Key Areas of U.S. Military Focus

The previous sections have already shown that China’s present and future ability to cooperate, compete and fight a conflict can be seen from many different perspectives – and that China’s present strategy is focused more on economic growth and the development of fully competitive modern forces than any form of conflict. At the same time, it is clear that the U.S. now sees China as its key peer in both civil and military terms, and that its strategy focuses on competition and possible conflict, rather than cooperation.

China’s white papers do not yet directly address these aspects of U.S. strategy, but it is clear from the military charts and data that follow that Chinese military developments have focused on the U.S. as a competitor and potential threat in similar ways for well over a decade. It is also clear that China is shaping the rises in its military expenditures — and its plans to acquire parity or superiority in military technology — around its assessments of U.S. plans and capabilities. Once again, in the real world, grand strategy does not consist of what nations say, but rather of what they actually do.

Accordingly, this section of the report introduces the analysis of China’s perception of its strategic goals, possible threats, and the development of its military forces by outlining U.S perceptions of China’s expanding role in the Pacific, the developments in U.S. strategy and forces, and how the U.S. is shaping its forces in the present military balance. It does not attempt a full net assessment, but it does attempt to provide the context necessary for a paper that focuses on U.S. and Chinese strategic competition.

It is important to note, however, that the following sections focus on China’s regional concerns as well as U.S. and Chinese strategic competition, and how its rising power affects its military capabilities relative to Asian states and its ability to protect its status as a major economic and trading power.

It also concludes by providing an overview of open source data on the developments in each key aspect of Chinese military forces – many of which are driven by the need to deter and potentially fight U.S. forces, but many of which as also driven by China’s need to deal with regional powers and by unique Chinese approaches to grand strategy, strategy, and tactics.
U.S. Military Forces Affecting (and Affected By) China, the Pacific, the South China Sea, and Indian Ocean
U.S. Military Forces Affecting China, the Pacific, the South China Sea, and Indian Ocean

The previous charts and tables showing the comparative size of Chinese, Russian, and USA forces have focused on the total global strength of each power. In practice, deterrence, hybrid operations, asymmetric warfare, conventional warfare, and nuclear warfare all have one thing in common. There is virtually no chance that a scenario will arrive where global or major regional power use all of their forces, and the total military balance determines the outcome.

This is particularly true of the United States. It works closely with strategic partners. It has major deployments in the U.S. that would take time to bring to readiness and deploy, and major deployments in most regions of the world that it must sustain in part in most conflicts that involve other regions. Accordingly, any comparison of U.S. and Chinese military power must focus initially on the forces the U.S. already has in Asia and the Pacific and the role a given strategic partner would play in a given scenario, plus the power projection forces the U.S. might deploy from the Continental U.S. and other regions.

There is no clear way to show the full range of U.S. forces that might be involved in a confrontation or conflict with China, but the U.S does have a set of forces that are clearly focused on Asia and the Pacific called the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). The charts in this section that display unclassified estimates of these forces by the U.S. command and the IISS provide a broad picture of the military capabilities the U.S. would draw upon in anything short of a general war, although the U.S. would probably deploy significant elements of its forces stationed in the U.S. to meet the needs of a given crisis or conflict. The following tables and charts describe these forces, their size, and their deployments. They also describe some near-term priorities for force improvement which provide useful insights into how the U.S. is reacting to China’s military progress.

The final graphics show the location and function of key U.S. bases and a sample year of U.S. military exercises. These graphics both provide a picture of U.S. regional capabilities and of some of the reasons that China sees the U.S. position in the Pacific as being a potential threat.

It should be noted that the U.S. has never provided exact details on its efforts to build up its forces in the Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) — and related power projection forces based in the U.S. — since it first announced a “pivot to East Asia” and then a “rebalancing to Asia” in 2012. It has, however, been increasing selected aspects of its forces in Asia since 2015 — initially as a reaction to the collapse of the FSU and Warsaw Pact and then to the rise of China. The U.S. FY2018, FY2019, and FY2020 do not describe such a force building and increases in readiness in detail, but many elements of these annual budget requests do reflect increasing U.S. forces, force modernization, and improvements in global U.S. power projection capability.

