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CMSI

翻译

TRANSLATIONS



Volume 1

Maritime Geopolitics of the Belt and Road Initiative



中国海事研究所
China Maritime Studies Institute



U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Est. 1884
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

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United States Naval War College
China Maritime Studies Institute
中国海事研究所

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The China Maritime Studies Institute (CMSI) Translation Vault

This series presents a curated collection of open-source Chinese-language journal and newspaper articles that were originally published in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Hand-selected for their relevance to PRC military maritime affairs and translated by CMSI researchers over the past thirteen years, these materials were previously only available for limited distribution. CMSI is now pleased to open access to these translations and offer them to a broader community of defense professionals and scholars seeking deeper insights into evolving PRC military maritime developments.

Each volume in the series is loosely organized by theme, featuring articles that address strategic, operational, and tactical dimensions of the PRC's maritime military affairs. Selection was guided by operational or policy relevance at the time of translation, with some articles anticipating key shifts in Chinese policy or doctrine, and others offering rare glimpses into both official narratives and unofficial discourse.

Though historical in origin, many of these sources remain timely. Readers may uncover enduring patterns, early indicators of current trends, or fresh perspectives on the PRC's long-term military maritime ambitions. CMSI will continue publishing volumes in this series until its archive of previously translated materials is fully released.

About This Volume

Volume 1 of this series, *Maritime Geopolitics of the Belt and Road Initiative*, features eight translated articles examining China's expanding interests beyond the western Pacific and the strategies it is developing to protect them—particularly along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road corridors. President Xi Jinping first announced the overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road during an official visit to Indonesia in 2013. Initially referred to as One Belt, One Road (OBOR), the initiative was later rebranded as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The opening article, *A Summary of Chinese Research on the Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*, surveys PRC academic literature on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. It highlights key challenges, including geopolitical rivalry, uneven development, and non-traditional security threats along these corridors. The piece identifies gaps in existing PRC

research, calling for empirical studies, sector-specific analysis, and broader regional coverage to inform policymaking and strategic planning.

“One Belt, One Road” and Grand Border Defense, published in the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) official military journal *National Defense* in 2016, presents the initiative as both an economic and security framework. It argues that OBOR necessitates a shift from inward-focused defense to an outward-looking, integrated approach—termed “grand border defense”—combining military, diplomatic, and political tools to secure China’s interests along its periphery and maritime routes.

The subsequent article, *“Marching West’: The Rebalance of China’s Geo-Strategy,”* was authored in 2012 by Wang Jisi, then Dean of Peking University’s School of International Studies, and originally published in the nationalist *Global Times* newspaper. The article is noteworthy for anticipating the logic that would later underpin BRI. Wang articulates a strategic rationale for the PRC to orient itself westward in order to secure energy supply chains, expand access to emerging markets, and counterbalance the U.S. “pivot to Asia.” He underscores the importance of long-term planning, sustained diplomatic engagement, and the cultivation of regional expertise.

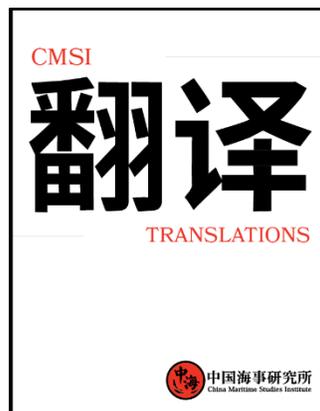
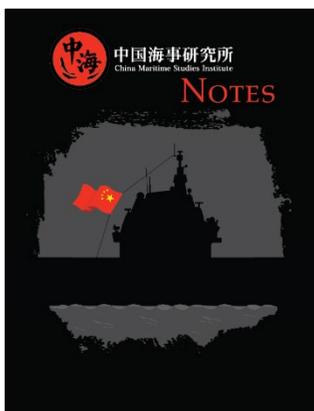
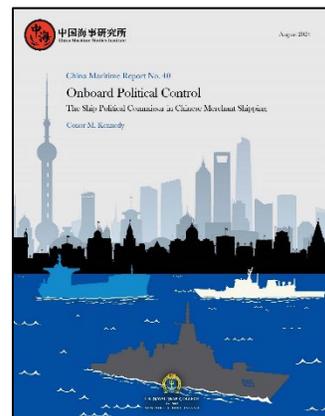
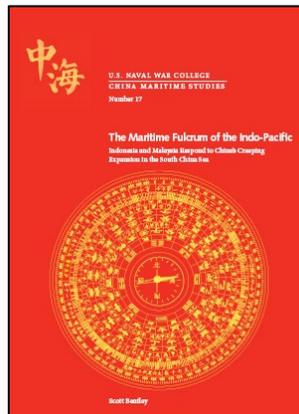
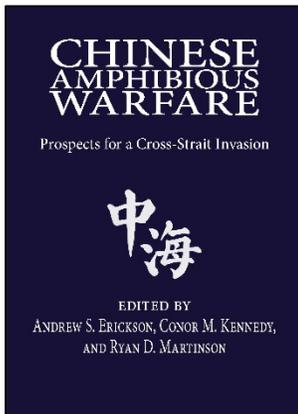
The next three articles explore China’s efforts to establish overseas strategic footholds. *Strategic Strongpoints along the ‘Belt and Road’ and Building Military Diplomacy* examine the role of military (i.e. PLA Navy, PLAN) diplomacy in selecting and developing overseas bases. *National Maritime Strategy Founded on Seapower Theory* draws on Mahanian theory to argue for far-seas training, overseas basing, and a national maritime consciousness. It identifies key priorities: securing the South China Sea, projecting influence in Southeast Asia and protecting energy routes to the Indian Ocean. *Making and Breaking the Status Quo: China’s Overseas Strategic Support Points* offers case studies of China’s overseas facilities and analyzes its long-term basing strategy.

The final two articles assess PLAN operations in the far seas. *Chinese Sea Power Expansion and the State of Sea Power in the Indian Ocean* focuses on strategic competition with India and the race to control key chokepoints. *Five Major Implications of Chinese Surface Task Forces Crossing the International Date Line* evaluates the operational and strategic significance of the PLAN’s first eastward crossing in a combat-ready posture, highlighting implications for deterrence, regional dynamics, and maritime power projection.

Together, the articles within this volume provide a window into the PRC’s evolving strategic thought as it seeks to protect its expanding global interests. They reveal a concerted effort to integrate economic initiatives like BRI with expanded military, diplomatic, and infrastructural capabilities, particularly across the Indian Ocean region. By analyzing how Chinese scholars and strategists conceptualize maritime power, overseas basing, and geopolitical competition, this volume offers valuable and timeless insights into the drivers of the PRC’s external posture and the potential implications for regional and global security as Beijing seeks to transform the PLAN into a “world class” navy.

Additional China Maritime Studies Institute publication series are available for download from the U.S. Naval War College website:

<https://usnwc.edu/Research-and-Wargaming/Research-Centers/China-Maritime-Studies-Institute>





A Summary of Chinese Research on the Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road¹

By Tan Yao (Guangxi University)

Introduction

The “Maritime Silk Road” has existed since antiquity, appearing before the land-based Silk Road. It passed from east to west and was a golden belt connecting ancient China with Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, western Asia, and northern Africa. It had tremendous significance for promoting trade relations and political, economic, and cultural exchange between China and other places around the world. In an October 2013 speech to Indonesia’s parliament, President Xi Jinping proposed the concept of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. It was a commitment to deepen economic cooperation between China and ASEAN. In a February 2014 government work report, Premier Li Keqiang said that China should conduct planning to build a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms—which was issued on 12 November 2013 at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party—proposed the strategic vision of “working hard to build a Silk Road Economic Belt and a Maritime Silk Road, so as to form a new pattern of all-round opening.” The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is China’s national strategy in the period of the new normal (*xinchangtai*). It is a broad concept, involves multiple domains, and will play out over the long-term. At the same time that the policy is being implemented, it has received lots of attention from different segments of society, both at home and abroad. In the academic world, it has become an important topic of discussion and research. This article examines current [Chinese] research on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, looking specifically at meanings

¹ 谭瑶 [Tan Yao] 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设研究综述 [“A Summary of Chinese Research on the Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”] 东南亚纵横 [Around Southeast Asia] 2016, No. 3, pp. 81-86.

(*neihan*), strategic significance, regions involved, approaches, challenges, suggestions, and other matters. It also looks for gaps in the literature and areas for new research in order to establish a foundation for future work.

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Meanings of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

The concept of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road comes from the ancient “Maritime Silk Road.” This concept was first proposed by Japanese scholar Misugi Takatoshi in a volume entitled *An Exploration of the Maritime Silk Road*. Scholars have come to a commonly-accepted meaning of the term “Maritime Silk Road.” In it, the silk trade is regarded as a symbol. The Maritime Silk Road existed for a long period of time in ancient China, it was a maritime communication line between China and other states, and it accompanied economic and trade relations.² The ancient Maritime Silk Road was created during the Qin and Han dynasties. It gradually developed during the Sui Dynasty, achieved prosperity during the Tang and Song dynasties, and reached its heyday during the early Ming dynasty. Later, during the maritime prohibitions of the middle and late Ming dynasty, it gradually declined. The Maritime Silk Road has a history of 2,000-plus years. It is the world’s oldest sea route. We can roughly divide it into three routes. The first is the east sea route, which goes from Chinese ports to North Korea, South Korea, and Japan. The second is the south sea route, which goes from Chinese ports to the states of Southeast Asia. The third is the west sea route, which goes from Chinese ports to Southeast Asia, western Asia, the coast of eastern Africa, and to the Americas.³ These routes served as an important bridge of communication between the economies of the East and West, as well as for cultural exchange. The form and meaning of the Maritime Silk Road has experienced a fairly large change, the result of changes in the means of shipping, communications routes, and the items being traded. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road not only inherits the traditional spirit of the ancient Maritime Silk Road, that is, “mutual trust, mutual benefit, peace, and cooperation.” It has also been injected with new meaning as a result of efforts to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and promote economic cooperation between regions. Most Chinese scholars

²陈万灵、何传添：《海上丝绸之路的各方协弈及其经贸定位》，《改革》2014年第三期，第74-83页。

³蔡春林：《新兴经济体参与新丝绸之路建设的策略研究》，《国际贸易》2014年第5期，第25-29页。

expound on new meanings of the concept from the perspective of China's internal and external environment and the characteristics of the new normal. In 2014, Liu Cigui examined the topic from the perspective of the global economic environment. He suggested that the purpose of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road construction is for China to adapt to the trends of economic globalization, develop the "marine economy," and expand the convergence of interests, with a view to achieving joint development and prosperity with other regional states.⁴ In their research, Ju Huaying and Li Guanghui (2014) look at the topic from the perspective of economic openness. They believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a global strategy enabling China to actively take part in global governance, build itself into a maritime power, and help China transform itself from a regional power to a responsible global power.⁵ Quan Yi, Wang Jie, and Liu Wanting (2014) consider the topic from the perspective of building and developing the global order. They believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a trade route aimed at alleviating the "China Threat Theory" and communicating peaceful and friendly information, and leveraging the creation of good maritime partnerships and cooperative relations to realize an advantageous geopolitical and economic situation.⁶ Zhou Fangye (2015) looks at the topic from the strategic perspective. Zhou believes that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road fulfills the important development task of "opening to the west" (*xiangxi kaifang*). In this context, China should pursue the development goal of creating a "peripheral community of common interest," strive to raise the economic dependence, security coordination, and cultural tolerance of its construction.⁷ Zhang Lin and Liu Xiaoyun (2015) examine the topic from the geopolitical perspective. They believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is an opportunity for

⁴ When he wrote this article, Liu Cigui was the Director of the State Oceanic Administration. For the original article, see 刘赐贵:《发展海洋合作伙伴关系推进 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考》,《国际问题研究》2014 年第 4 期,第 122-131 页。

⁵ Ju Huaying is from the College of Economics and Management at China Agricultural University. Li Guanghui is a researcher and vice president of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Commerce. For the original article, see 鞠华莹、李光辉:《建设 21 世纪海上丝绸之路的思考》,《国际经济合作》2014 年第 9 期,第 55-58 页。

⁶ Quan Yi is a researcher and chief editor of the *Asia-Pacific Economic Review* as well as a researcher and deputy director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Research Institute at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences. Wang Jie is a graduate student in the College of Economics and Management at Fuzhou University. Liu Wanting is a graduate student in the College of Economics at Fujian Normal University. For the original article, see 全毅、汪洁、刘婉婷:《21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略构想与建设方略》,《国际经济合作》2014 年第 8 期,第 4-15 页。

⁷ Zhou Fangye is an assistant researcher at the National Institute of International Strategy of the China Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 周方治:《21 世纪海上丝绸之路战略支点建设》,《新视野》2015 年第 2 期,第 105-110 页。

reshaping the geopolitical pathway (*luxian*) of south-south cooperation. It benefits China in pragmatically expanding its political and economic space abroad, thereby increasing national competitiveness.⁸ Fu Mengzi and Lou Chunhao (2015) believe that the 21st Maritime Silk Road is a “global trading network” enabling China to become an integrated hub connecting production, finance, trade, investment, labor and other domains and connecting the important regions of the world.⁹

The State of Research on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

Chinese research on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is primarily focused on the following domains: 1) Its strategic significance, viz. its influence on China’s domestic economic and political exchanges and its influence on the political and economic development of different regions; 2) the scope of the areas involved in the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and approaches to constructing it; 3) the risks and challenges facing construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road; 4) research on the impact of construction of the 21st Century Silk Road on China’s far seas fishing industry and trade facilitation (*maoyi bianlihua*).

A. The Strategic Significance of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road can enormously increase the level of China’s domestic economic development. It will help to strengthen political and cultural exchanges with neighboring states, achieve joint cooperation and a win for all, promote prosperity and stability for the Asia-Pacific region, and advance peaceful development for the world. Chinese scholarly discussion of the strategic significance of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road can be categorized as follows:

⁸ Zhang Lin is a professor at the China-ASEAN Research Institute of Guangxi University. Liu Xiaoyun is from the Business School of Guangxi University. For the original article, see 张林、刘霄云：《异质性‘外部性’视角下 21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略研究》，《国际贸易问题》2015 年第 3 期，第 44-53 页。

⁹ Fu Mengzi is a researcher and deputy director of the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. Lou Chenhao is a deputy research fellow and assistant director of the Maritime Strategy Institute at the China Institute

Domestic significance:

1. *Deal with the current complex international environment, consolidate economic cooperation with states along its path.* Since the beginning of the Reform and Opening period, China's economy has developed rapidly and the country has gradually become a global economic power. This has caused some Western countries to have suspicions and unnecessary worries. They have adopted measures to maintain their current international positions. The United States in particular has passed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

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and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). It has sought to leverage its hard power and soft power as part of its “Asia Rebalance” and “Asia-Pacific Rebalance,” and moved the center of its global strategy to the east. This has significantly squeezed the space in which China can open to the outside world and worsened China's external environment. Scholars like Fu Mengzi and Lou Chunhao (2015) have pointed out that many states demand an international order that allows them to maximize their own gains. As a result, these states adopt measures to maximize their own gains. In particular, the US is implementing its “Asia-Pacific Rebalance” strategy and has signed TTIP and TPP agreements. These moves will severely hamper integration of the East Asia region and progress in Asia-European economic and trade cooperation. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road proposal will strengthen the foundation for cooperation between China and Central Asia and Southeast Asia. To a certain extent, this will lessen the pressure that America is exerting on China.¹⁰ Quan Yi, Wang Jie, and Liu Wanting (2014) point out that in the face of the Pacific Ocean island chain strategy, the New Silk Road Plan, and the Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the United States, Japan, and Australia and other stakeholders, China's timely

¹⁰Fu Mengzi is a researcher and deputy director of the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. Lou Chenhao is a deputy research fellow and assistant director of the Maritime Strategy Institute at the China Institute

proposal of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative will promote exchange and interaction between the developing states of the Asia-Pacific region and the undeveloped countries of Africa.¹¹

2. *Expand and enhance openness to the outside world, raise the quality of China's economic development.* Most Chinese scholars believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will significantly improve the level of China's openness to the world and the quality of China's domestic economic development. Fu Mengzi and Lou Chunhao (2015) believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road can amply muster external factors of production, foster positive Chinese and foreign economic interactions, strengthen the network of economic cooperation between China and states along the route, and ultimately promote the development of China's foreign trade.¹² Zhang Yong (2014) points out that construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road both accords with the tide of today's economic globalization and promotes a transition in the development of China's domestic economy. It is a new motive force for the expansion and enhancement of the situation with respect to China's openness.¹³ Chen Wanling and He Chuantian (2014) believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road involves the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The large number of coastal states involved will encourage all states around the world to be more open to China, accept China's domestic capital and factors [of production], ameliorate the situation with respect to China's domestic excess "quality production" and energy shortages. To a large extent, this will improve the quality of China's economic

¹¹Quan Yi is a researcher and chief editor of the *Asia-Pacific Economic Review* as well as a researcher and deputy director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Research Institute at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences. Wang Jie is a graduate student in the College of Economics and Management at Fuzhou University. Liu Wanting is a graduate student in the College of Economics at Fujian Normal University. For the original article, see 全毅、汪洁、刘碗婷:《21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略构想与建设方略》,《国际经济合作》2014 第 8 期,第 4-15 页。

¹²Fu Mengzi is a researcher and deputy director of the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. Lou Chenhao is a deputy research fellow and assistant director of the Maritime Strategy Institute at the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. For the original article, see 傅梦孜、楼春豪:《关于 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考》,《现代国际关系》2015 年第 3 期,第 54-63 页。

¹³Zhang Yong is an associate professor at the School of Law and Politics at Lingnan Normal University. For the original article, see 张勇:《略论 21 世纪海上丝绸之路的国家发展战略意义》,《中国海洋大学学报》2014 年第 5 期,第 13-18 页。

development.¹⁴ Liu Cigui (2014) believes that with maritime interconnections, cooperation between port cities, marine economic cooperation, and other approaches, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will connect Chinese ports with those in states along the route, thereby strengthening China's "lifeline"—i.e., its coefficient of sea lane security—and accelerating the realization of the strategic objective of turning China into a maritime power.¹⁵

International significance:

1. *Promote the establishment of a new international political order, safeguard peaceful development around the world.* Chinese scholars believe that construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will strengthen exchanges between states along the route. This in turn will help build strategic trust, thereby promoting the establishment of a new international political order. Zhang Yong (2014) suggests that construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road can strengthen trust between the states along its path and build better political connections between them, thereby promoting the establishment of a new international economic and political order.¹⁶ Quan Yi, Wang Jie, and Liu Wanting (2014) point out that the emphasis of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is to communicate information showing that China is peaceful and achieve mutual benefit and common development. Doing so will go a long way to promote political trust between the different states.¹⁷ Yin Lun (2015) believes that

¹⁴ Chen Wanling is director of the International Economic and Trade Research Center at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. He Chuantian is a professor at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. For the original article, see 陈万灵、何传添：《海上丝绸之路的各方协弈及其经贸定位》，《改革》2014年第三期，第74-83页。

¹⁵ When he wrote this article, Liu Cigui was the Director of the State Oceanic Administration. For the original article, see 刘赐贵：《发展海洋合作伙伴关系推进21世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考》，《国际问题研究》2014年第4期，第122-131页。

¹⁶ Zhang Yong is an associate professor at the School of Law and Politics at Lingnan Normal University. For the original article, see 张勇：《略论21世纪海上丝绸之路的国家发展战略意义》，《中国海洋大学学报》2014年第5期，第13-18页。

¹⁷ Quan Yi is a researcher and chief editor of the *Asia-Pacific Economic Review* as well as a researcher and deputy director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Research Institute at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences. Wang Jie is a graduate student in the College of Economics and Management at Fuzhou University. Liu Wanting is a graduate student in the College of Economics at Fujian Normal University. For the original article, see 全毅、汪洁、刘碗婷：《21世纪海上丝绸之路的战略构想与建设方略》，《国际经济合作》2014年第8期，第4-15页。

construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road can strengthen communication and consultation between senior levels of government of states along the route on international matters, foster exchange visits between senior levels and increase political trust, and promote friendly cooperative relations between states. These things would have tremendous significance for peaceful development around the world.¹⁸

2. *Deepen multilateral cooperation between emerging economies, achieve common prosperity for Asian and European countries.* Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road has occurred in the context of deepening of globalization and regionalization (*qiyuhua*). It has tremendous significance for the promotion of economic cooperation between states. Chen Wanling and He Chuantian (2014) believe that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will promote dialogue and understanding between states and trading partners along the route, advancing broad cooperation in the areas of trade and investment. It should truly expand the scope of economic cooperation and economic aid, thereby promoting regional economic development.¹⁹ Lv Yusheng (2013) suggests that construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road can strengthen maritime cooperation between China and ASEAN—indeed, the entire Asia-Pacific region. It can build an improved version of the China-ASEAN free trade region.²⁰ Quan Yi, Wang Jie, and Liu Wanting (2014) believe that construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road allows countries along the Silk Road to enjoy the benefits of China's Reform and Opening Up, creating a new arrangement in Asia characterized by mutual benefit and win-win outcomes.²¹ Shen Lei (2014) suggests that the 21st

