tension in the broader relationship.

Selected U.S.-China Security-Related Visits and Exchanges

Presidents Obama and Xi meet at The Hague: Presidents Obama and Xi met on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit at The Hague in March 2014. They discussed a wide array of issues. Regarding North Korea, President Obama stressed the need for China and the United States jointly to prioritize denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. President Xi called for the United States to adopt an “objective and fair attitude” toward China’s maritime disputes, while President Obama “reiterated his support for the security of our allies, Japan and the Philippines.” President Obama underscored the need for the United States and China to work closely on issues of cybersecurity. In response to President Xi’s comments about a *New York Times* report suggesting that the U.S. National Security Agency hacked into the servers of Chinese company Huawei, President Obama assured President Xi that the United States does not engage in espionage to gain commercial advantage.¹⁷² The two leaders plan to meet again in Beijing in November 2014 on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders’ Meeting.¹⁷³

U.S. Secretary of Defense Visits China: On his first trip to China in his current position, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel traveled to China (as well as Hawaii, Japan, and Mongolia) in April 2014 and met with President Xi, Minister of National Defense Chang Wanquan, and Central Military Commission Vice Chairman General Fan Changlong, among others. Secretary Hagel also toured China’s aircraft carrier (he was the first foreign military leader to do so) and delivered a speech at China’s National Defense University. The most tangible outcomes of the visit were announcements to establish a bilateral army-to-army dialogue and to begin an “Asia-Pacific security dialogue” within the year.¹⁷⁴

PLA Chief of General Staff Visits the United States: PLA Chief of the General Staff General Fang Fenghui visited the United States in May 2014, reciprocating Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey’s visit to Beijing in April 2013.¹⁷⁵ In San Diego, General Fang visited the aircraft carrier *Ronald Reagan* and the littoral combat ship *Coronado*. He also observed Marine training at Camp Pendleton and met with Admiral Locklear.¹⁷⁶ At the Pentagon, General Fang received the

**Selected U.S.-China Security-Related Visits
and Exchanges—Continued**

first full-honor arrival ceremony for any chief of defense since 2012.¹⁷⁷ During meetings at the Pentagon, General Dempsey and General Fang disagreed over China's South China Sea territorial claims but agreed to conduct more HA/DR exercises and to cooperate on counterterrorism and antipiracy. They also discussed "establishing a mechanism for mutual notification of major military activities and devising standards of behavior for air and sea military safety in a maritime domain."¹⁷⁸

Other Military Visits and Exchanges: More high-level U.S.-China military-to-military exchanges happened in 2014 than in each of the previous three years.¹⁷⁹ In addition to Secretary Hagel, U.S. officials who were scheduled to visit China in 2014 included the Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations (who visited China twice), Commandant of the Marine Corps, Pacific Command Commander, and Northern Command Commander. Likewise, the PLA Navy Commander and the Nanjing Military Region Air Force Commander visited the United States. In addition to these high-level visits, 32 activities the Department of Defense characterizes as "functional exchanges," "academic exchanges," and "recurrent exchanges" were planned for the two militaries in 2014.¹⁸⁰

The growing tensions in the U.S.-China relationship, despite some isolated progress in military-to-military relations, reveal an important shift in the way China views the United States. President Xi's government appears willing to cause a much higher level of tension in the bilateral relationship than past administrations have. This may be a consequence of China's growing confidence in its economic and military power. It may also be part of a deliberate effort by China to apply pressure to the bilateral relationship to determine if and how the United States will "push back." In fact, several experts from the region told the Commission China's assertiveness in the South and East China Seas—particularly toward Japan and the Philippines—is actually meant to test the United States' commitment to its treaty allies and the region. China's pursuit of a more competitive relationship with the United States likely will continue to present obstacles to the bilateral relationship in the future.

Conclusions

- China has been aggressively advancing its security interests in East Asia. This has led to tension, confrontation, and near-crises with its neighbors and the United States and has fueled competition with the United States that increasingly appears to be devolving into a zero-sum rivalry. A central characteristic of this pattern is Beijing's effort to force the United States to choose between abandoning its East Asian allies to appease China and facing potential conflict with Beijing by protecting its allies from

China's steady encroachment. China's pattern of behavior is likely to persist.

- China's People's Liberation Army has undertaken provocative, aggressive, and dangerous behavior aimed at the U.S. military in maritime East Asia, which creates the risk of misperception, miscalculation, escalation, and loss of life.
- Having rapidly consolidated power, Chinese President Xi Jinping appears to have achieved a higher degree of control over China's national security and foreign policy than his predecessor and is pursuing a more active role for China in regional and international affairs. President Xi's proposed regional arrangements, the Silk Road Economic Belt, 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, are designed to project a positive and "responsible" image of China to the region and the world, develop trade routes, and gain access to natural resources. These initiatives, couched in terms of cooperation and friendship, belie China's increasingly strident efforts to intimidate and coerce many of its neighbors.
- China's territorial dispute with Japan remains one of the region's most dangerous flashpoints. China's declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone over contested waters in the East China Sea in late 2013 ratcheted up tensions with Japan and created an unsafe and unpredictable air environment in the region. On two occasions in 2014, Chinese and Japanese military aircraft activity in China's Air Defense Identification Zone led to close encounters which could have resulted in an accident and loss of life.
- China moved aggressively in asserting its claims in the South China Sea in 2014, using unilateral and destabilizing actions to advance its territorial ambitions. In March, it began attempts to block access to a Philippine military outpost in the South China Sea, Second Thomas Shoal. In May, it moved an oil rig into Vietnam's exclusive economic zone. Throughout the year, it continued work on various land reclamation projects in the South China Sea, including building military facilities on Fiery Cross Reef and potentially Johnson South Reef in the Spratly Islands. China's actions have introduced greater instability to the region and violate China's 2002 agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which stipulates that all claimants should "exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability."
- China's People's Liberation Army participated in more exercises and drills with foreign militaries in 2014 than in any previous year since 2005. In particular, China's participation in the U.S.-led Rim of the Pacific exercise illustrated the People's Liberation Army's intent to increase its participation in regional and global security affairs. However, China's decision to send an uninvited intelligence collection ship to the exercise seemed to belie its rhetoric of peaceful cooperation with its neighbors.
- Due largely to institutional and training reforms over the last decade, China's People's Liberation Army now is able to maintain higher day-to-day readiness rates and conduct longer-range and more frequent, robust, and realistic training. As these reforms

continue, the Chinese military gradually will become more proficient and confident operating its advanced weapons, platforms, and systems and conducting large-scale, sophisticated operations.

- China's naval operations within weapons range of U.S. bases and operating areas in the Indian Ocean region will become more frequent as China expands and modernizes its fleet of submarines and surface combatants. However, the Chinese navy in the near term likely will not seek to develop the ability to establish sea control or sustain combat operations in the Indian Ocean against a modern navy.

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