The maps showing U.S. bases do not include every local deployment, but are accurate pictures of the location of major bases. Here, it should be stressed that the Pacific covers a vast area, and forward basing is critical to sustaining any major joint force U.S. deployment in a given area.
U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) AOR

The United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) encompasses about half the earth's surface, stretching from the waters off the west coast of the U.S. to the western border of India, and from Antarctica to the North Pole. There are few regions as culturally, socially, economically, and geo-politically diverse as the Asia-Pacific. The 36 nations that comprising the Asia-Pacific region are home to more than 50% of the world's population, 3,000 different languages, several of the world's largest militaries, and five nations allied with the U.S. through mutual defense treaties. Two of the three largest economies are located in the Asia-Pacific along with 10 of the 14th smallest. The AOR includes the most populous nation in the world, the largest democracy, and the largest Muslim-majority nation. More than one third of Asia-Pacific nations are smaller, island nations that include the smallest republic in the world and the smallest nation in Asia.

USINDOPACOM is one of six geographic Unified Combatant Commands of the United States Armed Forces. Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (CDRUSINDOPACOM) is the senior U.S. military authority in the Indo-Pacific Command AOR. CDRUSINDOPACOM reports to the President of the United States through the Secretary of Defense and is supported by four component commands: U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Pacific Air Forces, U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Marine Forces, Pacific. These commands are headquartered in Hawai‘i and have forces stationed and deployed throughout the region.

USINDOPACOM protects and defends, in concert with other U.S. Government agencies, the territory of the United States, its people, and its interests. With allies and partners, USINDOPACOM is committed to enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win. This approach is based on partnership, presence, and military readiness.

USINDOPACOM recognizes the global significance of the Asia-Pacific region and understands that challenges are best met together. Consequently, USINDOPACOM will remain an engaged and trusted partner committed to preserving the security, stability, and freedom upon which enduring prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region depends.

VISION: USINDOPACOM ensures a Free and Open Indo-Pacific alongside a constellation of like-minded Allies and Partners, united by mutual security, interests, and values in order to deter adversary aggression, protect the Homeland, and be ready to fight and win in armed conflict.

MISSION: U.S. Indo-Pacific Command will implement a combat credible deterrence strategy capable of denying our adversaries sustained air and sea dominance by focusing on posturing the Joint Force to win before fighting while being ready to fight and win, if required.

FOCUS AREAS:
1. Joint Force Lethality - We must continue to develop and field capabilities necessary to deter aggression and prevail in armed conflict should deterrence fail.
2. Design & Posture - We will adapt from our historical service-centric focus in Northeast Asia to a new more integrated joint forces blueprint which is informed by the changing threat environment and challenges of the 21st Century across the entire Indo-Pacific.
3. Exercises, Experimentation, & Innovation - Targeted innovation and experimentation investments will evolve the joint force while developing asymmetrical capability to counter adversary capabilities.
4. Allies & Partners - Through increased interoperability, information-sharing, and expanded access across the region, we present a compatible and interoperable coalition to the adversary in crisis and armed conflict. USINDOPACOM headquarters is located in the Nimitz-MacArthur Building on Camp H.M. Smith just outside of Honolulu, Hawaii.

USINDOPACOM currently has more than 2,000 aircraft; 200 ships and submarines; and more than 370,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, DoD civilians, and contractors assigned within its area of responsibility. The largest concentration of forces in the region are in Japan and the ROK. A sizable contingent of forces (more than 5,000 on a day-to-day basis) are also based in the U.S. territory of Guam, which serves as a strategic hub supporting crucial operations and logistics for all U.S. forces operating in the Indo-Pacific region. Other allies and partners that routinely host U.S. forces on a smaller scale include the Philippines, Australia, Singapore, and the United Kingdom through the island of Diego Garcia.

In order to overcome the tyranny of distance, posture that supports and enables inter- and intra-theater logistics must be flexible and resilient, and the pre-positioning of equipment is critical. Specifically, we are exploring expeditionary capabilities; dynamic basing of maritime and air forces; special operations forces capable of irregular and unconventional warfare; anti-submarine capabilities; cyber and space teams equipped for multi-domain operations; and, unique intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities among other investments. From leveraging existing access in the Compact States, to pursuing co-development with our most capable allies and partners, we will continue to forward-station leading edge technologies, such as 5th generation fighters in the Indo-Pacific.