¹⁸Yin Lun is an assistant researcher at the Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 尹仑: 《21 世纪海上丝绸之路与“环印度洋战略”研究》, 《学术探索》2015 年第 5 期, 第 31-35 页。

¹⁹Chen Wanling is director of the International Economic and Trade Research Center at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. He Chuantian is a professor at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. For the original article, see 陈万灵、何传添: 《海上丝绸之路的各方协弈及其经贸定位》, 《改革》2014 年第三期, 第 74-83 页。

²⁰Lv Yusheng is a researcher at the Guangxi Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 吕余生: 《深化中国—东盟合作, 共同建设 21 世纪海上丝绸之路》, 《学术论坛》2013 年第 12 期, 第 29-35 页。

²¹Quan Yi is a researcher and chief editor of the *Asia-Pacific Economic Review* as well as a researcher and deputy director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Research Institute at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences. Wang Jie is a graduate student in the College of Economics and Management at Fuzhou University. Liu Wanting is a graduate

Century Maritime Silk Road is an open and mutually beneficial trade route. It allows Chinese firms to engage in transnational direct investment in states along the route and cooperate with host countries to create industrial parks. This can help these states resolve their unemployment problems and release lots of “positive energy” for their economic development.²² As Cai Chunlin (2014) points out, construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road helps

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emerging economies along the route to develop new engines of economic growth and accelerate construction of infrastructure, thereby enabling political and economic interactions and strategic cooperation between the different states.²³

B. Research on the Regions Involved in the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

The aim of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is to create a global communications and shipping network and a cooperative arrangement that involves economic, trade, and financial matters. It seeks to connect East Asia with central Asia, south Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and all the way to the Americas. It covers a broad area and passes through a large number of regions and cities. Chinese scholars have conducted significant research on the different countries involved. They have also examined the roles and development strategies of Chinese cities involved in the construction of the Silk Road. With respect to overseas regions, Chinese research has been chiefly directed at emerging economies with close relations with China and ASEAN states neighboring China. Li Jingyu and Zhang Chenyao (2015) analyze problems faced by China-Russia cooperation to develop the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.²⁴

student in the College of Economics at Fujian Normal University. For the original article, see 全毅、汪洁、刘碗婷：《21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略构想与建设方略》，《国际经济合作》2014 第 8 期，第 4-15 页。

²²Shen Lei is a professor at the Shanghai University of Politics and Law. For the original article, see 申蕾：《丝绸之路经济带建设的内涵与外延分析》，《经济研究导刊》2014 年第 33 期，第 30-33 页。

²³Cai Chunlin is a professor in the Research Center of BRICS Studies at the Guangdong University of Technology. For the original article, see 蔡春林：《新兴经济体参与新丝绸之路建设的策略研究》，《国际贸易》2014 年第 5 期，第 25-29 页。

²⁴ Li Jingyu is a senior advisor at the World Ocean City Headquarters and director of the World Ocean City Development Research Institute. Zhang Chenyao is an assistant researcher at the World Ocean City Headquarters Development Research Institute. For the original article, see 靖宇、张晨瑶：《中俄两国合作开拓 21 世纪北方向海上丝绸之路的战略构想》，《东北亚》2015 年第 3 期，第 75-83 页。

They assert that in order for Russia to participate in Silk Road construction it must develop and strengthen cooperation in the maritime domain, actively cooperate with China to improve infrastructure in states along the route, establish a Silk Road Bank and ocean city headquarters (*haiyang chengshi zongbu*), among other work. Cai Chunlin (2014) points out that in the context of Silk Road construction emerging economies have superior conditions and excellent endowments (*bingfu*). The Silk Road represents a strategic opportunity for the states involved to engage in a new round of economic cooperation and raise their levels of economic development and international influence.²⁵ As Liao Meng (2015) points out, Sri Lanka is a hub connecting the route between Asia and Africa. As such, it has particular significance in Silk Road construction. [The Silk Road] can help promote the construction of China-Sri Lanka Free Trade Zones, develop the Sri Lankan economy, and increase the diplomatic chips that can be used against India. Liao Meng also suggests that China should strengthen cooperation with Sri Lanka in the fields of economics and trade, finance, and other aspects.²⁶ Lv Yusheng (2013) highlights the importance of deepening cooperation between China and ASEAN, and even the broader Asia-Pacific region. Lv emphasizes the advantages of Guangxi province's location and its possible role in laying a solid foundation for constructing the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.²⁷ Most Chinese analyses examine provinces and regions such as Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, and Taiwan. Liu Zongyi (2014) believes that development of China's coastal cities and ports and construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road are mutually supporting. Cities and ports will play a leading role in Silk Road construction. They will promote the extension and expansion of production chains and value chains, especially in East Asia.²⁸ Wu Chongbo (2014) believes that given its historical role as the starting point of the Maritime Silk Road, Fujian province should vigorously strengthen marine economic and resource cooperation with ASEAN

²⁵Cai Chunlin is a professor in the Research Center of BRICS Studies at the Guangdong University of Technology. For the original article, see 蔡春林: 《新兴经济体参与新丝绸之路建设的策略研究》, 《国际贸易》2014 年第 5 期, 第 25-29 页。

²⁶Miao Meng is an assistant researcher at the Overseas Chinese Research Institute at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 廖萌: 《斯里兰卡参与共建海上丝绸之路的战略考虑及前景》, 《亚太经济》2015 年第 3 期, 第 62-67 页。

²⁷Lv Yusheng is a researcher at the Guangxi Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 吕余生: 《深化中国—东盟合作, 共同建设 21 世纪海上丝绸之路》, 《学术论坛》2013 年第 12 期, 第 29-35 页。

²⁸Liu Zongyi is an assistant researcher at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies. For the original article, see 刘宗义: 《21 世纪海上丝绸之路站设与我国沿海城市和港口的发展》. 《城市观察》2014 年第 6 期, 第 5-12 页。

and African states and broaden its economic and cultural exchanges with regions along the route, thereby creating an economic, trade, and cultural network connecting China with Southeast Asia and Africa.²⁹ Ou Changsheng (2015) points out that if Xiamen city hopes to become the central hub of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road it must unearth and cultivate “Maritime Silk Road” cultural resources. Doing so will increase the acceptance and respect for Xiamen among regions along the route and draw attention to the role of cultural soft power in the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.³⁰ Lu Wengang, Huang Xiaozhen, and Liu Shi (2014) suggest that Guangdong province has obvious geographic, cultural, economic, and trade advantages in the context of construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. However, problems exist with respect to industry development and balancing regional economic development. Thus, the government must work together with the overseas Chinese diaspora in order to help promote construction of the Silk Road.³¹ Hu Jianhua (2015) sees Guangxi as an organic convergence portal, in that it is the only province that connects China with ASEAN states by both land and sea. Thus, Guangxi should further tilt its policy towards air and sea transportation, cultivate a new type of commercial approach and promote Guangxi’s custom’s integration.³² Yuan Xintao (2014) also suggests that Guangxi should amply leverage its role as a bridge to further cooperation with ASEAN. It should become a major international channel and key node enabling southwestern and central-southern China to get involved in the Maritime Silk Road.³³ Wang Min (2015) examines the Silk Road from the perspectives of historical geography, economic cooperation, and other levels of analysis. Wang shows that Taiwan’s participation in the building of the 21st

²⁹Wu Chongbo is a professor at the Southeast Asia Research Institute of Xiamen University. For the original article, see 吴崇伯: 《福建构建 21 世纪海上丝绸之路战略的优势、挑战与对策》. 《亚太经济》2014 年第 6 期第 109-113 页。

³⁰ Ou Changsheng is a researcher and economist at the Xiamen Municipal Committee Department of Propaganda and Research. For the original article, see 欧长胜: 《厦门领跑“海上丝绸之路”的文化资源优势研究》, 《厦门发展研究》2015 年第 2 期第 20-24 页。

³¹ Lu Wengang is a professor at the Jinan University School of Public Administration. Huang Xiaozhen is a master’s student at the Jinan University School of Public Administration. Liu Shi is a professor at the Jinan University School of Economics. For the original article, see 卢文刚、黄小珍、刘沛: 《21 世纪广东省参与“21 世纪海上丝绸之路”建设的战略选择》, 《经济纵横》2014 年第 6 期第 49-53 页。

³² Hu Jianhua is Vice President of the Guangxi Autonomous Region Party School and Deputy Dean of the Guangxi College of Administration. For the original article, see 胡建华: 《广西推进 21 世纪“海上丝绸之路”建设的路径选择》, 《经济纵横》2015 年第 4 期. 第 46-50 页。

³³ Yuan Xintao is a post-doc at the School of Marxism at Xi’an Jiaotong University and a lecturer at the Xi’an Politics Institute of the People’s Liberation Army. For the original article, see 袁新涛: 《丝绸之路经济带建设和 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的国家战略分析》, 《东南亚纵横》2014 年第 8 期第 3-8 页。

Century Maritime Silk Road would have an obvious benefit in creating a new platform for cross-strait economic cooperation and promoting economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Wang proposes that Taiwan take steps to advance the “five connections” (*wutong*) between the Mainland and Taiwan in order to promote social and economic integration and innovation between Fujian province and Taiwan.³⁴

C. Chinese Researchers Have Focused on Challenges and Approaches to Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

1. The Risks and Challenges Facing Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

With respect to the risks and challenges facing construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Chinese scholars have prioritized three key areas: the geopolitical issues; the strategic pressures exerted by great powers such as Europe, the US, and Japan; and the imbalanced development of states along the route.

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Fu Mengzi and Lou Chunhao (2015) point out that in order to safeguard its global maritime hegemony the US has signed a series of agreements including TPP and TTIP. These efforts were part of its “Asia-Pacific Rebalance” strategy. The US has engaged in obstructive behavior in regions along the route, even interfering in the internal affairs of some states. This has undoubtedly exacerbated the strategic game between the US and China with respect to the maritime order. Fu and Lou point out that traditional and nontraditional security challenges within different regions represent the greatest challenges for the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. These include territorial disputes between some of the states along the route, as well as issues with religious faiths.³⁵ Gu Yuanyang (2014) writes that America’s “Asia-Pacific

³⁴Wang Min is a PhD student at the Research Institute of Chinese Economic Reform and Development at Renmin University and an assistant researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Taiwan Research Institute. For the original article, see 王敏: 《台湾参与“21 世纪海上丝绸之路”的战略构想与可行路程》, 《亚太经济》2015 年第 1 期第 140-144 页。

³⁵Fu Mengzi is a researcher and deputy director of the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. Lou Chenhao is a deputy research fellow and assistant director of the Maritime Strategy Institute at the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. For the original article, see 傅梦孜、楼春豪: 《关于 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考》, 《现代国际关系》2015 年第 3 期, 第 54-63 页。

Rebalance” strategy seriously impacts Asian affairs, challenges China’s core interests, and damages political trust between China and certain ASEAN states.³⁶ Yin Lun (2015) also points out that if China-US relations are problematic, this will create a Malacca bottleneck (*pingjing*) and an Andaman-Nicobar island chain (*daolian*) in the Indian Ocean region. Such outcomes would deter China from entering the Indian Ocean and engaging in trade relations with the states of Europe, Africa, and western Asia.³⁷ In their work, Quan Yi, Wang Jie, and Liu Wanting (2014) point out that the South China Sea issue, the US-Japan “Indo-Pacific strategy” and other issues such as the China-India territorial disputes will give rise to tremendous threats for China as it builds the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. They also emphasize that China cannot underestimate the obstacles created by the non-traditional security threats generated by chaos and poverty in some parts of the Middle East and Africa.³⁸ In their work, Zhang Lin and Liu Xiaoyun (2015) use a framework for international economic cooperation centered on economic heterogeneity and externalities. They point out that the challenges facing China in building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road chiefly come from an unstable geopolitical environment and asymmetrical distribution of economic externalities.³⁹ Yuan Xintao (2014) looks at the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road from the perspective of Chinese provinces and cities. Yuan believes that plans made by these regions to seize on development opportunities will likely cause problems such as regional functional convergence, overlap in the layout of the structure of

³⁶Gu Yuanyang is the Director of the World Economic Research Center at the China Foundation for International Studies. For the original article, see 谷源洋: 《大国汇集亚洲与中国“经略周边”——“21 世纪海上丝绸之路”建设》, 《亚非纵横》2014 年第 5 期第 46-56 页。

³⁷Yin Lun is an assistant researcher at the Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 尹仑: 《21 世纪海上丝绸之路与“环印度洋战略”研究》, 《学术探索》2015 年第 5 期, 第 31-35 页。

³⁸Quan Yi is a researcher and chief editor of the *Asia-Pacific Economic Review* as well as a researcher and deputy director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Research Institute at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences. Wang Jie is a graduate student in the College of Economics and Management at Fuzhou University. Liu Wanting is a graduate student in the College of Economics at Fujian Normal University. For the original article, see 全毅、汪洁、刘碗婷: 《21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略构想与建设方略》, 《国际经济合作》2014 第 8 期, 第 4-15 页。

³⁹Zhang Lin is a professor at the China-ASEAN Research Institute of Guangxi University. Liu Xiaoyun is from the Business School of Guangxi University. For the original article, see 张林、刘霄云: 《异质性“外部性视角下 21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略研究》, 《国际贸易问题》2015 年第 3 期, 第 44-53 页。

production, and homogenous and disorderly competition. These outcomes would result in a severe waste of resources.⁴⁰

2. Suggestions for Constructing the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

In order to resolve the problems created during the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Chinese scholars have examined the strategic options that China might adopt both internally and externally. Scholars such as Ju Huaying, Li Guanghui, Zhou Fangzhi, Shen Lei, Quan Yi, Wang Jie, Liu Wanting believe that “focusing on port construction and interconnections,” “building and improving regional supply chains, production chains, and value chains,” “strengthening strategic trust between governments,” “persisting in the principle of mutual benefit and win-win” and similar measures will help ensure the smooth advancement of construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Zhou Fangye (2015) examines the construction of China’s strategic support points (*zhanlue zhidian*) and proposes systemic reforms and innovations for Chinese diplomacy, commercial cooperation, people-to-people exchanges, and other interactions. Zhou also emphasizes the important function of political and economic intercourse during the building of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.⁴¹ Lv Yusheng (2013) points out the importance of constructing mechanisms to increase political trust between states. Lv also emphasizes the importance of coordinated development between Chinese provinces and cities along the route. Lv proposes that China create a special organization to coordinate “Guangdong-centered pan-Pearl River and a Guangxi-centered pan-Gulf of Tonkin economic cooperation.”⁴² Chen Weiguang (2015) looks at strategic implementation, asserting that the characteristics of the maritime silk road—i.e., openness, diversity, multi-domain cooperation, etc.—dictates that its construction cannot be divorced from linkages with the Silk Road Economic Belt, maritime cooperative governance, regional cooperative governance, and other

⁴⁰Yuan Xintao is a post-doc at the School of Marxism at Xi’an Jiaotong University and a lecturer at the Xi’an Politics Institute of the People’s Liberation Army. For the original article, see 袁新涛：《丝绸之路经济带建设和 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的国家战略分析》，《东南亚纵横》2014 年第 8 期第 3-8 页。

⁴¹Zhou Fangye is an assistant researcher at the National Institute of International Strategy of the China Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 周方冶：《21 世纪海上丝绸之路战略支点建设》，《新视野》2015 年第 2 期，第 105-110 页。

⁴²Lv Yusheng is a researcher at the Guangxi Academy of Social Sciences. For the original article, see 吕余生：《深化中国—东盟合作，共同建设 21 世纪海上丝绸之路》，《学术论坛》2013 年第 12 期，第 29-35 页。

cooperative mechanisms.⁴³ Zhang Lin and Liu Xiaoyun (2015) look from the perspective of economic heterogeneity and externalities, pointing out that Chinese efforts to strengthen the provision of public platforms and services and augment the country's soft power can enormously improve China's national image, thereby strengthening political trust and economic/trade relations with states along the route.⁴⁴ Gu Yuanyang (2014) examines the problem of imbalanced development across many countries involved in the Silk Road and suggests that China should accurately grasp the importance of "letting China's development benefit neighboring states." That is, it should conduct "cost and benefit" analysis when making investments. Doing so will allow it to make effective investments in the infrastructure of coastal states, thereby achieving mutual benefit and win-win development.⁴⁵ Liu Cigui (2014) examines the topic from the perspective of developing maritime cooperative relationships. He emphasizes the tremendous strategic significance of "developing a foundation for pragmatic cooperation in the marine industries" and "promoting comprehensive cooperation in the maritime non-traditional security domain" and other measures for constructing the Maritime Silk Road.⁴⁶

D. Research on Industries Such as Far Seas Fishing and Tourism

In the context of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Chinese scholars have conducted fairly little research on particular industries. Far seas (i.e., pelagic—*yuanyang*) industries have been the key focus of research

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⁴³ Chen Weiguang is a professor at the School of Finance at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. For the original article, see 陈伟光: 《论 21 世纪海上丝绸之路合作机制的联动》, 《国际经贸探索》2015 年第 3 期, 第 72-82 页。

⁴⁴Zhang Lin is a professor at the China-ASEAN Research Institute of Guangxi University. Liu Xiaoyun is from the Business School of Guangxi University. For the original article, see 张林、刘霄云: 《异质性‘外部性’视角下 21 世纪海上丝绸之路的战略研究》, 《国际贸易问题》2015 年第 3 期, 第 44-53 页。。

⁴⁵Gu Yuanyang is the Director of the World Economic Research Center at the China Foundation for International Studies. For the original article, see 谷源洋: 《大国汇集亚洲与中国“经略周边”——“21 世纪海上丝绸之路”建设》, 《亚非纵横》2014 年第 5 期第 46-56 页。

⁴⁶When he wrote this article, Liu Cigui was the Director of the State Oceanic Administration. For the original article, see 刘赐贵: 《发展海洋合作伙伴关系推进 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考》, 《国际问题研究》2014 年第 4 期, 第 122-131 页。

that has been done. Wei Youzhou, Zhao Rui, and Lin Xianghong (2014) examine China's far seas industries in the context of construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, looking specifically at both challenges and opportunities for development. They suggest that the government should adopt measures to promote the development of far seas industries, taking into account matters such as the strategic value of different industries, global distribution, industrial capacity, and management and coordination.⁴⁷ Fu Mengzi and Lou Chunhao (2015) also examine the far seas fishing industry in the context of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, especially its vital role in promoting the development of China's marine economy.⁴⁸ Bai Fuchen (2014) believes that marine fishing cooperation between states along the route of the Silk Road should be seen as a key domain promoting the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Bai also points out that Guangdong province is very well situated to support the moving out of China's far seas fishing industry and promote technological and economic cooperation in the realm of fisheries.⁴⁹ In their examination of the status of China's tourism resources along the Maritime Silk Road, Ceng Qihong and Cai Wenjing (2008) point out that formulating a regional tourism cooperation strategy can go a long way to help create a Maritime Silk Road tourism brand and enhance China's excellent traditional culture.⁵⁰ Liu Linzhi (2004) analyzes the tourism resources of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road cities of Quanzhou, Guangzhou, Ningbo, and Zhanjiang and sees tremendous value in developing tourism with marine characteristics.⁵¹

⁴⁷Wei Youzhou, Zhao Rui, and Lin Xianghong published this article as part of a research project funded by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission. For the original article, see 韦有周、赵锐、林香红:《建设“海上丝绸之路”背景下我国远洋渔业发展路径研究》,《现代经济探索》2014年第7期,第55-59页,

⁴⁸Fu Mengzi is a researcher and deputy director of the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. Lou Chenhao is a deputy research fellow and assistant director of the Maritime Strategy Institute at the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations. For the original article, see 傅梦孜、楼春豪:《关于21世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考》,《现代国际关系》2015年第3期,第54-63页。

⁴⁹Bai Fuchen is a professor at Guangdong Ocean University. For the original article, see 白福臣:《建设海加快海洋渔业合作推进海上丝绸之路建设》,《新经济》2014年第7期,第35-36页。

⁵⁰Both authors are graduate students at Fujian Normal University. For the original article, see 曾启鸿、蔡文静:《海上丝绸之路区域旅游合作研究》,《经济研究导刊》2008年第9期,第167-168页。

⁵¹ Liu Linzhi is an undergraduate journalism major at Fudan University. For the original article, see 刘林智:《海上丝绸之路极其特色旅游资源开发》,《资源开发与市场》2004年第2期,第139-140页。

E. Some Research on the Facilitation of Chinese Trade

In the context of the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Chinese scholars have conducted some research on how the initiative might impact China's economic and trade cooperation with other states. Mao Yanhua and Yang Siwei (2015) did an assessment of the level of facilitation of trade between states along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, examining the challenges that states along the route will face as they pursue economic cooperation. They propose that states set up cooperative mechanisms for trade facilitation, deepen cooperative management of ports along the route, and innovate open economic systems, with the hope of promoting the facilitation of capacity building in states along the route.⁵²

Summary and Outlook of Current Research

In summary, Chinese research on the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road has largely concentrated on macro issues and tended to use qualitative analytical methods to broadly explain the context in which the initiative is being pursued. This research analyzes both the strategic considerations of the various Silk Road states of the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the new situation confronting China's continuing reform and opening up. Moreover, Chinese scholars have affirmed its benefits for Chinese and world development and made numerous recommendations for overcoming the challenges ahead. However, the existing literature has certain shortcomings.

The first shortcoming involves the topics of inquiry. There are many countries along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and a broad range of possible topics. However, Chinese scholars have mostly concentrated on ASEAN states and the newly-emerging economies along China's periphery. Studies of domestic issues have mostly focused on Guangxi, Guangdong, and Fujian provinces. Therefore, Chinese scholars should expand their research into the countries and regions of South Asia, Japan, Korea, and Africa in order to further improve the study of coastal states. At the same time, greater attention should be paid to the strategic role of coastal and

⁵²Mao Yanhua is Vice Dean of the Free Trade Zone Comprehensive Research Institute at Zhongshan University. Yang Siwei is a PhD student at the Zhongshan University School of Management. 毛艳华、杨思维：《21世纪海上丝绸之路贸易便利化合作与能力建设》，《国际经贸探索》2015年第4期第101-112页。

riverine regions like the Bohai Economic Rim and the Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone in constructing the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

The second research shortcoming is methodological. Current research is mostly qualitative and lacks the data and models to conduct empirical analysis. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road involves many areas, such as China's industrial economy, e-commerce, and foreign trade. It has a significant impact on the development of Chinese enterprises and related industries. Scholars should delve into specific sectors and collect precise data to build models for empirical analysis in order to predict the positive and negative effects different strategic decisions may have on China's economy.

The third shortcoming involves research content. Most studies only conduct strategic analysis and suggest policy options. Research into different industries or enterprises in the context of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, however, is quite rare. Studies examining the transformation and upgrading of the industrial economy and options for enterprises investing abroad are particularly scarce. Thus, scholars should pay greater attention to China's more specific and detailed economic development issues.

The fourth shortcoming is the lack of research examining the relationship between current global value chains and the transformation of international trade. Countries are increasingly focusing on international cooperation in manufacturing. China is confronting the issue of "over capacity of high-quality production." Chinese research should look at how the country can carry out industrial transfer (*chanye zhuan yi*) and leverage its manufacturing sector to accelerate overseas investment in the context of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The aim should be to promote regional economic cooperation between China and other regions.



“One Belt, One Road” and Grand Border Defense

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In world history, great powers are bound to compete and powerful states inevitably seek to rule. There have been numerous cases of the “Thucydides Trap.” “One Belt, One Road” is a strategy of cooperation rather than confrontation. It is not a beggar thy neighbor strategy (*yilin weihe*). The world today has reached a moment where China assumes responsibilities in line with its capabilities and status. Keeping pace with China’s “Going Out” policy requires leaving its introverted style of self-development and take steps for a “grand border defense” (*da bianfang*). Border defense is no longer a line of defense in the traditional sense, or just meeting on the battlefield (*bingrong xiangjian*). It is defense and administrative control (*guankong*), as well as construction and cooperation. It is the support base and starting point for the “One Belt, One Road.” Border defense is at the junction of Chinese outward-ness (*zouchuqu*) and openness (*yinjinlai*), and together with the “One Belt, One Road” will gleam with new vigor amidst new challenges and opportunities.

[†] 侯昂好 [Hou Anghao], “一带一路”与大边防[“One Belt, One Road” and Grand Border Defense], 国防 [National Defense], No. 4, 2016, pp. 20-24.

Greater Domestic and Foreign Connectivity (*nei wai daliantongxing*) and New Ideas and Capabilities of Border and Maritime Defense

Today, no state or nation can withdraw from exchanges and cooperation and isolate itself from the world. Ties amongst all the states and nations in the world began affecting, influencing, and reinforcing each other once communication and exchange of production occurred. The “butterfly effect” is an aspect of the era of globalization. Greater domestic and foreign connectivity from the “One Belt, One Road” reflects new Chinese national pursuits in a new era. This requires new ideas and capabilities in border and maritime defense.

1. Greater connections are like the arteries of the communities of common destiny

Swedish geologist Sven Hedin once commented on the Ancient Chinese Silk Road, “Silk has become the link between different peoples, and has emerged as an endless trade route... it is no exaggeration to say that this transportation route is the longest through the old world. From a cultural-historical point of view, this is the most important link between nations and continents to have existed on Earth.” China expanded the scope of its exchanges after the Han Dynasty. Exchanges with the Korean Peninsula, Okinawa, and the Japanese Archipelago began in the East. Exchanges in the West extended into Central Asia and the Mediterranean via the opening of the Ancient Silk Road through the Gansu Corridor. Exchanges in the South spread not only across Southeast Asia, but also lead into the Maritime Silk Road. China was the easternmost power on the Ancient Silk Road, and so the ebb and rise of Chinese national strength had always been closely linked to the prosperity of the Silk Road.

China proposed the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” in 2013. The “Silk Road Economic Belt” is predicated on opening up China’s western lands for development. It will construct an expansive, open economic cooperation zone from Central Asia to Europe, extending into the vast regions to the west. The “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” aims to promote the establishment of open and cooperative maritime corridors, and create a new driving force for economic cooperation and development between coastal states.

The “One Belt, One Road” is a grand strategy that is regionally-centered but globally-oriented. As of April 2015, nearly 60 countries and regions have responded positively to the “One Belt, One Road” strategic concept. The founding member states of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank have increased to 57 and the Silk Road Fund LLC has officially been established. Outwardness, openness, friendliness, and deep cooperation of greater domestic and foreign connectivity in the “One Belt, One Road” is already apparent. Geography and [the characteristics of] the present era have combined to grant China a special position and role in constructing an interconnected network along its periphery. This network is much like a major artery, giving vitality and impetus to peripheral interests and the community of common destiny.

2. Greater connections and grand border defense breaks away from beggar thy neighbor [policies] and bring about strength, not tyranny.

Greater connectivity in the “One Belt, One Road” is an expression of China’s traditional culture of “harmony” and the new age concepts of “amity, sincerity, reciprocity, and inclusiveness.”¹ It is an extension of eastern strategic wisdom. Greater domestic and foreign connections are built upon a full range of links integrating infrastructure, regulatory systems, and personal exchanges. They [connect] infrastructure networks (land, sea, and air transportation networks) that develop outwards in all directions to achieve more complete, three-dimensional, highly-networked domestic and foreign connections [featuring] “policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and a people-to-people bonds.”² Greater domestic and foreign connections have the following special characteristics. Domestic and international markets are closely linked. There’s a greater connection between goods, capital, personnel, and regulations. Domestic development and wider regional state development are closely linked. National security is closely linked to international security. There is enhanced security interaction and the spillover effect from internal security is intensifying. The international security environment is increasingly impacting the domestic [security environment]. There is integration of domestic and foreign security issues.

¹ Translator’s note: This text comes from Xi Jinping’s book *The Governance of China*.

² Translator’s note: This text comes from a keynote speech delivered by the Chinese Ambassador to Ghana. See www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjfb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1360902.shtml

Border defense has always been a sensitive area where domestic and foreign [elements] come together. In modern times separatists have generally sought out foreign backers to collude with in secessionist activities. For example, when the Yakub Gang faced imminent defeat by the Qing Army, which had occupied the northern frontier and opened up the gateway to the southern frontier under General Zuo's command, the British Government openly pressed the Qing Government to allow Yakub to continue occupying Kashgar and serve as England's "buffer state." Faced with strong demands from those like General Zuo, the Qing Government stayed the course. Eventually the Yakub Gang was completely expelled, an example of success. On the eve of the Xinhai Revolution, the Jebtsundamba sought independence for Outer Mongolia and sent Prince Kanddorj on a mission to Russia, where he publicly received an audience with officials of the Tsarist Government. The Tsarist Russian minister to China also openly stated the Mongolians went to Russia to appeal their grievances, and that the Qing Government should take decisive measures to prevent further acts of Mongolian aristocrats in foreign countries. Unfortunately, this didn't come to the attention of the Qing Court. This caused closer collusion between reactionary Mongolian aristocrats and Tsarist Russia, further dividing China. This is an example of failure.

3. Grand border defense is a projection of the force and wisdom of the "One Belt, One Road"

As a result of the greater domestic and foreign connectivity inherent in the "One Belt, One Road" [strategy], the concept of border defense has expanded to encompass "Grand Border Defense." It is both a bridge and stage for greater domestic and foreign connection. As such, while the new situation has brought opportunities for border and maritime defense, it has also made it more challenging. Greater domestic and foreign connections engender tremendous vitality; however, greater vitality often also conceals larger and more uncertain security threats. Terrorism on land and sea, transnational crime, water resource security and environmental security are such examples. While greater connections increase domestic and foreign integration, they also bring immense pressure on the administrative control of border and maritime defense. Greater domestic and foreign connections strengthen the transnationality, commonality (*gonggongxing*), and spillover effects of non-traditional security. [Non-traditional] threats are more diverse and interwoven, and show trends of regionalization and internationalization. This

requires that grand border defense not be just defense and management, but also cooperation and construction. Grand border defense must be a stronger and closer integration of military, political, and diplomatic [efforts]. It must actively provide the necessary public goods; promote construction of support mechanisms for security cooperation, and mechanisms for communication, coordination and cooperation; and conduct effective public diplomacy. It also requires higher efficiency and greater security.

Overall, grand border defense within the “One Belt, One Road” is the junction where domestic and foreign [elements] meet. It is the projection of national force and wisdom. It is where hard border defense and soft border defense join. With respect to conceptions and capabilities, grand border defense will bring the pace and rhythm of China’s “Going Out” [strategy] up to speed. It will become a strong support for the “One Belt, One Road” [initiative]. At the same time, it must eliminate the “China Threat Theory,” create a “community of common destiny,” and make new contributions to mold China in the image of a responsible great power.

Great Outward Advancement and the New Position and Role of Grand Border Defense

French historian [Alexis de] Tocqueville once brilliantly analyzed the differences between large and small countries. He perceptively noted “the goal of small countries is national liberty, affluence, and happy lives, while large countries are destined to create greatness and be everlasting while bearing responsibility and pain.” Today, China is doing away with the fond illusion of “tyranny of strength” and returning to its roots. The proposal of the “One Belt, One Road” is both a continuation of the historical Silk Road of 2000 years ago as well as an extension of the new century’s path of cooperation and win-win.

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In the context of globalization and the great outward advancement (*waixiang dajinqxing*) of the “One Belt, One Road” strategy, border defense is no longer a linear type of border defense in the traditional sense. It departs from [the notions of] “defense of boundaries” and “guarding of the border” and instead should be seen as “grand border defense.” Grand border defense is not just defense of a point or line. It is not simply where [forces] meet on the battlefield. The content and

significance of grand border defense has been enriched conceptually, and in terms of space and mode (*fangshi*).

1. The great outward advancement of the “One Belt, One Road”

“Idle boast the strong pass is a wall of iron; with firm strides we are crossing its summit.”³

Centuries after the decline of the ancient Silk Road, China’s “One Belt, One Road” strategic concept is now outlining anew the prospects of Asian and European cooperation. These prospects are outward looking, open, and cooperative.

Seclusion once made China—a large country that was the center of Asian civilization—dormant and isolated in a thick cocoon. The creation of China’s remarkable continental civilization and its magnificent maritime operations ended in silence as it gave up the oceans and world to the progressive Western powers. Eventually China was even deprived of the power to survive. Seclusion is clearly a kind of insecure self-defense, tantamount to spinning a cocoon around oneself (*zuojian zifu*).

The East India Company of the tiny country of the Netherlands once monopolized half of global trade. Even trade in the Baltic and North Seas was completely in the hands of the Dutch. An externally-oriented economy was seen by the Dutch as the lifeline of the country’s development. This concept turned a small country that occupied a corner of the world into the “cabbies of the sea” that shook half the world. If Britain had always kept its sight and power strictly bound to Europe, then the island nation would have never become the world’s factory or the “empire on which the sun never sets.” Britain was far ahead in the 19th century precisely because it went beyond Europe, embarked on new routes, and created new ideas and technologies. Although the US economy developed rapidly and experienced growing trade at the end of the 19th century, the whole of its society lacked a strong sense of outward development or the impulse to build global power. Sticking to glorious “isolationism” and inward-looking development was the consensus of its politicians and thinkers. The emergence of Mahan’s theory of sea power impacted politicians and diplomats like Theodore Roosevelt. The gaze of the US was pulled away from North America by the ideas of sea power theory, and extended across the world’s oceans. Only

³ Translator’s note: This is an excerpt from a poem written by Mao Zedong.

then did America's foreign and military policies undergo major transformation, completely changing the US from an inward-looking country into an outward-looking and progressive country. From then on, the US began to advance from North America to the entire world.

Some have aptly characterized the "One Belt, One Road" as "linking the Asia-Pacific economic sphere in the East, tying together the European economic sphere, and connecting Europe and Asia. It will radiate to over 40 countries, covering more than three billion people." This strategy is a typical "Going Out" national development strategy, reflecting initiative, progression, and outward orientation.

2. Outward-looking border and maritime defense should break away from tradition

In some respect, concepts are power. Altering a concept is to reverse direction and find new focal points. The direction of border and maritime defense must also be calibrated if the strategy of great outward advancement is to be fully implemented. [This entails] the construction and development of an outward-advancing grand border defense and grand maritime defense (*dahai fang*).

Traditional Chinese border and maritime defense is typically the inward-looking kind. Cultural influence decreased as you left [China's borders]. The national security concept was "the leaders guard the four frontiers" (*tianzi shou siyi*). The frontiers were a cocoon for the center, a barrier for protecting the security of the core. Chinese perception of the ocean underwent a long and tortuous process through four periods of conceptual change. In the first period, China saw maritime issues in terms of terrestrial security, as merely a barrier for land. This concept sheltered China for thousands of years. In the second period, maritime issues were only seen in terms of defending the coast. This was exhibited in the protection of harbors and defense of the coast during the Opium War. In the third period, maritime issues were seen in terms of near seas defense (*jin hai fang wei*), which was not the true ocean. This was displayed in China's disastrous defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). In the fourth period, the vision of spanning the oceans was contemplated, finally linking maritime defense with [China's] embrace of the wider world.

Currently, the situation of border and maritime defense is undergoing significant change. The task of transforming border and maritime defense is thus naturally more prominent. Even though frontiers are an expanse of defensive lines for national sovereignty, they should however become launch bases (*chufa jidi*) for the outward expansion of national interests. Frontiers should become forward positions integrating the interior with the exterior to safeguard national security. As a launch base they should support the outward development of national interests into peripheral regions and distant waters (*yuanhai*). The frontier development zones (*fazhandai*) should connect with peripheral development zones. Coastal development zones should [link up] with the development zones of the four seas⁴ and two oceans (the northwestern Pacific Ocean and northern Indian Ocean). As forward positions, frontiers should be powerful supports for advancing the front lines of security outward in order to maximize external strategic depth (*waixiangxing zhanlve zongshen*). They should form a security screen (*anquan yanhuquan*) for the coastal economic interior of frontier regions. Traditional border and maritime defense is defensive, prevents foreign invasions, and safeguards national territorial integrity and sovereign security. To strengthen its defensive functions, border and maritime defense must vigorously forge ahead in upgrading how the concept of defense is conceived. The concept of *fangyu* (防禦) must be replaced with the concept of *fangwei* (防卫).⁵ It must focus on eliminating threats at their source, especially in eliminating the sources of terrorist forces, separatists, and extremists. It must combine strategic defense with tactical offense to implement conditional preemption (*youtiaojian de xianfazhiren*).

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It must extend defense (*fangwei*) to punish invaders at the frontline of border defense.

⁴ Translator's note: The "four seas" include the Bohai Gulf, Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea.

⁵ Translator's note: Although the two phrases *fangyu* (防禦) and *fangwei* (防卫) both are translated in English as "defense," they have quite distinct meanings. Whereas *fangyu* is more a fundamental type of operation in warfare whereby it is used in combination with the offensive, *fangwei* is a measure to protect important strategic objectives. *Fangwei* is more proactive in its actions to ensure the security of an objective while *fangyu* is more passive. The objective of *fangyu* is to resist and attrite an attack to diminish the enemy's offensive power in preparation for a counter-offensive. *Fangwei* is persistent and varied in the types of forces used, while *fangyu* is only conducted during major combat operations across both exterior and interior lines with larger scales of force employment. In this sense, the author of this article is implying a change in what constitutes defensive security actions, utilizing the more appropriate Chinese term.

3. The great outward advancement of the idea of “harmony” (*hehe*)

Throughout world history, outward-looking countries have advanced through war and by relying on gunboats. Armed force has frequently been a driver of human exchanges. The cultural intercourse of the world is interwoven with a great deal of blood and tears of the weak who are bullied by the strong. Over thousands of years the Chinese have formed the ideas of benevolence and good neighborliness, the preciousness of harmony, and the accommodation of differences. This is also the historical root of China’s foreign policy of friendship and partnership towards its neighbors. Today, the time has arrived for the Chinese people to become “Chinese,” that is, to truly take up the mantle of reviving the world’s oldest civilization [i.e., the Chinese, or *huaxia*, civilization]. This naturally includes assuming world responsibilities through the spirit of “accommodating differences” and “the virtue of tolerance.” Today, China is still focused on the states in its region. It is unlike the contemporary western countries that built colonies around the world to expand their spheres of influence. The “One Belt, One Road” strategy engages and refines the concept of “harmony.” It is an improvement of human civilization.

The “harmony” of the “One Belt, One Road” is geographically based in Asia, and radiates from China towards Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, North Africa, as well as Central and Eastern Europe. It takes Eurasia as a platform for cooperation. The countries along its route are the primary partners for cooperation, yet cooperation is not limited to just them. [The “One Belt, One Road”] welcomes the cooperation of any interested and sincere countries or regions. In terms of a model for cooperation, [it should] conform to the principles of equality, mutual consultation, joint construction, sharing, mutual benefit and win-win. The “One Belt, One Road” should be constructed on a common schedule and roadmap. Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said that the “One Belt, One Road” is not just a “solo act” from China, but is a “symphony” of all countries participating.

No country can stand without a defense. The more open “One Belt, One Road” policies are, the greater the strategic issue of defending (*fangwei*) grand border defense becomes, as well as the need for constructing a reliable underlying platform for strategic expansion. Security of the border and maritime defense system is a crucial support for the “Going Out” [strategy]. The firmer this support is, the more stable and far-reaching our movement will be. Large countries

will create greatness and eternalness while bearing responsibility and pain. The mission and value of border defense for great powers is similarly based on this.

“One Belt, One Road” and the Integration of Land and Sea

China is positioned on the coast at the intersection of the eastern part of Eurasia and the Western part of the Pacific Ocean. Geopolitically, it is characterized by being both a land and sea power. For much of history China was aligned “on land with its back to the sea.” It marched out to the sea a very small number of times, and did so passively. China was unable to leverage the geopolitical advantages of being both a land and sea power, and instead often got stuck between land and sea lines and internal divisions. Strategically, China must work through the realities of a sea-land dichotomy, and choose to complete overall planning of both the land and the sea (*luhaitongchou*). Today, China’s unprecedented development has made it the biggest variable in the international community. This has led to Western misunderstanding, hostility, encirclement and containment from both the landward and seaward directions. The concept of the “One Belt, One Road” integrates the “two Silk Roads,” namely the terrestrial silk road and the maritime silk road. It is the first time development of the Silk Road went beyond the geographical limits of the Ancient Silk Road and [broke] the old rules whereby the sea and land were treated as distinct. It has drawn a blueprint for connecting sea and land. This urgently requires an enhanced overall planning concept for the sea and land, and an expansion of the content of planning. [It also requires] integration of the two strategic directions and their respective types of resources and cultures to form a superior, synergistic, and complete border and maritime defense force. This requires a stance whereby land and sea are collaborative and coordinated.

1. Conduct overall planning for the two strategic directions of land and sea

As a land and sea country, it is critically important for China to formulate a strategy for handling the relationship between the landward and seaward directions. Conducting overall planning for the land and sea firstly involves the planning of these two strategic directions. It is critical to avoid getting caught in a pincer move by the enemy (*fubei shoudi*).

For almost 600 years, China has been unable to get rid of the constraints and vexations of this dilemma. In the 1870s, the Qing Dynasty simultaneously faced the threat of strong neighbors on land and sea from Tsarist Russia and Japan. The country ultimately collapsed because it didn't have the strength to realize its combined land and sea strategy. In the 1960s, China simultaneously faced land and sea threats from two superpowers, the USSR and the US. Although China's "two-line" and "bows drawn on both sides" (*liangmian kaigong*) strategy protected national security, it came at a heavy price. In the 1970s, China made a timely strategic adjustment. It implemented a "one-line" countermeasure by normalizing relations with the US, ultimately avoiding the same geopolitical tragedy experienced by the late Qing.