DoD is also developing new operating concepts to increase our lethality, agility, and resilience that will be further implemented through our evolving posture. For example, as part of the Multi-Domain Operations concept, the U.S. Army will test Multi-Domain Task Forces intended to create temporary windows of superiority across multiple domains, and allow the Joint Force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. The U.S. Army will test the Multi-Domain Task Forces through the Pacific Pathways program to determine the right capability mix and locations. Furthermore, the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations is an emerging U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operating concept to provide resilience and support to maritime operations inside contested environments. It is intended to deny adversary freedom of action; control key maritime terrain; and support Joint Force air and maritime requirements by operating from austere locations at a tempo that complicates adversary targeting. In addition, DoD will continue to ensure a force posture that enables the United States to undertake a spectrum of missions including security cooperation, building partner capacity, collaboration on transnational threats, and joint and combined training.

The Department is undertaking a range of efforts to enhance Joint Force preparedness for the most pressing scenarios. Examples of DoD initiatives include:

- Investments in Advanced Training Facilities at the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex to present a more realistic and representative training environment;
- Investments in unit and depot maintenance across Air Force and Naval Aviation to achieve an 80 percent fighter readiness goal by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2019; and,
- Investments in advanced missile defense systems interoperable with allied systems in Japan and Australia.
The Department is also modernizing the force to meet the demands of high-end competition. Illustrative examples of key investments include:

- Acceleration of the development and forward presence of U.S. land forces’ Multi-Domain Task Force, utilizing Security Force Assistance Brigades to build partner capacity and strengthen multinational teams, and expanding Pacific Pathways to deepen relationships with U.S. allies and partners;
- Strategic deterrence enhancements associated with investments in the new Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine;
- Purchase of 110 4th- and 5th-generation aircraft which will result in both capability and capacity improvements;
- Purchase of approximately 400 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles;
- Purchase of more than 400 Joint Air-Surface Missiles – Extended Range;
- Investments in two Unmanned Surface Vehicles, additional Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles, and additional Maritime Strike Tactical Tomahawks;
- Increased capacity in Anti-Surface Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, and Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) by purchasing 10 more destroyers within the FY 2020-2024 Future Years Defense Program;
- Investment in resources to support offensive and defensive cyberspace operations; and,
- Efforts to unify, focus, and accelerate the development of space doctrine, capabilities, and expertise to outpace future threats, institutionalize advocacy of space priorities, and further build space warfighting culture.
U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Deployments and Forces in 2018

**AUSTRALIA:** US Pacific Command • 1,500; 1 SEWS at Pine Gap; 1 communications facility at Pine Gap; 1 SIGINT station at Pine Gap; US Strategic Command • 1 detection and tracking radar at Naval Communication Station Harold E Holt

**BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY:** US Strategic Command • 300; 1 Spacetrack Optical Tracker at Diego Garcia; 1 ground-based electro-optical deep space surveillance system (GEODSS) at Diego Garcia

**U.S. Pacific Command** • 1 MPS sqn (MPS-2 with equipment for one MEB) at Diego Garcia with 2 AKRH; 3 AKR; 1 AKEH; 1 ESD; 1 naval air base at Diego Garcia, 1 support facility at Diego Garcia

**GUAM:** US Pacific Command • 6,000; 4 SSGN; 1 MPS sqn (MPS-3 with equipment for one MEB) with 2 AKRH; 4 AKR; 1 ESD; 1 AKEH; 1 bbr sqn with 6 B-52H Stratofortress; 1 tpt hel sqn with MH-60S; 1 SAM bty with THAAD; 1 air base; 1 naval base

**JAPAN:** US Pacific Command • 53,900
US Army 2,700; 1 corps HQ (fwd); 1 SF gp; 1 avn br; 1 SAM bn
US Navy 20,250; 1 HQ (7th Fleet) at Yokosuka; 1 base at Sasebo; 1 base at Yokosuka

**FORCES BY ROLE**
3 FGA sqn at Iwakuni with 10 F/A-18E Super Hornet; 1 FGA sqn at Iwakuni with 10 F/A-18F Super Hornet; 2 EW sqn at Iwakuni/Misawa with 5 EA-18G Growler; 1 AEW&C sqn at Iwakuni with 5 E-2D Hawkeye; 2 ASW hel sqn at Atsugi with 12 MH-60R; 1 tpt hel sqn at Atsugi with 12 MH-60S

**EQUIPMENT BY TYPE**
1 CVN; 3 CGHM; 2 DDDGM; 8 DDGM (2 non-op); 1 LCC; 4 MCO; 1 LHD; 1 LPD; 2 LSD
USAF 12,150

**FORCES BY ROLE**
1 HQ (5th Air Force) at Okinawa – Kadena AB; 1 tfr wg at Misawa AB with (2 sqn with 22 F-16C/D Fighting Falcon); 1 wg at Okinawa – Kadena AB with (2 sqn with 27 F-15C/D Eagle; 1 sqn with 14 F-22A Raptor; 1 sqn with 15 KC-135R Stratotanker; 1 AEW&C sqn with 2 E-3B/C Sentry; 1 CSAR sqn with 10 HH-60G Pave Hawk; 1 tpt wg at Yokota AB with 10 C-130J-30 Hercules; 3 Bae 1900C (C-1J); 1 Spac Ops gp at Okinawa – Kadena AB with (1 sqn with 5 MC-130H Combat Talon; 1 sqn with 5 MC-130J Commando II; 1 unit with 5 CV-22 Osprey); 1 ISR sqn with RC-135 Rivet Joint; 1 ISR UAV flt with 5 RQ-4A Global Hawk

**JSMC 18,800**

**FORCES BY ROLE**
1 mne div; 1 mne regt HQ; 1 arty regt HQ; 1 recce bn; 1 mne bn; 1 amph salt bn; 1 arty bn; 1 FGA sqn with 12 F/A-18C Hornet; 1 FGA sqn with 12 F/A-18D Hornet; 1 FGA sqn with 12 F-35B Lightning II; 1 tfr sqn with 15 KC-130J Hercules; 2 tpt sqn with 12 MV-22B Osprey

**US Strategic Command** • 1 AN/TPY-2 X-band radar at Shikoku; 1 AN/TPY-2 X-band radar at Kyogokanishi

**KOREA, REPUBLIC OF:** US Pacific Command • 28,500
US Army 19,200

**FORCES BY ROLE**
1 HQ (8th Army) at Seoul; 1 div HQ (2nd Inf) located at Tongchon; 1 armd bde; 1 (cbt avn) hel bde; 1 MRL bde; 1 AD bde; 1 SAM bty with THAAD

**EQUIPMENT BY TYPE**
M1A2 SEPv2 Abrams; M2A2/M3A3 Bradley; M109A6; M270A1 MLRS; AH-64D Apache; CH-47F Chinook; UH-60L/M Black Hawk; MIM-104 Patriot; FIM-92A Avenger; 1 APS armd bde eqpt set

US Navy 250

**USAF 8,800**

**FORCES BY ROLE**
1 (AF) HQ (7th Air Force) at Osan AB; 1 tfr wg at Osan AB with (1 sqn with 20 F-16C/D Fighting Falcon; 1 atk sqn with 24 A-10C Thunderbolt II); 1 tfr wg at Kunsan AB with (2 sqn with 20 F-16C/D Fighting Falcon); 1 ISR sqn at Osan AB with U-25 USMC 250

**MARSHALL ISLANDS:** US Strategic Command • 1 detection and tracking radar at Kwejalake Atoll

**PACIFIC OCEAN:** US Pacific Command • US Navy • 3rd Fleet: 8 SSGN; 21 SSGN; 4 SSN; 4 CVN; 10 CGHM; 21 DDG; 6 DDGM; 9 FFG; 3 MCO; 1 LHA; 3 LHD; 5 LPD; 3 LSD