History reveals that no matter how strong a single country is, it is difficult to stay strong in two spheres over the long-term. Survival and victory in international competition is predicated on strategic concentration. The implementation of both a land and sea strategy is not the equal use of force in both directions, but rather having focal points within each. China's current strategic center of gravity should shift to the sea according to realities of its land and maritime security situations. As Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes wrote in *Red Star Over the Pacific*, "China realized it had the continent in one direction and the sea in the other direction," and "the scope of Chinese activities is expanding into waters farther away from China's coast."⁶

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They describe China's shift towards the ocean as an "extraordinary behavior." [They state] "Even Alfred Thayer Mahan could respect such an ability and determination to mobilize national resources."

2. Plan overall support for the use of both land and sea resources

The complex process of material and spatial energy transmission is present between the two different spaces of the ocean and land. Although the Ancient Silk Road advanced prosperity on land, advantages at sea were delayed and had no impact. This caused China to fall behind in the Age of Discovery. The closed-door policy resulted in the bullying of China by the Western world. History proves that confinement to only understanding and utilizing land resources cannot meet

⁶ Translator's note: Did not locate the original English text.

the development [needs] of a land and sea country. China gradually began the development path of becoming a major maritime state (*haiyang daguo*). It also gradually [began] to understand, explore, and exploit marine resources. “Marine resources” in this context not only refers to the oil and natural gas in the seabed, but also in the strategic sense as a spatial resource. Overall planning of support for the use of both land and sea resources integrates relatively isolated sea-land systems into a new body. Not only does it have a certain amount of space on land in which to maneuver (*zhouxuan*); it also has resources available from the maritime barrier and from sea lanes.

Conducting overall planning for sea lanes and land routes can yield support from both types of resources. Sea lanes are themselves a kind of resource; however they entail a great deal of risk. Opening up land routes, however, can neutralize, distribute, and reduce this risk, alleviating the “Malacca Dilemma.” Such a land route extends from Kunming all the way to Myanmar’s coastal ports. [It also includes] the Sino-Pakistan highway, going all the way to the Port of Gwadar. Upon Gwadar Port’s completion in 2017, one will be able to go from China’s remote western region directly to the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Suez Canal. [It also comprises] the routes from the ports of Bangladesh to the rim of the Indian Ocean. Eventually these will form a land and sea passage to the Indian Ocean.

A moat around heaven becomes a thoroughfare (*tianqian bian tongtu*) and the separation of sea and land eventually disappears. The prosperity of “countless bells ring from camels passing through the desert that should be carrying white silk to the City of Anxi”⁷ will benefit China and the world.

3. Conduct overall planning for innovation in continental and maritime culture

It can be said that there are two major cultural systems in Chinese history. This is a history of the conflict between continental culture and maritime culture, a conflict that even resulted in the decline and splitting up of the country. A key subject in Chinese culture is the conservatism (*shoucheng*) of the central part of China and its tough and durable continental civilization. This is very different from the openness and mercantile maritime civilizations of the eastern part of the

⁷ Translator’s note: This is a quote from Zhang Ji, a Tang Dynasty Poet who lived after the end of the Ancient Silk Road.

country. Traditional Chinese culture was secluded in the continent, and feared the ocean. Just as Wang Yiwei states, “there is no lack of maritime genes in Chinese civilization. These have merely been suppressed for a long time by continental genes.” From one perspective, strategy is preceded by culture. Maritime defense (*haifang*) construction is an area where two different cultures clash and mix. [China] should make full use of the advantages of both cultures and thought. Conducting overall planning for innovation in both continental and maritime culture would build a spirit of the age, recast the people’s character, and create a new kind of civilization.

Since ancient times, the heart of China’s continental culture was in its ancient capitals. It radiated from its center on the Yellow River outward to the entire East Asian region, and formed a Chinese cultural sphere. The central government was long plagued by the need to decide whether to focus on maritime defense (*haifang*) or on frontier defense (*saifang*), or whether to go out to the sea or move westward (*xijin*). In 1935, the geographer Hu Huanyong used the Aihui-Tengchong Line to divide China into two halves, the northwest and the southeast. Known as the “Hu Huanyong Line,” it displayed the gap between East and West China, and the disconnect between the land and the sea. This was an economic, cultural, and conceptual disconnect. The “One Belt, One Road” strategy broke through the internal “Hu Huanyong Line” and the external disconnect between land and sea to make clear that China will simultaneously “go out” on both the land and the sea. China will not only leverage its advantages as a continental civilization, but also advance the development of its maritime civilization. This will coordinate and advance China’s continental and maritime civilizations together so that it can truly become a land and sea power.

In the current context, cultural integration refers more to the absorption of advanced maritime culture from the rest of the world and plugging its characteristics into traditional continental culture. The spread of Chinese maritime culture inland advances along nodes (*dian*) and axes (*zhou*). The nodes are coastal port cities. One of the axes is the 5800 kilometer coastline around the Bohai Sea region. Others would be the transit lines extending inland from each of the coastal ports. Today, the ancient terrestrial Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road will intersect and reshape the political and economic structure of the world. China’s land is vast and faces the northwestern Pacific Ocean with a long coastline. As the dominant country on the east part of the

Eurasian continent, China's destiny should be toward the ocean. Let the sea breeze blow just as the flowers blossom in the warm spring.

The French mathematician and thinker Pascal has a famous saying, "the course of progress must be replaced by progress itself."⁸ Once the vast creativity of the great Chinese nation begins to "take off again," this in itself will signify great progress.

⁸ Translator's note: The original quotation not found.



“Marching West,” the Rebalance of China’s Geo-Strategy*

By Wang Jisi (Dean of the Peking University College of International Relations)

In recent years, the Obama government has proposed a concept of a “strategic rebalance,” with a “return to Asia” as its theme. Russia, India, the European Union and other key states have in turn adjusted their own geo-strategies. A new round of competition between great powers involving geopolitics and geo-economics is intensifying. As the focus of America’s strategy “moves East” and Europe, India, and Russia “look East,” China, which is at the heart of the Asia-Pacific, should not limit its vision to coastal territories, or traditional competitors and partners. Instead, it should formulate a “marching west” (*xijin*) strategy.

Development of the Western Parts of the Country Call for a New Strategic Pillar

Ancient China’s economic and political centers were in the interior (*neilu*). The Chinese nation almost entirely lacks a history of extending land borders overseas. The Silk Road was an important bridge connecting the civilizations and commercial activities of the East and West. But beginning in early modern times, when the Western Powers and Japan militarily and economically opened up China they primarily came from the seaward direction. Since then, modern industry and large cities have been concentrated along the eastern seaboard. In the early period of China’s Reform and Opening Up, America, Europe, Japan and the “Four Dragons” of

* 王缉思[Wang Jisi] “西进”，中国地缘战略的再平衡 [“Marching West,” the Rebalance of China’s Geo-Strategy”] 环球时报 [Global Times], 17 October 2012, URL: http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2012-10/3193760.html

East Asia were China's main partners in economic intercourse. The southeastern part of China first established economic zones, strengthening the advantaged position of the coast. In contrast, the economic and societal development of the western regions lagged for a long period of time. They had little contact with the outside world, and this contact took place only later. It was not until 2000 when the central government proposed a plan to develop the western regions that the situation started to improve.

[Plans to] establish and perfect the geostrategic pillar of the overall strategy for developing China's western regions should contain the following elements. First, [China should] conduct overall planning and cooperate with many other states to ensure that unimpeded transportation to/from the rich oil and gas resources and other commodities of Central Asia. China can divide them into southern, central, and northern lines and accelerate construction of a China-dominated "New Silk Road. In the east it should start in China's eastern regions, extending through the central regions of Eurasia, reaching the eastern shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the coastal states of the Mediterranean in the west. The route from China's western regions to the Indian Ocean should be constructed as soon as possible. Second, [China should] expand trade cooperation with and economic aid to the states to the west (i.e., South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Caspian states). It should also create a cooperative development fund. From 2001-2011, China's trade with South Asia and Western Asia increased 30 fold (during the same time period, China's total trade increased seven fold), with its proportion of total trade rising from 2 percent to 9 percent. In the past seven years, China's trade with Arab countries grew 10 percentage points faster than growth in China's overall trade. This shows both the necessity and potential for China to "march west." Third, the harmony and stability of areas like Tibet and Xinjiang have been impacted by threats from separatism, religious fundamentalism, terrorism, and other hostile forces beyond our borders. Cross-border crime is severe and has become a big concern for national security. As a result, China needs to formulate and implement an integrated foreign-domestic, mutually supporting, and targeted social and religious policy and education plan, and build a strategic screen (*pingzhang*) for national security and harmony between China's ethnic groups. Fourth, [China should] increase diplomatic expenditures in the countries to our west. It should research their national conditions and religious situations, strengthen societal and human exchanges, convert China's economic advantages within the

region into political advantages and soft power, and expand China's room for strategic maneuvering.

Why China Needs a “Marching West” Strategy

The countries to our west constitute a core zone of the Eurasian continent. This region is the source of several different human civilizations. It has rich natural resources. But due to various reasons, in the coming years many countries in the region will have a hard time maintaining stability and prosperity. The political chaos and cross-border conflicts (national, religious, and sectarian) of a number of countries in the region will harm the global order and great power relations. They will severely harm China's quickly expanding economic interests and political influence in the region. Thus, China cannot stand aloof. It must adopt a proactive new posture and take action in this vast area.

This region is a confluence of interests and a space of competition between the European Union, Russia, India, America, Japan, and China. Unlike Western Europe and East Asia, the states of western Asia do not have and will not form a U.S.-dominated regional military alliance (or counter-alliance). Moreover, the region still shows no signs of regional economic integration. Great power coordination mechanisms and rules for competition and cooperation have not yet been established. Traditional great power spheres of influence are constantly overlapping and being re-shaped.

However, America has already taken the offensive. In the fall of 2011, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton publicized America's “New Silk Road” plan. In this plan, “Turkmenistan's oil and gas fields will satisfy Pakistan and India's increasing resource needs, providing significant cross-border income for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajikistan's cotton will be manufactured into Indian cloth. Afghanistan's furniture and fruit will appear in Astana, Bombay, and places further afield.” Simply put, this plan aims to create an international economic and transportation network centered on Afghanistan, connecting Central Asia and South Asia, and extending to the Middle East. Its near term aim is obviously related to answering the question of how to maintain America's interests after it removes its troops from Afghanistan.

Russia regards the Caspian region and the countries of Central Asia as part of its “backyard.” It ardently desires to maintain its traditional position there. The Caspian region and Central Asia have become the primary direction of European Union resource diplomacy. On matters of regional security and politics, Europe and the U.S. will maintain cooperation over the long term, and when necessary they will leverage the military influence of NATO. India sees the Middle East and Central Asia as important directions in which to promote diversification of its energy imports. It is trying to build a peripheral oil and gas supply network. Japan’s economic interests and security concerns in the region are also on the rise.

From this we can see that promoting a “western march” of China’s economic and political activities and national interests has important strategic significance. First, a “western march” benefits the creation of a much more balanced relationship between China and the U.S. It will promote mutual trust between China and the U.S. The U.S. National Security Council, State Department, Department of Defense, and other policymaking departments have all subordinated China policy to East Asia policy. Their leading officials have always been East Asia specialists. Obama’s “strategic shift to the East” focusses on East Asia. The U.S. has knowingly or unknowingly “fixed” China as an East Asian country. This has made it easy for Chinese people to limit their own strategic outlook. Sino-U.S. competition in East Asia is increasingly turning into a “zero sum situation.” But if China “marches west,” then there will be great potential for cooperation between the two countries on matters such as investment, resources, anti-terrorism, non-proliferation, and regional stability. Moreover, there’s almost no risk of military confrontation. On the question of maintaining stability in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, America urgently desires that China provide assistance.

Secondly, China's economic interests in states to the west have revealed a good opportunity to engage in major power multilateral negotiations and raise its international status. Compared to East Asia, China usually has no connection with these states (outside of India), presenting fewer factors to create resistance or conflict. China sits in a relatively advantageous position for geo-economic and geopolitical competition and cooperation. Formulating fair rules together with other powers involved in molding the security and development environment for this region will be beneficial for China's interests and help shape an image of a responsible power.

Strengthening and expanding the roles of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, building the "New Silk Road" together with concerned powers and regional states, and promoting the construction of multilateral security mechanisms and peaceful resolution of regional conflicts are all possible starting points for China.

"Marching West" must be strategically planned

There's also risk in the "march west" opportunity. The first risk is that the west is far from being a pure land of sunshine. Many states are politically unstable, relatively poor, and rife with ethnic conflict. Once mired in conflict like some western states have been, it becomes very difficult to withdraw. China not only must dare to "creatively intervene" but also must have plans and methods for crisis management. The second risk are the various complicated relationships between these states to the west. The Middle East has the regional powers of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Israel all wrestling amongst themselves, and South Asia has the intractable dispute between India and Pakistan. China's taking a position on any specific diplomatic issue will inevitably offend some countries, which requires maintaining a delicate balance. The third risk is that China's "march west" will inexorably incite doubts and wariness among other countries. All effort must be made to avoid their joining together to crowd out China. China must avoid giving the appearance of grasping for hegemony, power, or profit. It should avoid showing a posture of "breaking American containment." It should not view normal competition as a zero-sum situation, or politicize economic issues. The fourth risk is that it's easy to be accused of "resource plunder" or "new colonialism." Investment must pay attention to local environmental protection, and people's livelihoods and employment. It should strive to

improve consular regulations, protecting as well as teaching and managing local Chinese expatriates.

In comparison to its understanding of the countries and regions of the US, Europe, East Asia and Russia, China's understanding of the various states to its west is even shallower. China lacks people proficient in languages such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Kazakh, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and Sinhalese, and there are only a handful of domestic think tanks and university departments that research these regions. More official or semi-official think tanks and bilateral or multilateral international forums of civil academic departments should be organized to promote research into the various states of the regions to the west. China should also cultivate talent and people in these countries who "know China." Long-term plans must be drawn up and sufficient financial support given in order to integrate the academic resources of the various diplomatic, economic, and cultural education departments and strengthen the synergies of "marching west."

This paper doesn't propose that "marching west" become a clearly written national foreign strategy, but rather to emphasize that in the ever-changing situation of world geo-economic and geopolitical sectors, there must some geo-strategic "rebalances" of thought that are new, global in nature, and are not mutually exclusive of land dominance and sea power.



Strategic Strongpoints along the “Belt and Road” and Building Military Diplomacy*

Liu Lin[†]

On 11 July 2017, a ceremony was held at the naval port of Zhanjiang in Guangdong province to commemorate the establishment of the People’s Liberation Army support base in Djibouti and the departure of the deploying troops. This was the first step in China’s construction of strategic strongpoints or overseas replenishment sites. China is advancing its construction of the “Belt and Road,” [but] the overall situation in some areas is unstable due to the diverse and complex situations of countries along the route. [This has] given prominence to some national security issues. Security risks and challenges cannot be ignored. [We] must create strategic strongpoints in support of this. At the same time, economic, diplomatic, political, and military resources must be integrated to support “Belt and Road” construction. So, what does the creation of strategic strongpoints mean for the “Belt and Road”? What role can military diplomacy play? What challenges confront military diplomacy and strategic strongpoint construction? These are all questions that need to be considered.

Strategic Strongpoints and “Belt and Road” Construction

Strategic strongpoints are a concept first raised during the rise of the modern West. Traditional colonial powers paid a great deal of attention to overseas strongpoints during their overseas expansion. The American strategic theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan conducted a systematic discussion on the importance of overseas bases and strategic strongpoints. He found that without

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military bases, naval ships would be unable to go farther than their own coast in wartime. [They would be stuck] like land birds. Almost all major powers have historically prioritized the construction of overseas bases and replenishment sites. [They were acquired] through various means, such as commercial purchases, signed treaties, forced leases, and sometimes even the use of force. For example, during its confrontation with the French navy in the early 18th century, Britain's navy relied on force to capture the Strait of Gibraltar, giving Britain firm control over the base at the mouth of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. In modern times, great powers tend to utilize more peaceful, legal means to establish overseas bases. The means became even more "mild" after the end of the Cold War. They have been acquired through the provision of political support, security promises, and economic aid.

With the rise of China, more and more enterprises are going abroad in search of much-needed factors of production. Asset allocation is increasingly targeting overseas markets and more personnel are working, studying, and traveling abroad. Trends show that China's overseas interests are expanding by leaps and bounds. China is becoming a global power and will inevitably integrate into a more complex and diverse global environment. [Its] overseas interests are confronted by growing risks and challenges. At present, most incidents involving the security of China's overseas interests [occur] far from the homeland. These incidents are brimming with various kinds of historical and real-world conflicts involving national, religious, and great powers interests, with all kinds of complex and conflicting views. However, China is still not powerful enough to construct a system with global coverage to protect its overseas interests. Finding overseas strategic strongpoints has thus become a key choice. China does not pursue hegemonic policies or engage in neocolonialism, but it has a right, the necessity, and the capability to advance the globalization of its system for protecting overseas interests.

The Belt and Road initiative makes construction of strategic strongpoints seem more urgent.

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Carefully selecting countries to host strategic strongpoints helps focus use of limited resources on strategic strongpoints themselves and increases the efficiency of resource allocation; fosters the congruence of interests between China and relevant countries, accelerates the fusion of interests, and avoids strategic risk; accelerates the construction of important domains, important projects, and important hubs, and serves a demonstration function; and improves China's

strategic position within the international system, bolsters the certainty of China's external environment, and increases China's influence within the international system. In his speech at the opening ceremony of the 2013 China-ASEAN Expo, Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the need to build the Maritime Silk Road oriented towards ASEAN, and to create strategic strongpoints for hinterland development.[‡]

Belt and Road strategic strongpoints refer to relevant countries or places that have key significance and serve important support functions in promoting the construction of the Belt and Road. They can be a specific country, or they can be overseas bases (*haiwai jidi*) that rely on important ports. In general, strategic strongpoints have great strategic importance. They can exert a fairly good demonstration and knock-on effect. Moreover, we should already have pretty good bilateral relations with countries hosting strategic strongpoints. When building strategic strongpoints we should comprehensively consider political, economic, security, and other factors. They should be set up rationally and comprehensively.

The establishment of a logistics support facility in Djibouti enables the Chinese Navy to normalize patrols along the coast of Africa. This allows the Navy to better assume international tasks including operations such as anti-piracy, disaster relief, and refugee transfers. Going forward, China can consider placing strategic strongpoints in other strategically important locations, especially along energy and trade routes and extremely important straits and choke points. China's overseas strategic strongpoints will not become strongpoints for a hegemonic strategy. Rather they will provide support for China's efforts to safeguard its overseas interests, and create favorable conditions for cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road. Its biggest function will be risk prevention, not pursuit of "privileges."

Military Diplomacy Benefits the Consolidation of Strategic Strongpoints

Military diplomacy has long been an important way and means for a state to safeguard its security and expand national interests. Yet to date there has not been a universally-accepted

[‡] Translators' note: Li Keqiang's use of the term *zhanlue zhidian* (strategic strongpoint) at the 2013 China-ASEAN Expo was cited in the 2015 "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Belt and Road." However, the official English translation renders the term as "strategic propellers." See www.china.org.cn/chinese/2015-09/15/content_36591064.htm

definition or understanding of the term military diplomacy. Foreigners seldom use the term military diplomacy. They tend to prefer the expression defense diplomacy (*fangwu waijiao*), or they use the two interchangeably. In the eyes of foreign scholars, defense diplomacy is an important tool for national diplomatic and security policy. In recent years, as China's military diplomacy has become increasingly active, Chinese scholars have grown more interested in theoretical and policy research on military diplomacy. They have created a rudimentary system of theory. In general, Chinese scholars believe that the aim of military diplomacy is to realize, safeguard, promote, and expand national interests, and that it obeys and serves the country's overall strategy. Military diplomacy is a field in which military affairs and diplomacy intersect. It is an extension of national diplomacy into the realm of military affairs. It is both a component part of national military activities and a form of diplomacy. Specifically, military diplomacy entails high-level military interactions, exchanges involving military education and training, military assistance, foreign arms sales, joint exercises and training, ship visits, and cooperation in national defense industries. Broadly speaking, overseas non-combat operations such as suppressing piracy and performing disaster relief are also considered forms of military diplomacy. Military diplomacy serves the following functions: it ensures the realization of the national interest, creates a favorable disposition of power, increases trust to relieve the "security dilemma," achieves a shock effect to deter current and prospective opponents from acts of war, promotes the development of national defense construction and military construction, and [collects] intelligence to aid policy making.