**PHILIPPINES:** US Pacific Command • Operation Pacific Eagle - Philippines 250

**SINGAPORE:** US Pacific Command • 200; 1 log sqn; 1 spt facility

**THAILAND:** US Pacific Command • 300

U.S. Forces in USINDOPACOM in 2019

Approximately 375,000 U.S. military and civilian personnel are assigned to USINDOPACOM and its different components across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. According to USINDOPACOM, those assignments are broken out as follows:

- Approximately 28,500 U.S. service members and their families are stationed in the Republic of Korea, while U.S. Forces Japan consists of approximately 54,000 military personnel and their dependents. As of September 2016, approximately 5,000 service members and their families were stationed in Guam.
- U.S. Pacific Fleet consists of approximately 200 ships (including five aircraft carrier strike groups), nearly 1,100 aircraft, and more than 130,000 sailors and civilians.
- Marine Corps Forces, Pacific includes two Marine Expeditionary Forces and about 86,000 personnel and 640 aircraft.
- U.S. Pacific Air Forces comprises approximately 46,000 airmen and civilians and more than 420 aircraft.
- U.S. Army Pacific has approximately 106,000 personnel from one corps and two divisions, plus over 300 aircraft assigned throughout the AOR.
- These component command personnel figures also include more than 1,200 Special Operations personnel. Department of Defense civilian employees in the Pacific Command AOR number about 38,000.

Source: Ashley Townshend and Brendan Thomas-Noone and Matilda Steward with Matilda Steward, *Averting Crisis: American Strategy*, United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney, August 2019, p. 12
U.S. Allies and Bases in Region

U.S. Bases in Pacific


Source: https://amti.csis.org/the-evolving-role-of-military-exercises-in-asia/
The U.S. Side of the Shifting Asia-Pacific Regional Balance
The charts and tables in this section provide Japanese and Korean assessments of the regional balance between U.S., Chinese, and other military forces. There are no open source estimates by the U.S. government that provide unclassified official estimates, but the numbers shown in each estimate seem to be reasonable broad estimates of the force totals involved.

Such totals do not, however, reflect levels of readiness, modernization, and military experience. They do not reflect the forces likely to be allocated to any given scenarios, and are relevant largely to scenarios involving theater-wide conventional wars. Such conflicts seem much less likely than political-economic tensions, competitions, and conflicts — including hybrid operations that do not actually involve military clashes. All of the major powers have strong strategic, economic, and military incentives to avoid major clashes or conflicts or terminate them as soon as possible — given the immense cost of any major conventional conflict and its aftermath, and the risk of nuclear war.

Accordingly, the capability of any given side to use force to exert influence — passively or in limited conflicts — may be just as important in the real world as the capability to deter, fight, and successfully terminate major conflicts. The ability to preemptively or suddenly use limited forces successfully in hybrid or asymmetric operations in limited regional conflicts may also dominate the competition between China, the U.S. and other major powers. Similarly the ability to deter the escalation of limited clashes or conflicts on favorable terms may be as critical as the ability to deter and successfully fight large-scale conflicts.

The public statements of Chinese national strategy may not recognize these realities, but they are logical extensions of Chinese strategy since at least the days of Sun Tzu, and Chinese staff colleges and writing clearly emphasize such options. The same recognition is increasingly part of official U.S. military education, although U.S. policymakers often do emphasize the risk or possibility of large-scale conflicts.
Japanese Estimate of Regional Military Balance: 2017

South Korean Estimate of Regional Military Balance: 2016 - I

- **Russia**
  - Defense Budget: USD51.6Bn
  - 798,000 Troops
  - 1,011 Fighters
  - 1 Aircraft Carrier
  - 62 Submarines

- **China**
  - Defense Budget: USD145.8Bn
  - 2,333,000 Troops
  - 1,588 Fighters
  - 1 Aircraft Carrier
  - 65 Submarines

- **Japan**
  - Defense Budget: USD41Bn
  - 247,000 Troops
  - 348 Fighters
  - 6 Aegis Ships
  - 18 Submarines

- **U.S.**
  - Defense Budget: USD597.5Bn
  - 1,381,000 Troops
  - 2,047 Fighters
  - 10 Aircraft Carriers
  - 71 Submarines