Military diplomacy can play a unique role in the promotion of the Belt and Road. First, creating strategic strongpoints gives military diplomacy a bigger responsibility. The expansion of China's national interests will not be smooth sailing. It will inevitably create increasing security requirements. These relate to issues such as the security of strategic resources and strategic sea lanes, expansion of space for strategic interests, and national security responsibilities. The military should provide strong strategic support. China's national interests are expanding to new places, and the mission of the military must extend to these new places.

The "going out" of China's military forces has created a demand for strategic strongpoints. Since 2008, the Chinese Navy has deployed a total of 26 escort task forces to the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters to conduct escort operations. Because these operations take place in areas remote from Chinese territory, the lack of base support has caused difficulties with supplying them.

Thus, we became conscious of the need to select a port with good natural conditions, convenient access to needed supplies and materials (*wuzi choucuo fangbian*), and good communications at which to build a supply base and provide our ships with the chance to take turns stopping for supplies and temporary repairs. Of course, the construction of strategic strongpoints is chiefly driven by civil aims. It provides support for companies and personnel going abroad as part of the Belt and Road. In this situation, the employment of military forces is not primarily about directly using military power against a counterpart. It is more about potential use. Or, to put it another way, the purpose is to leverage the role of military diplomacy. For example, participating in real troop operations such as non-combat military operations not only can allow a country to maintain military presence in corresponding regions. By demonstrating our power we can also impact the policies of states with whom we have contradictions or conflicts of interests. Active and effective military diplomacy activities can also induce target countries to implement policies or measures that favor us in matters of politics, security, diplomacy, and economics, among others.

In recent years, China has actively participated in international peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and anti-piracy, among other operations. Not only has it safeguarded its own legitimate rights and interests; it has also upheld international responsibilities and obligations. Moreover, China's military diplomatic activities have promoted the development of relations with countries along the Gulf of Aden and other parts of the Indian Ocean. This has created conditions for China to establish and safeguard strategic strongpoints. In fact, other countries have also done this. Many places within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) are very remote from the U.S. homeland. The functions of PACOM are not limited to preparing for and conducting war. It also assumes important military diplomacy functions. Every year, PACOM forces conduct frequent port visits to countries in the region, and they hold many joint military exercises with regional allies and partners.

Second, military diplomacy helps clear up the strategic suspicions held by strategic strongpoint countries or countries hosting overseas support points and improve China's great power image. The Belt and Road initiative has gained the support of a number of countries, but several countries still hold suspicions. Some countries still have this or that security issue with China. Military diplomacy seeks to strengthen military relations and military cooperation with each country. Promoting military diplomacy helps raise strategic trust between countries, and dispel

suspicious. In recent years, China has been involved in a number of maritime search/rescue and aid operations, including disaster relief after Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines and the search for the missing Malaysian Airlines flight 370. It also successfully conducted tasks such as escorting ships evacuating Chinese people from Libya and providing emergency water for the Maldives. In 2015, China sent ships to Yemen to conduct emergency operations to evacuate Chinese people. Not only did we safely and expeditiously evacuate our own compatriots; we also evacuated citizens from several other countries including India and Pakistan. Internationally, this had a huge impact. Such operations show China's sincerity to become a responsible great power, and win the general approval, respect, and trust of the international community.

Third, comprehensively developing and deepening military security relations will increase or strengthen the military and security dimensions of China's relations with strategic strongpoint countries and remove obstacles in the military security realm that arise as state interests expand. Great powers are all very adept at using means such as military assistance to strengthen military connections between governments and strengthen the extent of these states' reliance on them. When developing its foreign relations, China has long emphasized political and economic relations. Military and security relations have been comparatively weak. This is true in the case of China's relations with developed Western countries, developing countries, and neighboring countries. Therefore, exploiting military diplomacy to deepen multi-level military and security cooperation between China and these countries can help build strategic relations with them and reduce security pressures (*anquan yali*). Or to put it another way, military diplomacy serves to make the status of strategic strongpoint countries more pragmatic. Among some of our neighboring countries, the military plays an important and even a dominant role in national political life. This is the case in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Pakistan, and others. Engaging in military diplomacy with these countries will have a bigger effect with respect to molding the consciousness of the elites and promoting their participation in the Belt and Road.

Military Diplomacy during the Building of Strategic Strongpoints: Issues of Concern

Military diplomacy must obey and serve overall national diplomacy. Therefore, in the process of building strategic strongpoints China should not over-emphasize the role of military diplomacy.

Military diplomacy should play a supporting role. Moreover, it should place civil affairs and economics front and center. It should mix the military among civilians (*yu jun yu min*), and use civilians to conceal the military (*yi min yan jun*). When engaging in overseas military operations, Great Britain will often conduct civil activities first and military operations second. Moreover, throughout the entire operation, they emphasize coordination and complementarity between civil operations and military operations. They downplay the military connotations. Additionally, when promoting military diplomacy we should pay attention to method and rhythm. We cannot aggressively push our cause and be impatient to make achievements. Rather, we should consult with the target country and take things step by step. We should consider the particular needs of the strategic strongpoint countries, using a differentiated approach to move things forward. We must respect our counterparts and avoid making our counterparts feel that China is too overbearing. Doing otherwise would not help promote mutual trust with the host country, and it may increase these countries' concerns that they will be used as China's strategic tools.

Given the sensitivity of military diplomacy, when engaging in military cooperation with countries hosting strategic strongpoints we should also consider the reactions of other countries, especially great powers, and we should take appropriate measures. We should avoid negative impacts on relations with countries along the Belt and Road, especially certain great powers, caused by our conduct of military diplomacy. In its pursuit of overseas strategic strongpoints, China cannot shed the influence of regional great powers or extra-regional great powers.

Almost every Chinese action overseas will elicit intense scrutiny from other great powers. Once we do something wrong, this type of scrutiny will likely escalate to competition and hostility. For example, India is extremely wary of Chinese military cooperation with Indian Ocean countries. The visit of a Chinese submarine to Colombo, Sri Lanka was just a conventional supply operation, but it nearly elicited a hysterical response from India. India criticized China for interfering in Indian Ocean affairs. India is extremely sensitive about China-Pakistan cooperation. Despite the fact that China has repeatedly emphasized that Gwadar port is a civil project, India has long suspected that China will someday build Gwadar port into a military base. China built a logistics supply base (*houqin buji jidi*) in Djibouti, and this caught the attention of the U.S., Japan, and others. Of course, China should not shrink back just because of the opposition of great powers. Still, we must consider the reactions our actions might cause within international public opinion (some of our actions that have no military significance have

nevertheless been depicted as military in nature). Moreover, we need to provide explanations or counterattacks. Otherwise, foreign reactions will likely have an impact on China's international image and could undermine the smooth implementation of specific cooperation between China and relevant countries in the context of the Belt and Road initiative.

National Maritime Strategy Founded on Seapower Theory¹

Liu Yang [刘洋]²

Alfred Thayer Mahan was one of the founders of seapower theory. His work *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* has profoundly influenced people around the world. One can say that the United States has continuously used Mahan's three links and three elements of seapower theory as an outline for its maritime strategy. Admittedly, Mahan's ideas were constrained by the prejudices of his generation, but many of his core philosophies are still very useful to [China's] current establishment of a national maritime strategy.

I. A Few of Mahan's Ideas on Seapower Theory Worth Noting

Of the many core concepts of Mahan's seapower theory, the author believes China should draw from the following four in establishing a national maritime strategy.

1. Three Links and Three Elements of Seapower Theory

Mahan identified national goods, maritime shipping, and colonies as the three important links of seapower. The three elements that form national seapower are maritime power (navy, merchant marine), colonial and ocean bases, and sea lines of communication.

Mahan was restricted by his time, [namely in] his use of the concept of colonies. Today these are what are referred to as stakeholder areas, where the idea of the three links and three elements of seapower still hold significance. The three links of seapower make it apparent that seapower's goal is protection of the regular operation of the commodity economy. The three elements of seapower make it clear that in order to achieve the three links, [a state must] see the navy as its backbone, offshore bases as its skeleton, and maritime transportation lines as its flesh and blood.

2. Philosophy of Exercising the Navy in Far Seas

Mahan noted that "far seas navies must undergo training in the far seas; otherwise when they venture out to the far seas they will only be able to use officers and sailors that have not been fully trained; they will be up against hardened soldiers who have weathered storms and battles."

This idea suggests that navies must leave behind shallow waters and head toward the far seas to receive training under different atmospheric conditions. They must meet the challenges that various hostile forces present; only then will the navy be able to maintain strong combat effectiveness.

¹ Chinese title: "基于海权论思想的国家海洋战略"; Journal of Dalian Maritime University (Social Sciences Edition) [大连海事大学学报(社会科学版)]; Oct. 2012, p. 86-88.

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3. Philosophy of Overseas Bases

“England is a country that is able to win this war, due to its use of its maritime riches during peacetime, and the use of its large-scale navy during wartime. It relied on its masses of citizens whose lives and livelihoods depend on the sea, and utilized its plenitude of operational bases scattered around the world to control the oceans. However it must be noted that if these operational bases’ transport lines are impeded, they will lose their intrinsic value...”

From this statement of Mahan’s, it is clear that far seas navies must have overseas bases and unobstructed sea lines of communication. If a country does not have a certain number of overseas bases, it cannot be said to have strong seapower. Overseas bases are strategic focal points that serve the frontline and the rear. They are extremely important to national seapower.

4. Philosophy that Development of Seapower Must Be Rooted in the Masses

“However all of these developments that surprise people have been facilitated by the government. This development is as ephemeral as plants: if it loses government support, it will collapse. Because this period of time is short, this type of development cannot be allowed to become deeply rooted in the people...”

This passage from Mahan refers to the period when King Louis XIV oversaw France’s seapower. During the first decade of his rule, France’s seapower quickly surpassed England’s due to its highly effective systems and policy support. But in subsequent decades, France entered a huge land war with the Netherlands as a result of problems stemming from deeply-rooted land power thinking. Thereafter the development of the navy and overseas dependencies was vastly limited and finally ended. France ultimately incurred losses on land and at sea.

Seventeenth-century France is still significant today. From Mahan’s explanation of that era in history, two problems become evident. One is that [a state] must

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broadly establish seapower thinking among the masses. Once this happens, seapower can be strengthened. The second is that a country’s maritime strategy must not change for dozens of years, or even a century. This is the only way for a country with deeply ingrained thinking on land power to achieve a balance between the development of land and seapower, to coordinate interests on land and sea.

At present many people equate powerful armaments with a powerful navy, even equating the latter with enhancing seapower. These are biased opinions. The key to national maritime security’s progress is highly successful political, economic, and military systems. Undoubtedly, a strong navy is an important—even core—component of seapower, but an economic foundation, innovation of technology and systems, strategic planning, and conceptualizations of the ocean are the indispensable supportive factors behind seapower. In particular, conceptualizations of the

ocean and seapower ideology are most important to [laying] the broad foundation of seapower consciousness among the masses. Therefore [China] must make the state and the people pay attention to the ocean, and [establish] a broad foundation for ocean consciousness and seapower ideology.

II. Significance of Mahan's Seapower Theory to China's National Maritime Strategy

The three links and three elements of Mahan's seapower theory, along with [his] ideas about far seas naval training and overseas bases, and on the development of seapower being deeply rooted in the masses are all significant for China to draw upon in developing its national maritime strategy. The author suggests China should do the following:

1. Conduct Far Seas Exercises, Build Bases Overseas

The navy must definitely conduct regular far seas training, such that they can closely [emulate] the experience of actual combat. From Mahan's three elements of seapower one can see that overseas bases were an extremely important link. The country must have a certain number of overseas bases to effectively safeguard national seapower. Without overseas bases, the navy's far seas training and combat would be like a broken kite string or a discarded sword—they could not be effectively and protractedly implemented. China certainly needs to take a bold step forward, and should not be fettered by diplomatic rhetoric or philosophy. China should develop seapower according to the laws of seapower.

2. Broadly Establish Seapower Thought Among the Masses

Establishing a broad base of seapower ideology and ocean consciousness among the masses is the most critical [factor] to achieving seapower. The development of national seapower is not only limited by external forces. The level of individuals' [seapower] consciousness is even more important. Seapower that lacks a broad base among the masses is not true seapower, but is [instead] short-lived. If the high-level leadership does not attach importance to this [notion], seapower will quickly collapse. As long as seapower is deeply embedded in the hearts of the people, [China] will have long-lasting, unshakeable seapower.

[China] should link national maritime strategy to tangible benefits for citizens, and make the people aware that working in maritime industries is beneficial. Mere reliance on patriotic fervor and continuous proselytizing are not enough to mobilize the people to passionately care about the ocean. China must make civilians and the military fully recognize the wealth and security that the ocean brings to the people. Without a maritime leadership role, maritime trade lines can easily be interfered with and even cut off, such that [a state] could no longer preserve its wealth. Once citizens fully realize the benefits brought about by a maritime leadership role, China's national maritime strategy will persevere. At the same time, if [China] wants to achieve strong seapower and create a broad foundation for seapower thinking among the masses, it needs a clear, long-term, and stable national maritime strategy.

3. Stabilize National Maritime Strategy

If China wishes to have long-lasting, strong seapower, it must have a national maritime strategy that does not change for dozens of years, or even a century. There should be an adjustment to China's strategy of "keeping a low profile," as it is now the age of "positive action" (*yousuo zuowei*). It is a historical necessity and a demand of the times for [Chinese] national policy to shift from "keeping a low profile" to "positive action." In the [future] era of great reform when this strategic transition comes about, it is of the utmost importance that the state quickly stabilize the new national maritime strategy and clarify its core interests and development direction. Once this occurs, [China] can achieve a balance between the development of its sea and land power, as well as coordinate its maritime and land-based interests.

4. Declare National Maritime Strategy

It is extremely necessary to declare [China's] national maritime strategy and core interests. This type of strategic declaration is as an expression of a strong nation's self-confidence. Such a declaration would greatly intimidate hostile forces.

[China] should inform Chinese citizens of what the state will do, how the people should act according to the national maritime strategy, and what benefits the national maritime strategy will provide to them. Currently, many citizens do not understand the national maritime strategy. When seapower conflicts arise, [they] only know anger and venting [frustrations], but do not know how to resolve them. In the end they only know to complain about the government. We should not be afraid to make a declaration, and we should bravely solve problems. China should rely on itself [to solve its issues], not on others. If we do not make sure that our citizens and people around the world know [this], it is easy to create misunderstandings among our people. It would be detrimental to the normal interpretation of government policy, and could easily lead to misperceptions in international society [involving] people believing that China should maintain low-key military diplomacy, or that China can abandon rights over its territorial land and seas for [the sake of] its economic development. The government should make China's national maritime strategy known to Chinese citizens and people around the world. It should courageously declare its seapower and China's core interests. It should also bravely [express] its authority and its confidence that it will be victorious, thereby inspiring the people and striking fear in antagonistic forces.

III. Considerations of China's Specific Maritime Policy Objectives

Viewing China's national maritime strategy from a macroscopic level, the author believes that [China should]: use the three links and three elements of seapower as an outline, continuously train the navy in the far seas, build overseas bases, integrate civilians and the military, widely mobilize the masses to pay attention to seapower, focus on maritime rights and interests, deeply ingrain ocean consciousness into the people's hearts, establish a broad foundation of seapower thinking among the masses, and use policy to lead the people to thoroughly experience the

material benefits brought about by [China assuming] a maritime leadership role. The age of “keeping a low profile” in national policy should come to its end, and [China should] enter an era of “positive action.” Furthermore, [China] should declare its national maritime strategy and

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core interests at home and abroad.

The specific maritime strategic objectives are: China should plan to have an absolute leadership role over the Indochina peninsula and the South China Sea. The navy should develop westward, projecting its force through the South China Sea and Malacca Straits to the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and African waters. [The navy should] protect China’s maritime energy and commercial routes that stretch eastward via the Middle East and Africa.

Interpretation: the navy should operate along energy routes. China’s energy routes extend westward from the South China Sea, so the navy should strategically break through the South China Sea and develop westward to ensure China’s energy routes are unimpeded.

If the navy wishes to head west to the Indian Ocean, it must first win absolute authority over the Indochina peninsula. Only then will it be able to set up preferable forward bases. If [China] achieves leadership over the Indochina peninsula, it is imperative that it first improves relations with Burma. Burma is of enormous strategic value to China because it is the best basing location on the Indochina peninsula and China’s southwestern land-based oil route traverses it. China should definitely station troops in Burma. Obtaining a leadership role over the Indochina peninsula may also be useful to deterring Vietnam. Ground troops would go through Laos and Cambodia, deterring Vietnam from the West. [China can] also deter Vietnam from the front (China borders northern Vietnam), and the navy can do so from the east. This way [Chinese forces] can surround Vietnam from three, possibly even four sides, so that Vietnam will not dare to act rashly.

But overall the basic [objective] is to control the South China Sea and win absolute leadership over the Indochina peninsula. The South China Sea problem is a core interest of China’s, and is the navy’s biggest obstacle and source of concern in heading westward to the Indian Ocean. [China] must certainly make haste in finding a way to resolve the South China Sea issue. At the same time it must remember that what China wants is a leadership position in Asia and to have seapower along maritime energy routes, not to be a conqueror. [China] should take note of the corresponding region’s issues with distributions of interests as well as ethnic and religious issues, separating each area’s oppositional forces, treating some well and treating others with hostility, in order to achieve the objectives of its maritime strategy.

IV. Conclusion

We should bravely solve maritime issues and struggle for a maritime leadership role. Some problems can be handled using strategy and tactics; others can only be solved using the state's strong forces. We should courageously face them. [China should] recall the proverb: "trade cannot create peace, however wealth always brings war."



Making and Breaking the Status Quo: China's Overseas Strategic Support Points♦

By HU Zhongjian and HU Xin

(HU Zhongjian is a graduate student at the PLA School of International Relations; HU Xin is a researcher at the Institute of Strategy and Security at the PLA School of International Relations)

Recently, the eye-catching headlines “China establishes first overseas military base” and “China advances into the Southern Pacific” have flooded the foreign media. Seemingly overnight China has become a superpower capable of projecting military power into distant oceans. Although this is clearly exaggerated, it is undeniable that China's rise is closely connected with its overseas interests. The “One Belt, One Road” proposal will inevitably further expand China's overseas interests once it takes effect. China's move from being solely a continental country towards being a country actively expanding into the oceans is the only way for it to become a world-class major power. At the same time, China will in the foreseeable future undoubtedly face complex and serious challenges over how it protects its overseas interests. Therefore, in recent years China has been actively making political, economic, diplomatic, and military arrangements to both plan the overall development of the “One Belt, One Road” and gradually make low-profile strikes at the outside forces attempting to make it hard for China.

The Shadow of China's Advance Overseas

Differing from the high-profile “Rebalancing” strategy pushed forward by the US or Japan's furious clamoring for containment of the “China Threat,” China's strategic layout (*zhanlue buju*)

♦ 胡中建[HU Zhongjian], 胡欣[HU Xin], “布局与破局: 中国的海外战略支撑点”[Making and Breaking the Status Quo: China's Overseas Strategic Support Points], 现代军事[*Contemporary Military*], 2015, No. 12., pp. 34-41.

upholds the steady, low key style and “waiting and observing” [traits] common with Chinese strategic calculus. This reflects the influence of Chinese traditional strategic culture. It is also because China is currently in a crucial historical phase of transforming itself from a large country into a powerful country (*youdaxiangqiang*). The more complex and volatile the external security environment becomes, the more crucial it is to maintain a strategic focus. Correspondingly, the development of China’s concept of overseas interests will undergo a gradual process of maturation. By examining four recent overseas cases involving China, we can see that China’s overall strategic situation has entered a stable initial stage. Of course, just like in many other areas, any move by China will inevitably lead to suspicion, hostility, and demonization by the US and other countries.

Port of Gwadar Transfer to China

The Baluchistan Provincial Government of Pakistan held a ceremony on 11 November 2015, officially giving China 280 of 923 hectares of tax-exempted land in order to establish and develop the Gwadar Free Trade Zone. On a 43-year lease, the rest of the land will quickly be delivered to Chinese Overseas Ports Holding Company, Ltd. The Gwadar port project has already been in development for many years and was hyped-up by foreign media several times.

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With investment reaching \$46 billion USD and its special geostrategic location, Gwadar port has become an important link in the development plan for a Sino-Pakistan economic corridor.

Opening up a map and seeing where Gwadar port is located, one can see why China needs to establish an overseas strategic support point here, and why the US and India have deep-seated worries about China. The port of Gwadar guards the main approaches of Pakistan to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, and is positioned at the chokepoints of the sea lanes connecting the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Red Sea with the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It is only 400 km (~248 miles) from the Strait of Hormuz and 70 km (~ 40 miles) from Iran. In 1958, Pakistan purchased the Port of Gwadar area from Oman. Later in the 1971 India-Pakistan War, the port of Karachi came under severe attack by the Indian military. This highlighted for Pakistan the necessity of establishing the port of Gwadar as a strategic rear. However, since Pakistan lacked

long-term funding, it was unable to develop [the port]. Both the US and USSR had once longed for this area and were never able to get their hands on it for various reasons. During the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Pakistan diplomatic ties in 2001, the Pakistani President Musharraf made a proposal to China for the cooperative development of Gwadar Port, and received a positive response. The two countries signed the relevant agreement when Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji visited Pakistan that same year.