Adapted from South Korea, Defense White Paper, 2016, p. 15
### South Korean Estimate of Regional Military Balance: 2016 - II

#### Number of Troops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,381,260</td>
<td>798,000</td>
<td>2,333,000</td>
<td>247,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Army</strong></td>
<td>509,450</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
<td>151,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Navy</strong></td>
<td>326,800</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>235,000</td>
<td>45,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Air Force</strong></td>
<td>319,950</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>398,000</td>
<td>47,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Airborne</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>Joint Staff Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>185,050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Command/support</strong></td>
<td>15,100</td>
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#### Army

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divisions/Brigades</strong></td>
<td>10/45</td>
<td>4/89</td>
<td>23/128</td>
<td>9/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>** Tanks**</td>
<td>5,884</td>
<td>20,200</td>
<td>6,540</td>
<td>687</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Infantry combat vehicles</strong></td>
<td>6,559</td>
<td>13,900</td>
<td>3,950</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reconnaissance vehicles</strong></td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>650 (light tanks)</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Armored vehicles</strong></td>
<td>24,377</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>4,150</td>
<td>792</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Towed artillery</strong></td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>13,165</td>
<td>6,140</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-propelled guns</strong></td>
<td>1,469</td>
<td>6,120</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple launch rocket systems</strong></td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>4,070</td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mortar</strong></td>
<td>2,483</td>
<td>4,130</td>
<td>2,586</td>
<td>1,103</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-tank guided weapons</strong></td>
<td>SP 1,512</td>
<td>SP N/A</td>
<td>SP 480</td>
<td>SP 37</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ground-to-air missiles</strong></td>
<td>1,207</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Helicopters</strong></td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aircraft</strong></td>
<td>222</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Adapted from South Korea, *Defense White Paper, 2016*, p. 264.
South Korean Estimate of Regional Military Balance: 2016 - III

### Navy

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<th>Category</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic nuclear submarines</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft carriers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frigates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol and coastal combatants</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine sweepers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibious vessels</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landing craft</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary ships</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helicopters</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>131</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marine division</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naval division</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

### Marine Corps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnaissance vehicles</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibious assault APC</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel transport APC</td>
<td>2,467</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannons</td>
<td>1,506</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-tank missiles</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAV/ISR</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helicopters</td>
<td>455</td>
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### Air Force

<table>
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<th>Russia</th>
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<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic bombers</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconnaissance aircraft</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>348</td>
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<tr>
<td>Command and control aircraft</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport aircraft</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tankers</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>245</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWACS</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainers</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
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U.S. Views of China’s Strategic Posture in the Pacific
U.S. Views of China’s Strategic Posture in the Pacific

As the following sections show, China’s strategic posture focuses on all of China’s coasts, borders, and neighbors. Like its economy and trade, China’s military posture focuses as much on its claims to territory claimed by other Asian states like Japan and South Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia as it does on competition with the United States. Moreover, China cannot separate its strategy and military development in Asia from its focus on the U.S. The U.S. is the strategic partner of many Asian states, and has considerable political, economic, and military influence over many others.

As these later sections also show, these same claims alter China’s strategic relations with virtually all its neighbors, including ones as far away as the Philippines. They are helping to drive fundamental shifts in China’s force posture from a reliance on massive land forces to the creation of modern air and naval forces, modern ground forces designs for joint warfare, and increased power projection and “blue water” naval-air-missile forces.

The Western Pacific, and Chinese forces in its Eastern mainland and the South China Sea are, however, the areas that are now of particular strategic concern to the United States, and the key focus of U.S. and Chinese strategic competition. China has steadily modernized its forces in the areas which allow it to operate in the Eastern Pacific, South China Sea, and in the areas extending to which is called the Second Island Chain – an areas roughly equivalent to the claims that the Chiang Kai Shek regime made to the “Nine Dashed Line” in 1947 — after end of World War II. China associates these lines with the historical claims it can make tracing back to the height of the Chinese Empire, and its current regime modified them slightly in 2009 to better define its claims in the South China Sea and make its claims in the areas north of Taiwan less clear.