It was precisely with the support of Chinese capital, technology, and human resources that the first phase of the Gwadar Port project was completed in 2007. But surprisingly, the Pakistani Government handed operation of the Port over to Singapore's PSA International in a bid in which Chinese companies were not involved. However, after Singapore took over, construction was delayed, was not done well, and the quality of operations was far worse than expected. Faced with an embarrassing situation, Pakistan once again turned to China. This was due to trust in the Sino-Pakistani friendship, especially the long-term high degree of mutual trust enjoyed by the two countries in the field of security. [Pakistani] military figures particularly supported and approved this. For example, in 2010, the then chief of staff of the Pakistan Navy and maritime advisor to the Pakistan Government Noman Bashir pointed out "perhaps the operation and management of Gwadar Port by Chinese companies will be better." Since then, Gwadar Port again began to become closely tied to China. In May 2011, then Pakistan Defense Minister Mukhtar disclosed to the media that China has agreed to take over Gwadar Port. In January 2013, Pakistan Minister of Information Kaira further verified the information that China would take over Gwadar Port. The Pakistani rationale was clear: the development of Gwadar Port could not drag on any longer. Pakistan is eager to use Gwadar Port to spur economic development of Baluchistan Province, as well as the rest of Pakistan. Letting China take responsibility for construction and operation [of the port] can maximize the realization of Pakistan's national interests and reduce domestic opposition.

In terms of energy strategy, Gwadar Port connects the road pathways between China and Pakistan, shortening the transport distance for Chinese oil and natural gas imports from the Middle East and Africa. Particularly, [we] can avoid the "Malacca Dilemma" by shipping the various energy resources that arrive at Gwadar Port via pipelines to Western China. In terms of security, it can also reduce the security risks to China's overseas energy and trade routes. After

all, there exists the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Malacca region. This impacts the route that goes from the Middle East through the Indian Ocean, Malacca and the South China Sea, and then to China's coastal regions. More importantly, India, the US, and Vietnam are all ready to pounce on (*hushidandan*) China's lifeline. China also lacks forward deployed overseas military bases. Therefore, the enemy may cut China's main artery from the sea once tensions rise.

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At the same time, Gwadar Port also certainly has great strategic military value. Thus, foreign media continues to claim in exaggerated terms that the goal of China's acquisition of Gwadar Port is to better counterbalance the US and India. In fact, even just to let it function as a warship supply dock will bring tremendous support to an increasingly active China in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, as [one of] China's strategic support points in the Indian Ocean, Gwadar Port can significantly improve the ability of the Chinese navy to sustain deployments in overseas operations. It can improve the ocean transport capabilities of China in Indian Ocean waters and more effectively protect its overseas interests.

China Plans to Establish a Logistics Support Base in the Port of Djibouti

According to a May 2015 Agence France Presse report, President Guelleh "welcomed" China to establish a military base in Djibouti. Shortly afterwards China and Djibouti signed an agreement worth \$185 million USD allowing China to use the Port of Djibouti in close proximity to the US military base. The news that China would establish its first overseas military base came like a bomb and quickly began to spread internationally. Although Djibouti's land area is no more than 23,200 square kilometers (~14,415 sq. miles) and it has a population less than 900,000, it is called the "Horn of Africa" and is located in a major strategic hub. It controls the position connecting the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It also guards one of the world's most important shipping channels—the Bab el-Mandab Strait. The Port of Djibouti is a region of great strategic and economic value and has excellent port conditions. The Djibouti government is also working to turn [the Port of Djibouti] into a regional shipping center. The port currently has 15 berths, of which 13 are deepwater berths. It also includes one 200,000-ton oil transfer wharf (three berths) and one container wharf (two berths).

It is because of Djibouti's crucial strategic location that it has always been valued by foreign powers. Aside from France, which due to historical reasons has long exerted influence and maintains its largest overseas base there, the US also established in Djibouti its only military base in Africa. The US and Djibouti signed an agreement in 2001 for the US military to set up the "Horn of Africa Joint Task Force" on its Palermo Nilles base in Djibouti. The base is the region's counterterrorism command center and is of great strategic importance to the US. It has a permanent strength of about 4,000 troops and is equipped with UAV forces, mainly performing reconnaissance and combat missions. It is also one of the largest UAV bases in the world. Additionally, Djibouti and Japan reached an agreement in 2009 allowing Japan to lease 12 hectares of land to establish a logistics base. Japan subsequently built an airport and a permanent facility, becoming the first overseas military base constructed by Japan after World War II. The Abe government has repeatedly stated that it will turn the Djibouti base into a multi-function base in order to cooperate with the US military in anti-piracy operations in the region.

Djibouti has always been looked upon favorably by external forces who value its geographical advantages. From a security perspective, the US and France have helped train Djibouti security forces, conducted counterterrorism operations, and combatted piracy in the Gulf of Aden. From an economic perspective, the "base economy" model allows [Djibouti] to exchange for large sums in rents and assistance. It promotes heavy consumption and stimulates economic growth.

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For example, Japan provided Djibouti with \$35 million in aid to lease [land] in Djibouti to construct a base. With the rise of Sino-African cooperation, China and Djibouti have initiated extensive cooperation in the field of infrastructure investment. Djibouti clearly hopes to draw support from Chinese financial assistance to accelerate domestic economic development and create more employment opportunities. For example, in 2013 the Chinese ambassador in Djibouti eagerly expressed that "China should strengthen its cooperation with Africa in the fields of science, technology, and research in order to improve the living standards of the African people. This will have a positive impact on Sino-African commercial, economic, and financial exchanges, and contribute to the development of the Chinese economy. We hope to attract

Chinese investors to invest in Djibouti, so that Djibouti is seen as a logistics base for Chinese companies and products.”

However, states like the US are clearly “hypocritical” [lit. The magistrates are free to burn down houses, while the common people are forbidden even to light lamps]. The American magazine *Foreign Affairs* blatantly stated that “the US must work with other allies, such as France, Germany, and Japan, to counter the growing influence of China in Djibouti... Failure to do so will see Djibouti handing over the military bases south of the Sahara Desert to China, not the US... China is rising globally and is an adversary of the US.” Foreign media has even stated that Djibouti President Guelleh has urged the US many times to withdraw from the Palermo Nilles base in order to make room for Chinese base construction. To some extent this also reveals a shift in China and America’s relative influence in the region. As a result, the US naturally harbors intense hostility towards Sino-Djibouti bilateral cooperation. [The US] worries that this agreement will be detrimental to its regional security interests, harm its ability to combat terrorism, and increase China’s international influence in the African region.

The convergence of China and Djibouti depends on a bilateral relationship founded upon mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation. On 11 May 2015, PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying responded clearly that the traditional friendship between China and Djibouti has continued to develop in recent years, and the two countries have launched practical bilateral cooperation in various fields. The protection of regional peace and stability coincides with both China and Djibouti’s national interests, and is a common aspiration of both countries and the world. China is willing to—and should—make greater contributions to this [goal]. Although this is diplomatic rhetoric, it should be noted that regardless of how foreign media debate it, China’s growing investments and trade in Africa and Djibouti is an indisputable fact. China also needs more robust security guarantees in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the role of the Port of Djibouti as a far-seas supply stop for the Chinese navy is becoming increasingly prominent. It also provided a rationale for China to seek a strategic support point in Djibouti. On 26 November 2015, China’s Ministry of Defense Spokesperson stated conclusively that Chinese task forces conducting escort missions in the Gulf of Aden face difficulties with respect to personnel rest and food and fuel supply. It is indeed necessary to implement efficient logistic support nearby. Therefore “China and Djibouti are currently engaged in consultations to construct a support

facility in Djibouti. The facility will better support the Chinese navy in conducting missions for peacekeeping, escorts in the Gulf and Aden and Somali waters, and humanitarian relief. This will have a positive effect on the Chinese military's ability to effectively fulfill its international obligations and protect international and regional peace and stability." This shows that the consultations between China and Djibouti are being handled on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, not like the predatory hegemonic methods and unequal treaties used by western countries. At the same time, it defines the nature of China's future military presence in Djibouti; that is, for China the port is a logistics and resupply point for the promotion of regional security. It is clear that this is fundamentally different from America's offensively-oriented overseas military bases spread around the world.

China's Lease of the Port of Darwin

In October 2015, Australia signed a 99-year lease with a Chinese company for a section of the Port of Darwin. There were people in the US and Australia that quickly expressed objections and concerns over this agreement. The Port of Darwin has comparatively complete military facilities. Its airport can support a variety of fighter aircraft and it has superior naval berths. Additionally, it is the closest Australian city to Asia and could become a key pivot point connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans for the US-Australian military alliance. It can effectively support the Second Island Chain; thus, some military experts have referred to it as the "Second Guam."

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As part of Obama's return to Asia strategy, in 2012 the US Marine Corps began to rotate through the Port of Darwin. In 2014, the US and Australia signed a 25-year agreement. According to the agreement, the number of US personnel stationed in Darwin Port would reach 2500 by 2017.

Because of this, much concern and controversy arose at home and abroad after Australia leased a part of the port's facilities for China to use. Alarms bells went off in both the US and Australia, with people worried that China may use its presence in the port to monitor US military activities. Some foreign media even took pains to search China's online news and point out that there are "close ties" between the lessee Landbridge Group and the Chinese military. In regards to this, Chinese and Australian officials made it very clear that this is an economic and trade cooperation

project without the slightest involvement with the military. Those who have hyped the news have a hidden agenda and their concerns are truly unfounded. There are also some in Australia who believe that there are people attempting to create an “atmosphere of terror” in the Australian-Chinese bilateral relationship, even taking information and reprocessing it to incite anti-China sentiment. In fact, China currently has no need to seek a military presence in the South Pacific. Australia is a military ally of the US; it is unlikely to damage US-Australian security interests. Sino-Australian relations are currently in a period of mutual adjustment and accommodation (*mohe*). Neither country will allow such sensitive security issues to affect the broader development of Sino-Australian relations. The use of the port is to aid the development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation and will be normal development in future Chinese overseas trade development. At the same time, it also aligns with the needs of Australia’s interests in developing the domestic economy and integrating into the Asia-Pacific “circle of friends.”

The Chinese Navy Gains Permission to Use a Malaysian Port

In November 2015, the Commander of the Chinese Navy Admiral Wu Shengli visited Malaysia and reached an agreement with the Malaysian navy to allow Chinese naval vessels to make stopovers in the Port of Kota Kinabalu of the state of Sabah. This news also quickly drew international public attention. As the port is quite close to James Shoal, it can provide an important docking point for Chinese naval patrols in the South China Sea. More noteworthy, Malaysia itself has disputes with China in the South China Sea, yet Chinese-Malaysian defense cooperation has never been interrupted. To some extent, Malaysia is an important “wedge” for China to prevent the Philippines and Vietnam from causing an internal disturbance in ASEAN. Although this [news] looks inconspicuous, it did reveal a subtle message. The US online publication the *National Interest* therefore hinted “advice” to Malaysia, reminding it that Chinese military vessels have always been very active in the waters nearby Malaysia’s State of Sabah, and is increasing. The article acidly mentioned the Port of Darwin, stating “only the most naïve person would conclude that the Chinese PLA will not be similarly interested in entering Darwin Port and using the facilities there.” Considering the escalation of the South China Sea disputes in recent years, particularly the malicious provocations of the US and Japan, the ability of China and Malaysia to reach a cooperative agreement on this issue clearly moderates these disputes. It

indicates that although there are disputes in the South China Sea, they do not necessarily have to be solved in a zero-sum contest. Bilateral communication and coordination is the best means of maximizing the protection of each party's interests. Meanwhile, Malaysia's attitude can also help China gain some initiative within ASEAN, and help weaken the pervasive atmosphere in the region of "theories of a Chinese threat."

China Needs Overseas Strategic Support Points

Although China is just a major regional power, China's interests and influence have begun to show global characteristics. Thus, in the future China must have its own overseas strategic support points.

The Expansion of China's Overseas Interests Requires Overseas Strategic Support Points

As China's national power has grown, China's interactions with the outside world have become increasingly multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and multi-domainal. China maintains extremely important national interests in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, particularly in the domains

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closely related to Chinese interests, such as energy and trade. As a result, China must seriously confront new issues such as how to safeguard China's overseas investment interests and protect the personal security of Chinese citizens living abroad. Looking at the regional armed conflict and terrorist attacks that have occurred in recent years, China lacks the outposts (*qianshao*) needed for rapid response and assistance. In 2013, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense issued a national defense white paper entitled *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. Part 4, on Supporting National Economic and Social Development, included sections on Safeguarding Maritime Rights and Interests and Protecting Overseas Interests. The section on Protecting Overseas interests states, "With the gradual integration of China's economy into the world economic system, overseas interests have become an integral component of China's national interests. Security issues are increasingly prominent, involving overseas energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs), and Chinese nationals and legal persons overseas. Vessel protection at sea, evacuation of Chinese nationals overseas, and emergency rescue have become important ways and means for the PLA to safeguard national

interests and fulfill China's international obligations.” This was the first time that the issue of “overseas interests” was mentioned in an official document and the first time that safeguarding overseas interests was explicitly stated as a primary mission of the military. This has historic significance. In the 2015 white paper, entitled *China’s Military Strategy*, safeguarding the security of overseas interests was included among the Chinese military’s eight strategic tasks. This was the first time that a white paper mentioned “areas crucially related to China's overseas interests,” emphasizing the goal of “strengthening international security cooperation in areas crucially related to China’s overseas interests, to ensure the security of such interests.” This shows that safeguarding China’s overseas interests is a product of the times, and that doing so is both inevitable and urgent.

China’s Maritime Strategy Requires Overseas Strategic Support Points

China has maritime disputes with neighboring states that cannot be ignored. These could possibly ignite a regional armed conflict. In the future, 60 percent of America’s maritime forces will be deployed to the Asia-Pacific region. America has a very clear objective of surrounding and containing China. In the future China will face the threat of an informatized military conflict from the sea. It will also face tremendous challenges in safeguarding maritime rights and interests. Because of these issues, the most recent white paper re-characterized China’s naval strategy. It pointed out that, “In line with the strategic requirement of offshore waters defense and open seas protection, the PLA Navy (PLAN) will gradually shift its focus from ‘offshore waters defense’ to the combination of ‘offshore waters defense’ with ‘open seas protection,’ and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force structure. The PLAN will enhance its capabilities for strategic deterrence and counterattack, maritime maneuvers, joint operations at sea, comprehensive defense and comprehensive support.” This raises new requirements for the navy’s range of activities and operational capabilities. In particular, to fulfill the responsibilities of open seas protection, China must have reliable overseas ports where it can dock and re-supply. If China’s maritime forces are to break through the first and second island chains to smash the adversary’s intentions to emasculate (*yange*) China’s maritime strategy, it is inevitable that China have strategic support points enabling it to transit, dock, and re-supply.

China's "Going Out" Strategy Requires Overseas Strategic Support Points

“Going Out” is an important element of China’s foreign policy. The existence of overseas support points can better promote the realization of the three “Going Outs.”

The first “Going Out” is economic. Chairman Xi Jinping explicitly stated that “China’s

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openness to the outside is continuously deepening. This includes both opening the door to attract foreign investment into China and Chinese firms leaving China to invest abroad.” With the increase in Chinese overseas investment projects and growth in regional trade, China needs solid and reliable support points in order to maintain sustainable development overseas and the security of overseas investments. This is a problem that any global trading power must solve. China is completely justified in going out and achieving its strategic needs.

The second “Going Out” involves China’s influence abroad. The overseas military bases of countries like America often lead to severe contradictions with the host population. We see this with American bases in places like Japan and the Middle East, where the bases have engendered long-term conflict with the local people and even faced security risks. They have also harmed the stability of bilateral relationships. The overseas support points that China seeks to establish are not built on a foundation of unequal agreements or violations of sovereignty. They do not have the qualities of militarization, privilege, or colonization. They will mostly be built on the foundation of mutual benefit, equality, and respect. They are peaceful, economic in nature, and mutually beneficial. This type of Chinese-style presence will help show the image of China as a responsible major power and will actively spread the concept of a community of common destiny.

The third “Going Out” involves China’s military. As mentioned above, given the needs of safeguarding the country’s overseas interests and promoting regional and world peace, the general trend of the Chinese military forces going out is already very clear. America’s *National Interest* magazine once published an article pointing out that at present nearly 20,000 Chinese companies have invested in more than 180 countries around the world, with an annual investment of \$60 billion. Chinese citizens exit/enter the country 98 million times per year. It is

estimated that by 2020 this will reach 150 million times per year. China's military forces will play an important part in energy resource protection and consular protection. In recent years, Chinese public opinion has begun calling for the military to increase the pace of its "Going Out." However, given the military's own limitations and its lack of strategic support points to maintain overseas deployments, the Chinese military is very far from meeting the requirements of "safeguarding overseas national interests and the safety of Chinese citizens." In particular, China would have a hard time independently carrying out major overseas military operations.

Four Key Considerations in Building Overseas Strategic Support Points

China's establishment of its own overseas strategic support points accords with the current needs of China's foreign strategy. Doing so does not contradict the traditional elements of China's foreign policy. Yet, although the Chinese people feel proud and excited about the increase and expansion of China's influence, we must clearly recognize that the expansion of overseas interests and the building of overseas strategic support points are new things for China. There are both opportunities and challenges. In our view, China must correctly handle four types of relationships.

First, China must handle the relationship between a mature foreign policy and radical nationalism.

In its current development phase, China is transforming itself from a big country into a strong country. It faces many new types of challenges, including how to expand overseas interests, how to safeguard the security of overseas interests, and how to establish a regional strategic support framework. All of these are huge and sensitive issues. Moreover, the Chinese people both pay much attention to and have great expectations about these issues. As China moves ever closer to achieving the objective of national rejuvenation, the patriotic spirit and national emotions of the Chinese people are rising. In this process, China must prudently defend against radical nationalist sentiments hijacking foreign policy and military strategy. From conception to reality, a specific policy requires a fairly long process. During this process, it may encounter unavoidable ups and downs. We should also add the fact that transparency is lacking in sensitive diplomatic and security fields. Some issues may be misinterpreted and may even beget powerful emotions among the Chinese people. For example, on the matter of the recent Mali terrorist

attack, some Chinese netizens asked hard questions about why China's peacekeeping forces in Mali did not take part in the rescue. This wish is understandable, but

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it completely ignores the charter for UN peacekeeping operations and the tasks assumed by the Chinese peacekeepers. There are also some “angry youths” (*fenqing*) who believe that China should build bases all over the world and use force to safeguard the national interest. This view is incompatible with the nature of the Chinese state, the national interest, and the realities of Chinese power, much less is it compatible with the strategic planning capabilities that a mature major power should have. After all, the international community holds doubts about China's rise. Unnecessary and radical expansion of China's overseas military presence could only harm China's external environment.

Second, China must handle the relationship between “point” (dian) and “surface” (mian).

The Chinese board game “Go” has been called a strategic game embodying rich wisdom. Players should assess moves according to strategic value and importance and do their best to control the strategic points with the most value. China's pursuit of overseas strategic support points should be informed by this thinking. China cannot conduct an all-out attack; it must be selective about where and what it builds. The key should be to develop the places most important to safeguarding China's overseas interests. China is not like America. It is not a superpower that deploys forces all around the world. Thus, it cannot be impulsive and compete with America everywhere. China's overseas strategic support points are not prestige projects (*mianzi gongcheng*). They are not about setting up shop (*pu tanzi*). The key is to focus on quality, not quantity. The aim is to be able to truly serve China's overall foreign strategy.

Third, China must handle bilateral relationships between China and the countries with which it is cooperating.

Whenever any state expands its influence, there is always a certain amount of political risk. In particular, most Asian and African countries have liberated themselves from various states of colonialism. They are fairly sensitive about foreign forces. If we also consider the fact that national and religious elements are very complex, then we need to be even more cautious.

Politically speaking, although China's expansion of overseas interests can bring benefits to the host country, at the same time it can also easily engender local resistance. Western forces may also intentionally misrepresent and smear China. In many countries, anti-China factions form with little difficulty. In terms of people-to-people interactions, the increase in China's overseas presence may perhaps cause the local people to form a negative impression of China, and perhaps even become hostile. We already find examples in some African countries. The West has incited negative public opinion about "China's plundering of resources." As a result, local unemployment, environmental pollution, and political upheavals have been blamed on China. Attitudes towards China are not very friendly. Thus, establishing overseas strategic support points is not as simple as a paper agreement. We especially want to guard against thoughtlessly sending stuff abroad, or offering cookie-cutter cooperative projects. We must get a handle on the real needs of the host country; only then can both sides benefit. In particular, as overseas interests expand, we must engage in long-term management of strategic thinking and be mindful of cultural propaganda. We must do more to use soft power (*rouxing shili*) to patiently forge acceptance and understanding of China in the outside world.

Lastly, China must handle the relationship between long-term planning and short-term ups and downs.

Nothing is ever achieved overnight. The overseas strategic support points that China will seek to build often have important strategic value to China's competitors or opponents. Other states, especially America, will inevitably adopt measures to prevent China from smoothly achieving its strategic objectives. Thus, there is a fairly high probability China will experience short-term fluctuations and even major setbacks. There are many examples of this, such as Turkey's changing attitude towards China with respect to bidding for air defense missile systems. Using Djibouti as an example, after President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh expressed anti-American and pro-Chinese attitudes, the US began acting to remove him from power. British media reported that the US was plotting to implement "regime change" in Djibouti, preventing Guelleh from running in the 2016 national election. America said that if he ran again it would clearly violate the country's constitution. It very likely incited the opposition to challenge Guelleh's position. America would prevent China from establishing a foothold in the country, even if it meant creating chaos in Djibouti's domestic politics. Once there is a change in the host country's

government, there is a risk that prior agreements may no longer be valid. All this suggests that the expansion of China's overseas interests is unlikely to be smooth sailing. We must prepare ourselves mentally for a long-term struggle and we must have the patience and confidence to suffer turmoil and attacks.



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Chinese Sea Power Expansion and the State of Sea Power in the Indian Ocean

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Most of China's far seas lifelines are concentrated along the Malacca Strait/Indian Ocean and Middle East/Northern Africa route. The state of sea power in the Indian Ocean thus has a vital impact on the security of China's far-seas strategic sea lanes. Safeguarding the security of the Indian Ocean routes and maintaining a stable national economy are fundamental goals that future Chinese sea power development must achieve. They are also the true goals driving current Chinese sea power development. As a maritime power in the Indian Ocean, India possesses an innate strategic advantage on this route. Taking into account that both India and China are rising Asian powers, [they] will also inevitably become poles in a multipolar world. Additionally, India in recent years has vigorously promoted its "Look East" strategy and strategic penchant for sea power in Malacca, even in the South China Sea. India and its sea power strategy, as well as the state of sea power in the Indian Ocean, are important factors in the expansion of Chinese sea power in the far seas.

India has made constant improvements in its naval power and strategic system through years of development. The range of [India's] naval activities has gradually expanded. India's navy has completed its transformation from a defensive to an offensive strategy. [India] already exhibits the capacity of an Indian Ocean naval power. However, the Indian Ocean is no "Ocean of India." The US still holds its grip over Indian Ocean sea power by virtue of its strong military presence.

[†] 李剑 [LI Jian], 陈文文[CHEN Wenwen], 金晶 [JIN Jing], 印度洋海权格局与中国海权的印度洋拓展[Chinese Sea Power Expansion and the State of Sea Power in the Indian Ocean], 太平洋学报 [Pacific Journal], Vol. 22, No. 5, May 2014.

The viability of India's sea power strategy lies in its active conformity with US sea power, a conformity that amplifies India's suspicions and rejection of Chinese sea power development.

I. India's Sea Power Concept and Naval Strategy

India is surrounded on three sides by the sea and accounts for the bulk of the South Asian subcontinent. Like a dagger plunging over 2600 kilometers deep into the Indian Ocean, it has a continental coastline of over 7500 kilometers and an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of more than two million square kilometers, equivalent to 66 percent of India's land area.

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Furthermore, India also possesses over 1000 islands with a total land area of more than 8000 square kilometers. Among these, the Andaman - Nicobar Islands [occupy] an extremely important strategic position closely guarding the western entrance to the Malacca Strait, "chokepoint of the Asia-Pacific."¹ Yet the unique geography of the Indian Ocean further strengthens India's maritime advantages. The Indian Ocean leans against Asia in the north, abuts Africa in the west, reaches southward to Antarctica, and faces the Indochinese peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago in the east. Its access channels rely on several important straits, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, the Cape of Good Hope, the Greater and Lesser Sunda Islands and the Malacca Strait. It's a relatively separate and closed-off ocean, easily controlled. The Indian Ocean rim also includes the global supply of oil and gas in the Gulf region and the rich mineral resources of the African continent. [This] has resulted in the Indian Ocean resembling a dense cobweb connecting the maritime routes of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. In surveying the Indian Ocean's periphery, India faces virtually no rival maritime powers. In contrast with the marine geographic conditions confronting China, people can't help but marvel at India's superior marine environment.

¹ LI Jian and DU Liye, "Dominating the Indian Ocean, India's Long Road," *Liberation Army Daily*, 16 August 2014, 7th Ed.

1.1 India's Sea Power Concept and Its Development Track

Modern Indian sea power development originates from the fall of British hegemony. British forces left the Indian Ocean region in the 1960's just as the world was [embroiled] in the intense confrontation of the Cold War. The US and Soviet Union then sought to fill a "power vacuum" in the Indian Ocean. The US Navy received Diego Garcia from the British, and Soviet nuclear submarines frequently appeared in the Indian Ocean. Feeling deeply disturbed and threatened by this, India began strengthening naval construction and launched its first five-year plan for naval construction in 1964. Several years of hard work yielded India a maritime force capable of near-seas operations. [When] the third India-Pakistan War broke out in 1971, India crippled Pakistan and cast off its vulnerable strategic dilemma. It had gained control of the geopolitical advantage on the South Asian subcontinent. India's navy played a major role in the war, winning respect and confidence, as well as gaining an opportunity for development. India subsequently realized and continued to consolidate its land-based strategic objectives and began shifting its strategic center of gravity towards the Indian Ocean. When the Suez Canal—which was closed off for eight years due to the Third Arab-Israeli War—reopened in 1975, the convenient passage for European countries to enter the Indian Ocean via the Mediterranean Sea was restored. To prevent foreign forces from regaining control of the Indian Ocean, India began carrying out an Indian Ocean sea power strategy and made a series of decisions to strengthen the building of its maritime armed forces. India's national strategy during this time also underwent a transformation of "jumping out of the South Asian tub to control the Indian Ocean."² After the end of the Cold War, significant changes occurred in international security and India's domestic situation. The disappearance of superpower confrontation created favorable conditions for India to advance into the Indian Ocean. India's strategic goals of South Asian hegemony, containment of China, control of the Indian Ocean, and status as a world military power were thus further established in the 1990s.

² JU Hailong, *Reference System of China's Sea Power Strategies*, China Social Sciences Press, 2012, p. 147.

1.2 Ambition to Dominate Sea Power in the Indian Ocean

Prior to its independence, India's first Prime Minister Nehru once said "India can't possibly play a secondary role in the world according to its current position. It must either be an impressive major power or lie low."³ India recognized after its independence that to revive Indian national prestige it must rely on the exceptional advantages of the Indian Ocean. India also believed its security, national interests, and future grandeur were tied to the Indian Ocean. The founder of modern Indian sea power theory K. M. Panikkar thought "India is naturally a maritime nation,... beginning from the 16th century, the Indian Ocean became a battleground for the fight to command the sea. India's future will not be determined by its land borders, but by the vast ocean surrounding it on three sides."⁴

In the 21st century, India successively issued a series of official documents on maritime and naval strategic issues, including *Indian Maritime Doctrine*, *Indian Naval Concept Paper*,⁵ *Freedom to Use the Seas: India's Maritime Military Strategy*, *Maritime Agenda*.⁶ [These] have constructed a fairly complete theoretical system for [Indian] maritime strategy. These documents include the following five basic elements. They acknowledge the geo-strategic value of the Indian Ocean. The key to control of the Indian Ocean lies in its chokepoints, important islands, and trade routes. India must control the Indian Ocean by virtue of its geographical advantages. India's naval strategy has shifted from the previous strategy of "near seas defense" and "regional deterrence" to one of "far seas offense." On the basis of controlling the Indian Ocean, India's strategic interests will gradually extend from the west in the Persian Gulf eastward to the South China Sea. [Its interests will also] reach south of Africa and the wide sea areas of Oceania. The documents include the following three corresponding measures. First, India will strengthen naval force construction and procure and upgrade modernized armaments.

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³ Translators' note: Original text not found.

⁴ Translated by DE Long and WANG Shu: Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, World Knowledge Publishing House, 1965 Ed., p. 16.

⁵ Translators' note: Original text not found.

⁶ Translators' note: Original text not found.

Second, it will make adjustments to the structure and organization of its navy, enhancing maritime organizational command structures. Third, India will execute the “Exit West, Look East, and Go South” strategy to expand the range of naval activities and cooperative exchanges. On account of its strategic pursuit of control over the Indian Ocean, India is wary of all the “extra-regional navies” present in the Indian Ocean. Despite claims that there are no conflicts of interest with the US presence in the Indian Ocean, in fact, India perceives the naval forces of the US, Russia, China, Australia and Japan as potential factors affecting regional security.

1.3 Indian Naval Development

India has been committed to building naval power since the 1960s and became the first Asian country to obtain aircraft carriers. Particularly in recent years, India has made great efforts in international military procurement, independent research and development, modification and imitation. [India’s] main battle armament developments are becoming larger in scale, guided, and automated, rapidly approaching world-class levels. With its overall strength continuing to rise, India has become a significant Indian Ocean, if not global, naval power. The most prominent area of armament building is in carrier development. The carrier “Viraat” currently in service was purchased from the UK, and the 45,000-ton class “Admiral Gorshkov” carrier purchased from Russia was delivered at the end of 2013 after modernization upgrades. At the same time, India’s domestic-built carrier “Vikrant” was officially launched for outfitting in August 2013, with commissioning expected around 2017. In time, India will possess three carrier battle groups with strong far seas operational [capabilities]. In terms of numbers, it will become the world’s second largest carrier country, after the US. Submarine construction is another focus of India’s naval development. There are 14 advanced conventional submarines in the Indian navy, including ten Russian-made “Kilo” class submarines and four Type 209 submarines imported from Germany. India has also ordered an additional six “Scorpene” class submarines from France, expected to begin delivery after 2014. Such a high-quality conventional submarine fleet would prove second to none in the Indian Ocean region and neighboring Southeast Asia and the Gulf region. The nuclear submarines of the Indian navy are mainly the Akula II-class “Chakra” nuclear attack submarine leased from the Russian navy, as well as India’s independently developed “Arihant” class nuclear ballistic missile submarine currently undergoing sea trials.

The Indian navy currently possesses close to 170 ships, approximately 220 aircraft, and 16 submarines. In total tonnage, India's navy is fifth in the world, making it the strongest navy in the Indian Ocean. India released a "New Naval Development Plan" at the turn of the century, and proposed the slogan "from the Arabian Sea to the South China Sea, all fall within the scope of Indian Interests." The focus of India's naval construction shifted to the east, having established a fourth naval command (called the Eastern Naval Command) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These islands occupy a critical geographic location as India's eastern gateway. India further updated its naval strategic theory in 2004, describing in detail its "strategy for control of the Indian Ocean region" as well as the strategy and armament development rules for ensuring the navy possesses a "second-strike nuclear retaliation" and long-distance "force projection" capabilities.⁷

1.4 A Naval Strategy of Actively Moving Out

The Indian navy always holds firm to a naval strategy that actively [looks] outward. The Indian defense minister let it be known in the early 1980s that Indian naval construction goals would be to achieve a clear advantage over the other countries rimming the Indian Ocean. He also stated that the Indian Ocean's chokepoints—the Suez Canal, Strait of Hormuz, the Palk Strait, and the Malacca Strait—were the future strategic objectives of the navy. In 2004, the Indian Navy released its new strategic concept. It defined the goals of its sea power in the Indian Ocean as divided into three levels based on 300 and 600 nautical miles increments. The waters from India's coastline out to 300 nautical miles would be the Indian Navy's "inner defense zone." Also referred to as a zone of absolute control, it generally includes the entire Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the area of the Indian Ocean within 300 nautical miles of India's coast. [This zone] primarily takes on local defense missions, relying on the navy's coastal forces, shore-based aviation, and the coast guard to carry out maritime defense missions. The waters extending from the edge of the inner defense zone out to 600 nautical miles is the "outer defense zone," also referred to as the zone of intermediate control. This zone is defended by India's ocean-going fleet. Its mission in peacetime is primarily to safeguard India's distant islands, maritime routes, and merchant fleet. They also conduct limited monitoring and surveillance over this broad area.

⁷ GE Xu, YAN Jianping, WANG Jin, *National Mobilization on the Coast: 21st Century Naval Strategy*, Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 2000, p. 164.

During wartime they will control important straits in the Indian Ocean and its peripheries, such as the Suez Canal, Strait of Hormuz, the Palk Strait, the Malacca Strait and the Sunda Straits. The third ring is a “zone of soft control” that extends the range of the Indian navy’s control beyond the 600 nautical mile zone from the Indian Peninsula. This zone is an area in which the Indian Navy will implement future strategy and a necessary area of control for India to leave the Indian Ocean and become a true maritime power. While its maritime forces are still unable to completely control the Indian Ocean, India will ensure its maritime security by carrying out a strategy of control over entranceways to the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea.⁸

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According to this new naval strategy, the objectives of Indian naval sea power are mainly concentrated in the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, and a belt extending westward from the Nicobar Islands through Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and further north into the Persian Gulf.

In fact, even though the geographical scope of the “zone of absolute control” extends beyond the 200 nautical mile EEZ, the strategic intentions expressed by the “zone of soft control” essentially covers the entire Indian Ocean. In light of Indian naval development and the objectives and nature of its strategy, the Indian naval strategy and its strategy for the Indian Ocean area is focused on control and is clearly expansionary. Indian naval power has made continuous improvements during more than half a century of development. The range of Indian naval activities is gradually moving from surrounding waters into the far seas, and the scope of its maritime interests continually expands. Its naval objectives are broadening from consolidating a dominant position in the Indian Ocean towards controlling an even wider sea area. The features of naval construction and the strength it already possesses demonstrate that India’s naval strategy has already shifted from the defensive to the offensive. Although India has yet to achieve its desire for Indian Ocean dominance, it has already demonstrated its strength as an Indian Ocean maritime power. Even superpowers cannot ignore its presence in the Indian Ocean.

⁸ “Indian Maritime Doctrine” (New Delhi: Chief of Naval Staff, 2004), <http://indiannavy.nic.in/>.

II. The State of Sea Power in the Indian Ocean and US-Indian-Chinese Sea Power Interaction

Despite having a natural geographical advantage and a consistent sea power strategy of controlling the Indian Ocean, India by no means can make the Indian Ocean its own “lake.” This is precisely due to the Indian Ocean’s key position in global geopolitics. Indian Ocean sea power has been a focal point in the struggle for world hegemony for hundreds of years. The northern coast of the Indian Ocean has continually been the ultimate ground for major power competition. This was the case from Napoleonic times to the Cold War. Napoleon sent troops to Egypt in the early 19th century to cut off the British Empire’s strategic support from the Indian Ocean. Britain and Russia fought for dominance in Afghanistan at the end of the 19th century. During the Second World War, Japan placed its hopes in joining forces with Germany in India. The US and Soviet Union vied for hegemony during the Cold War, not just in the Indian Ocean, but also in Afghanistan. After the end of the Cold War, the American superpower used the Gulf War, Afghanistan War, and Iraq War to implement a strategy of intense control of the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Thus, no state can build exclusive maritime dominance in the Indian Ocean without being a global superpower.⁹

Although India is currently the strongest maritime force in the Indian Ocean area, Indian Ocean sea power remains firmly in US possession. As a global maritime hegemon, the US stations its fifth fleet and various sea and air forces in the Indian Ocean. It also established numerous army, naval, and air force bases around the Indian Ocean, from the Middle East to Africa and from Asia to Australia. It occupies Diego Garcia in the center of the Indian Ocean, and it deploys rapid support and logistics preposition fleets in the Indian Ocean. This arrangement ensures that no force can challenge the US in the Indian Ocean. Over the short term, the US may allow India to develop a manageable “capability to control the Indian Ocean”. Over the long term however, unless India is willing to completely abandon its non-alignment policy to become a subordinate to the US, India will sooner or later strike a sensitive nerve in US hegemony. Moreover, the security of Indian Ocean routes affects the economies of almost all the major powers. Any plans to dominate the Indian Ocean would inevitably incite the collective suspicions and strong

⁹ ZHANG Wenmu, “World Hegemony and the Indian Ocean – A Geostrategic Historical Analysis of the Major Powers of the World,” *Strategy and Management*, 2001, No. 4, pp. 17-19.

reactions of the major powers. By then, the Indian “dream of maritime hegemony” will probably be reduced to a sweet dream.

2.1 Indian Sea Power’s Active Conformity to US Sea Power

The survival of an Indian sea power strategy can only come as a result of active conformity to US sea power. In terms of strategic objectives, the Indian model for controlling the Indian Ocean fundamentally align with US strategic pursuits in the Indian Ocean region; there exist no irreconcilable contradictions. India and the US in reality haven’t experienced any strategic contention in the Indian Ocean region. This harmony under conflicting strategic objectives largely comes from the conformity of Indian sea power strategy to US sea power strategy. This kind of conformity is mainly expressed in three ways.

First, India avoids direct opposition with the US in the areas of geostrategic objectives. India is fully aware of America’s key interests in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, the western Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

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Thus, when describing the third level of its naval strategy—the “zone of soft control”—India only stresses capabilities in self-defense, early warning patrols, and limited force projection, despite its inclusion of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. India does not express intentions to strategically control [these sea areas]. When making geographical depictions of its naval strategy, India takes care to avoid the American sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean.

Second, India has avoided becoming a potential threat to America’s geostrategic interests. Anybody familiar with India’s geostrategic strategy knows that India has a “Go South, Exit West, and Look East” geostrategic orientation. However, India has not allocated its power equally in all three directions. India is very clear that if it heads west it will arrive at the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal. Going south, it will bump into Diego Garcia and Australia. India’s only choice is to look east. From the Bay of Bengal and the western entrance of the Strait of Malacca to the South China Sea, there is no maritime superpower with which it might clash. Indian sea power can only look east. In doing so it would not infringe upon American interests. Moreover,

to a certain extent it would hint at the value of US-Indian strategic cooperation. Thus, India has chosen the east as the primary direction for strategic expansion of its sea power. To this end, India established an Eastern Naval Command Department in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and has vigorously built bases along the Bay of Bengal. At the same time, it has increased its influence in countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar. Indeed, with much fanfare it has even extended its reach into the South China Sea. In recent years, the Indian Navy's "Look East" strategy has achieved fairly good results. In wartime, with the support of its naval base in the Andaman Islands, India's carrier strike groups could effectively blockade the western entrance to the Strait of Malacca, thereby deterring and preventing the navies of other states from entering the Indian Ocean. In peacetime, the Indian Navy can easily pass through the Strait of Malacca and enter the Pacific Ocean, serving a deterrence function in the South China Sea and exerting military influence on Southeast Asia and even the East Asian region.

Third, India has conformed to America's geo-strategy for the Asia-Pacific region. Since China and India have unresolved territorial disputes, the Indian government and military have long had the impulse to regard China as a strategic adversary. India sees China as a hypothetical enemy and propagates the "China Threat Theory." It has become a non-allied friend of the US. This has shifted America's attention away from the potential contradictions it might have with India.¹⁰ Give the "existence" of a "Chinese threat," it becomes very reasonable for India to elevate the position of its Far Seas Naval Command Department. Moreover, the Indian Navy's "Look East" strategy has not faced opposition from the states of Southeast Asia; nor has it put America on guard. Rather, because India's interests here are identical to those of the US and Japan, India has expanded its strategic influence in the western Pacific.

2.2 Sino-Indian Sea Power Competition and Cooperation

As Chinese sea power expands in the far seas, it must develop in the Indian Ocean. Even though China is likely to face strategic suppression from America's maritime hegemony, India is its most realistic strategic competitor. Given how formidable American sea power is in the Indian Ocean, over the short term it will not be worried by the minimal amount of power China develops there. Moreover, it can instigate and exploit animosities between China and India,

¹⁰ Zheng Li, "India's Maritime Strategy and Cooperation and Contradiction Between India and the US in the Indian Ocean," *South Asia Quarterly*, 2005, No. 9, p. 116.

reaping the rewards. This is a common trick used by the global hegemon to rule the world. Due to the fact that India fully adopts Mahan's thinking on sea power, its sea power strategy is in essence an expansionary strategy with strong tendencies to seek control. Moreover, it exhibits signs of a hegemon complex. In response to China's development of sea power, it is inevitable that India will more or less show the negative competitive impulses of hostility, extrusion, and exclusion. These will chiefly manifest in the following respects.

First, [India] is a real threat to the security of China's strategic sea lanes in the Indian Ocean. China's energy demands have continuously increased. The sea lanes extending from the Middle East and Africa across to the Strait of Malacca have become the primary arteries of trade and energy for China's economic development. More than half of the petroleum and petroleum products entering China must cross the Indian Ocean and transit through the Strait of Malacca. Thus, China's national development strategy and economic security are closely connected to the Indian Ocean. With the expansion of its sea power, India already has the military power needed to cut off China's strategic sea lanes across the northern part of the Indian Ocean. Moreover, from the statements of Indian officials and the Indian media, India is in fact conducting strategic planning for its navy with China as the hypothetical enemy. Moreover, it is wantonly playing up the "China Threat Theory." It is displaying extremely obvious hostile intentions to China. Once a maritime conflict breaks out between China and India, the outcome would be too disastrous to imagine. We must be on guard against this.

Second, [India is demonstrating] strategic suspicion toward and engaged in obstruction of Chinese sea power's entry into the Indian Ocean. Perhaps India is affected by the psychological impact of its military defeat [to China] in the 1960s, for it has long harbored very profound strategic suspicions towards China. It has been particularly sensitive in the areas of maritime security and maritime interests, causing it to pursue "containment and encirclement" of China on the sea. In 2005, an American consulting firm falsely claimed that China was pursuing a "String of Pearls Strategy." Although unfounded, this idea received widespread interest in India. To the Indians,

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China appeared to have already established a strategic encirclement around India.¹¹ Because of this, India regards China as its chief adversary in its maritime security strategy. It has adopted an aggressive and offensive maritime strategy. Militarily, it seeks to deter China. Beyond that, it has united regional and extra-regional powers for the purpose of constraining China's peaceful use of the Indian Ocean. Its ultimate intention is to exclude China from the Indian Ocean. This seriously impacts China's maritime security and maritime interests. It will also severely harm Sino-Indian relations.

Third, India's "Look East" strategy has a tremendous impact on China's geostrategic security. India's "Look East" strategy seeks to strengthen military bases and military power in the east. This includes creating an Eastern Naval Command Department and building a military base in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Since India has no competitor here, it has achieved the ability to control the Bay of Bengal and the western entrance of the Strait of Malacca. For China, the Strait of Malacca is the "Achilles Heel" of its sea lane security. China has important trade relationships with the states of the Bay of Bengal. China and Myanmar are building an important oil/gas pipeline. India's strategic control over the Strait of Malacca and the Bay of Bengal is in fact a strategic deterrent against China. It has worsened China's "Malacca Dilemma."¹² With respect to diplomacy and the use of maritime power, India's "Look East" strategy aims to pass through the Strait of Malacca and develop in the direction of the South China Sea. It intends to get involved in the South China Sea problem in order to compete with China over ASEAN, for economic, security, and military gains. In doing so, it wants to expand its influence in Asia-Pacific regional affairs. Even more worrisome, India's "Look East" strategy could intersect in the South China Sea with Japan's "Go South" strategy. If it works in conjunction with America's "Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific," this would result in a de facto maritime strategic encirclement of China. It would be tremendously damaging to China's maritime security and the development of its sea power.

¹¹ For the first use of the term "String of Pearls," see Julie MacDonald, Amy Donahue, and Bethany Danyluk, "Energy Future in Asia," Booz Allen Hamilton Report Sponsored by the Director of Net Assessment, November 2004.

¹² Feng Liang (ed.), *Research on the Maritime Security Strategies of the Main Countries of the Asia-Pacific Region*, World Knowledge Press, 2012, pp. 331-332.

However, if we set aside India's sensitivities, sea power competition between China and India has not gotten to the point of life and death for either side. There is still room for cooperation between China and India.

First, China and India share many common interests. They are both countries on the rise and they are both developing countries. China and India have common interests in creating a new international order. They have common cause in opposing American maritime hegemony and building a new maritime strategic configuration. They have a basis for relying on and cooperating with each other in multilateral settings such as the BRICS and the United Nations. Thus, there is no need for China and India to engage in a showdown at sea.

Second, India's "Dream of Becoming Hegemon of the Indian Ocean" is completely unrealistic. Indian Ocean security involves the common interests of nearly all of the major powers. Even if India plans to "achieve hegemony in the Indian Ocean," this ideal is not grounded in reality—it will never be realized. China and India can assist each other. They can jointly stabilize regions and countries where they both have important interests and security concerns, such as South Asia, the Middle East, and Iran. Together they can achieve a win-win outcome and assume shared responsibilities.

Third, the development of Indian sea power faces very profound and severe problems. India is vigorously developing a blue-water navy. India can buy whatever military hardware it wants from abroad. On the surface, things look good. However, in the near term India will be unable to resolve its territorial disputes with its neighbors. Its primary contradictions with other states are located in the landward direction. Thus, only a limited amount of resources can be allocated to the sea. Additionally, India's industrial and technological capabilities are inadequate; as a result, the Indian military has long been forced to rely on purchases from abroad. The "multi-national military" that India has cobbled together faces a very awkward situation in which it is dependent on the whims of other states on matters such as generating capabilities, systems integration, maintenance and support, and self-sustainment in wartime.¹³ Thus, there is no need for us to get too exercised about the picture the foreign media is portraying of "Sino-Indian sea power conflict."

¹³ Li Jian, Du Liye, "In Dominating the Indian Ocean, India's Road is Very Long," PLA Daily, 16 August 2013, p. 7.

III. Challenges and Approaches for Expanding Chinese Sea Power into the Indian Ocean

As China's economy has risen, its demand for overseas energy resources has increased rapidly and it has become highly reliant on overseas trade. As a result, safeguarding the security of strategic sea lanes in the Indian Ocean has become the primary driver of Chinese sea power's move to the Indian Ocean. Aside from this, other factors have gradually come to contribute to China's growing need to expand into the Indian Ocean. These include the need to obtain marine resources, expand strategic space, and create a favorable geostrategic security environment. However, due to the Indian Ocean's special geographic advantages and strategic value it has become a place of sea power contention between major powers. The Indian Ocean is not open to Chinese sea power, especially now with the rise of Indian sea power. Efforts to expand Chinese sea power into the Indian Ocean continue to face tremendous strategic challenges.

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3.1 Overcome Innate Deficiencies, Creatively Enter the Indian Ocean

The expansion of Chinese sea power into the Indian Ocean suffers from innate deficiencies. First, China is not an Indian Ocean coastal state. The most direct sea route to the India Ocean from China is several thousand kilometers. It is extremely remote. According to the law of diminishing marginal utility, the strategic power that Chinese sea power can exert in the Indian Ocean is extremely limited. Second, the sea routes by which China can enter the Indian Ocean are extremely narrow: China must choose from a very small number of straits such as the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Sunda, which are very easily blockaded and controlled. In fact, India's establishment of a Far East Naval Command Department in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is in itself driven by the strategic intention of blocking Chinese sea power from passing through the Strait of Malacca and entering the Indian Ocean.

The US and India have combined to exclude Chinese sea power from entering the Indian Ocean. India is continuously improving its ability to control and deter within the region, and Indians see China as their chief target of hostility and exclusion. Thus, China faces a severe situation in the Indian Ocean in which India and the US are combining to block China. In recent years, India has

strived to improve its far seas combat capabilities and been committed to building far seas sea power centered on a fleet of three aircraft carriers. It has continuously strengthened its ability to monitor and control the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, established a far seas naval command department, and built the Kadamba naval base to control the western Indian Ocean. Moreover, it built a naval listening post on Madagascar, where it monitors the communications between the coast of eastern Africa and the Asia Pacific region. If we set aside America's strategic influence, India has in fact become the maritime overlord (*bazhu*) of the Indian Ocean. Moreover, India has long been hostile to Chinese sea power entering the Indian Ocean. The reason why the "China Threat Theory" finds a market in India cannot be separated from the strong anti-China atmosphere within the country. America is the dominant sea power in the Indian Ocean. Thus, as India strives to develop sea power it seeks strategic cooperation with the United States. It has common cause with the US with respect to propagating the "China Threat Theory." They borrow from each other on the pretext of balancing against China. In areas such as nuclear cooperation, transfer of military technology, and military security cooperation they have formed a consistent tacit understanding with respect to China. In fact, on strategic policies such as moving east to the Pacific Ocean and penetrating into the South China Sea the two countries are cooperating. This directly threatens China's strategic interests and compresses China's strategic space.

China seriously lacks strategic strongholds (*zhidian*) and outposts (*qianshao*) in the Indian Ocean. This situation is comparable to postnatal "lack of nutrition." Due to China's long-term strategy of not building bases abroad, the extension of China's strategic antennae (*chujiao*) overseas lags well behind the expansion of China's national interest.¹⁴ This has resulted in a condition whereby "China's fate has been given to a world without any assurance of security."¹⁵ This fact is particularly evident in the Indian Ocean. Since 2009, the Chinese Navy has continuously sent escort task forces to the Indian Ocean as part of a UN-sanctioned mission to safeguard sea lane security in the Gulf of Aden. This was the key first step of Chinese sea power's overt entry into the Indian Ocean. However, due to China's lack of support and supply from overseas bases and supply points (*bujidian*), Chinese sea power is unable to do all that it would like (*li bu cong xin*) in the Indian Ocean, even for the purposes of handling non-traditional security threats. If China

¹⁴ Translators' Note: This term "antennae" is the same used to describe the anatomy of an insect.

¹⁵ Zhang Wenmu, *On Chinese Sea Power*, Ocean Press, 2009, p. 83.

wants to achieve normalized presence, it will face tremendous difficulties and pressures. Moreover, we must remember that Somali escort missions take place on the basis of a temporary UN authority to deal with a special situation. In the future, once piracy diminishes and the UN revokes this authority, Chinese sea power will lose its reason for being involved in the Indian Ocean. Thus, right now China desperately needs at least one foothold (*lizudian*) in the Indian Ocean to provide strategic support for Chinese sea power.

3.2 Make Meticulous Arrangements to Drive Chinese Sea Power into the Indian Ocean

Considering our need to support the expansion of Chinese interests, Chinese sea power must expand into the Indian Ocean. Given the actual situation that China faces in the Indian Ocean, this expansion must be cautious and careful and it must be slow and low-key. China must do its utmost to maintain the relative stability in the triangle relationship (*sanjiao guanxi*) between itself, the US, and India and ensure that the expansion of Chinese sea power into the Indian Ocean does not damage the strategic environment upon which China's peaceful rise relies. China's approach should be to "meticulously choose locations, make arrangements in a low-key manner, prioritize cooperation, and infiltrate slowly," thereby gradually driving the development of Chinese sea power into the Indian Ocean.

1. **Meticulously Choose Locations.** This phrase means that for Chinese sea power to develop in the Indian Ocean, it must meticulously select several key ports in which to build overseas supply and support points. Only by doing this would Chinese sea power be able to leverage the strategic functions it should have [in this region]. China must create at least one supply and support point in each of the key areas of the ocean. At present, one of these areas is the Bay of Bengal. In this area, Chinese sea power must exert effective strategic influence on the western entrance to the Strait of Malacca, and it must also be able to reliably protect the oil/gas pipeline connecting China and Myanmar. China could perhaps set up a strategic strongpoint in Sittwe, Myanmar. This is the terminus of the pipeline. It is also the location of a large refinery base that PetroChina will be constructing. The Arabian Sea/Persian Gulf is another sea area. Chinese sea power must ensure the secure movement of oil from the Persian Gulf, thereby guaranteeing the country's energy supply. One strategic

stronghold could possibly be built in Gwadar port in Pakistan. That port was built with

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Chinese assistance. It is less than 400 km from the Strait of Hormuz. Moreover, it is the proposed site of the terminus of an oil/gas pipeline connecting China and Pakistan. Its strategic value is tremendous. The third sea area is the western Indian Ocean. Chinese sea power must deal with the piracy and other non-traditional security threats along the Suez Canal-Red Sea-Gulf of Aden sea route and along the east coast of Africa. China might consider selecting a place along the coast of the Red Sea such as Djibouti or a place in the western Indian Ocean like the Seychelles to set up a supply and support point. In the future, if China wants to exert influence over sea lanes extending across the entire Indian Ocean and exert influence on the African mainland it perhaps should establish locations (*jubudian*) in places such as Hambantota (Sri Lanka) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania).

2. **Make Arrangements in a Low-Key Manner.** This phrase means that while making strategic arrangements in the Indian Ocean Chinese sea power must remain low-key (*didiao*). Civilian facilities should be built first. China should rely on large, state-owned enterprises to do advance construction. Operations should be run through private firms, doing our best to avoid the impression of a military presence. It should not excessively provoke the sensitivities of the hegemon [i.e., the US] or India, or give fodder for those who would hype the “China Threat Theory.” China should do its best to be low-key and reserved (*hanxu*) in its use of sea power. For military actions, China should do more and talk less, or just act and skip the talk. It should take small steps but move quickly, making rapid development. With respect to its approach to expanding sea power, China should attach more attention to “connotative development” (*neihanshi fazhan*); diligently develop its less visible capabilities (*neigong*), accumulate resources and expand in a rational manner; and avoid pursuit of aggrandizement.

3. **Prioritize Cooperation.** This means that for at least a fairly long period of time going forward, Chinese sea power in the Indian Ocean will primarily manifest in the form of maritime security cooperation. One reason is because China is hampered by its lack of strategic strongpoints and the reach of its power is inadequate. China cannot pursue the type of sea power that seeks control of the Indian Ocean. Another reason is that only by prioritizing and emphasizing cooperation to cope with common global threats can China mitigate the suspicions, resistance, and pushback of the US and India in the Indian Ocean. In fact, as the operational scope of Chinese sea power expands, when it goes beyond the near seas, it should adopt the basic guideline of prioritizing cooperation. It should leverage the soft power effects of hard Chinese sea power. This is the only way China can achieve its ultimate objective of improving its maritime geostrategic security environment.

4. **Infiltrate Slowly.** This means that as it expands into the Indian Ocean Chinese sea power should first do foundational work in order to reduce the suspicions and hostility of the US and India. It should not be rash or impetuous. It should wait for the right opportunities to act. When making strategic arrangements, it should be as low-key as possible. When it engages in security cooperation, it should be as demonstrative as possible. It should be gentle and mild, making quiet contributions such as marine surveys, marine mapping, assisting port construction, and disaster relief. It should do its utmost to first extend its antennae; make many friends; lay a firm foundation; accumulate power; wait for and exploit the right opportunities; and use opportunities—such as the UN authorization to combat Somali piracy—that offer legitimate reasons and forms for China to get involved in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, China should demonstrate in a very public manner how Chinese sea power is fulfilling international obligations, assuming the responsibilities of a major power, and safeguarding regional stability.

V. Conclusion

India and China are the same in the sense that they are both typical land-sea hybrid states and both still confront many contradictions and disputes in the landward direction. Their maritime strategies have always involved controversy and contradictions between [balancing the relative importance of] sea power and land power. However, India's sea power strategy has its own particular characteristics. It integrates modern Western sea power concepts with its colonial heritage. It actively pursues its maritime strategic interests and vigorously increases its maritime power, doing so on the basis of a correct judgment of its regional strategic situation. This strategic practice has a certain amount of value as a frame of reference for China as it creates and implements its sea power development strategy.

However, India's sea power theory too fully adopts Mahan's sea power thought. Thus, it particularly emphasizes the offensive connotations of geostrategic security. Offensive maritime geostrategic theory inevitably begets an extremely offensive sea power strategy. From India's requirement to keep the enemy outside of a specified "security zone" and its maritime security strategy of "control the Indian Ocean, deter external powers from getting involved," it is clear that India's sea power strategy is an expansionary strategy with strong intentions to achieve control. It exhibits signs of a hegemon complex. This is something we need to be on guard against and something we need to earnestly counter.

China's far seas transport lines are long. Significant segments are very far away from the areas within which the Chinese military can provide protection. Moreover, nearly every sea lane must transit through important strategic locations such as the Malacca Strait. These strategic locations are all controlled by international strategic competitors (*jingzheng duishou*), including India. The far seas expansion of Chinese sea power must focus on the core purpose of safeguarding China's strategic "lifelines." In recent years, the Chinese Navy has conducted escort operations in faraway Somalia. It has established a foothold in the Indian Ocean. To a certain degree, it has improved China's sea lane security. However,

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we cannot ignore the fact that China's escort operations still do not have an autonomous (*zizhu*) supply base. They lack isolated operations [*sic*] with strategic deterrent efficacy. China still has not formed a strategic foundational structure adequate for supporting powerful strategic capabilities in the oceans around the world. Appropriately resolving this passive situation as soon as possible is the most urgent task with respect to the far seas expansion of Chinese sea power.



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Five Major Implications of Chinese Surface Task Forces Crossing the International Date Line¹

Li Jie²

According to a February 18, 2020 *PLA Daily* report, the Southern Theater Command Navy surface task force then conducting far seas training deep in the Pacific Ocean had crossed the international date line. The report said this was the first time that a Chinese surface task force had entered the western hemisphere in a combat readiness training posture. The day after the surface task force crossed the international date line it conducted a live-fire exercise in the Western Hemisphere!

The Southern Theater Command Navy surface task force included the following vessels: the [Type 052D] guided missile destroyer *Hohhot*, the [Type 054A] frigate *Xianning*, the comprehensive supply ship [sic] *Tianshuxing*, and the reconnaissance vessel [sic] *Chaganhu*.³ The size and displacement of the vessels and the scale of the task force were not particularly large, but this event conveys five major implications:

First, this Southern Theater Command Navy surface task force heading to the waters of the Western Hemisphere to operate and train indicates that Chinese Navy surface task forces will henceforth never again suffer restrictions or restraints from any other country. China can, of its own volition, stride towards the “bluer, deeper” far seas (*yuanhai*) and even towards distant-ocean (*yuanyang*) waters to conduct activities. The vast waters of the Eastern Pacific will never again be America’s “backyard” or traditional dominion. Rather, it will be high seas that any country’s navy can freely navigate. The Chinese Navy’s far seas training task force’s crossing of the international date line in battle formation and its conduct of a live-fire exercise in the Western Hemisphere signifies that the Chinese Navy has officially accessed international waters.

¹ 李杰 [Li Jie], 中国舰艇编队穿越国际日期变更线的五大意义 [“Five Major Implications of Chinese Surface Task Forces Crossing the International Date Line”], 现代舰船 [*Modern Ships*], No. 1 (January 2021), p. 20.

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³ **Translator’s note:** The author has mixed up ship names. *Chaganhu* is the name of the “comprehensive supply ship” (viz. Type 901 fast combat support ship) and *Tianshuxing* is the name of the “reconnaissance vessel” (viz. Dongdiao-class AGI).

Second, although surface task force's largest combatant was just the destroyer *Hohhot*, this ship's technical performance is among the best in the world and our navy already has 20 or more of them. Even more important, this surface task force included a "battle-tested" frigate (of which the navy has more than 40) as well as a comprehensive supply ship known as the "wet-nurse of aircraft carriers" and a potent reconnaissance ship. One might say that this surface task force possessed both offensive and defense capabilities, and it was capable of performing various types of combat tasks and military operations other than war.

Third, although this surface task force did not include a large warship, such as an aircraft carrier or amphibious assault ship, it did include a "bodyguard" of aircraft carriers (i.e., a destroyer) and a "wet-nurse of aircraft carriers" (i.e., a comprehensive supply ship). This demonstrates that in the case of future far-seas operations as long as a task is required then deploying an aircraft carrier or amphibious assault ship is completely possible and can be done. Today's Chinese Navy has advanced surface combatants and multiple types of them, and it has ample numbers of other specialized warships to support [operations] in the waters of the middle and far seas.

Fourth, in crossing the international date line this surface task force got close to the U.S. archipelagic state of Hawaii. This showed that we will persist in smashing the long-term encirclement and blockade against us by the U.S. and other hegemonic countries. Since the early 1950s, the U.S. and other countries have established three island chain blockade lines in the Pacific Ocean (viz., the first, second, and third island chains). Over more than half a century, these island chain blockade lines have become "layers of chains" to encircle, blockade, and contain China. They have become enormous obstacles impeding China from heading towards the middle and far seas. They have become major restraints on China's reform and opening up and "Belt and Road" initiative. Therefore, the crossing of the three island chains by this surface task force demonstrates to the world that China will never again be subject to the restrictions and restraints of the island chains. America's approach of using island chains to blockade China will be completely crushed!

Fifth, we really cannot rule out one extremely important aim of this surface task force, namely, to provide cover and support for China's continuously-developing nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). As is well known to all, SSBNs are among the state's strategic nuclear force "triad" and an extremely important deterrent and strike force. As such, they will play a vital role. But SSBNs are easily hunted and attacked by adversary antisubmarine warfare forces, which is highly dangerous. Thus, one's own warships must provide cover and support. When considering the [improved] security of strategic nuclear submarines operating submerged in the middle and far seas and the inadequate range of SSBN missiles, it seems even more necessary [that they operate there]. Therefore, China's surface task forces and SSBNs going beyond the island chains to the middle and far seas for training and exercises is extremely important and must be strengthened.

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