The maps that following in this section show U.S. views of China’s expanding military forces in these areas – as well as other parts of the Pacific, and their possible role in air, missile, and naval operations. They also show maps of China’s efforts to expand its military role and control over the two island chains in the Pacific that are now called the “First and Second Island Chains.” This expansion of the military forces China deploys on these island chains — particularly in the South China Sea — are key areas of U.S. concern, although the U.S. is also concerned with Chinese operations in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) throughout the world and China’s steadily expanding exercises and military presence in other areas.

China, in turn, is reacting to the U.S. build-up and modernization of its forces in the Pacific. The next series of maps shows what Liddell Hart called the “other side of the hill.” It provides a Chinese think tank view of the potential threat posed by U.S. forces in the Pacific, outer Island zone, and South China Sea issues in English by a Chinese research center. It is clear that China’s focus on the U.S. is in many ways the mirror image of the U.S. focus on China.

Finally, the last chart in this section provides a summary of a Rand net assessment of the trends in U.S. and Chinese warfighting capability in two key zones shown in the previous maps: Taiwan and the Spratly Islands. Such a net assessment of possible conflict capabilities is highly scenario and time dependent, and its conclusions go well beyond the scope of this analysis. However, it is important to point out that military power is ultimately determined by the ability to deter, limit, win, and successfully terminate a given conflict – and not by static measures of force strength.
China’s Eastern Theater-2018

China’s Southern Theater


The Nine-Dash Line – shown in red – has its origins in demarcation claims made by the the Republic of China that were described in broad terms in 1947 – before the regime of Chiang Kai Shek was defeated by Maoist forces. Since that time, both the People’s Republic of China (Mainland) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) have made claims to a "10-dash line" (2009 and 2011) and "11-dash line.

The full range of Chinese claims is shown in the following major section of this report, and it is important to note that China has not filed a formal claim based on specific position for each dash or the connecting lines between them. They do not cover Chinese claims in the North Western Pacific, cover all of Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait, or define specific EEZs and air defense zones.

As such, they define China’s broad strategic claims while giving China considerable flexibility in defining and negotiating specific lines with specific countries.

Adapted from John Grady, “U.S., Partners Should Prepare For Chinese Reaction To Impending Territorial Dispute Arbitration,” USNI News, Updated: June 21, 2016 10:48 AM
PLA Demarcation of First and Second Island Chains

DIA Estimate of First and Second Island Chain Boundaries: 2019

Source: DIA, China Military Power, Modernizing a Force to Win - 2019, Department of Defense, 2019, p. 32
ONI Chinese (Defensive) Military Layers

China’s anti-access area denial defensive layers. Office of Naval Intelligence Image
China’s Expanding Missile Coverage

How U.S. Forces Could Respond to a Chinese Attack

Harden bases in Pacific
Allied forces would increase the number of bomb-resistant aircraft shelters and bring in runway repair kits to fix damaged airstrips.

Conduct long-range attacks
Stealthy bombers and submarines could wage a “blinding campaign,” destroying long-range Chinese surveillance and missile systems and opening up the denied area to U.S. fighter jets and ships.

Disperse forces
Allied commanders would send their aircraft to remote airfields on the Pacific islands Tinian and Palau, complicating the targeting process for the Chinese.
Uninvited Operations in Foreign EEZs

PLA Air Force and Navy Long Range Training Flights Over Water


An incident occurred on September 30, 2018, between the U.S. Navy destroyer Decatur (DDG-73) and a Chinese destroyer, as the Decatur was conducting a freedom of navigation (FON) operation near Gaven Reef in the Spratly Islands. In the incident, the Chinese destroyer overtook the U.S. destroyer close by on the U.S. destroyer’s port (i.e., left) side.

Location and Range of PLA South China Sea Deployments

Rebalancing in Asia and the “60% solution”

A Chinese Perception of U.S. Presence in the Pacific

A Chinese Perception of U.S. Presence in the Outer Island Chain

A Chinese Perception of U.S. Presence in the Southern Pacific and South China Sea

The RAND Score Card: 1996-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scorecard</th>
<th>Taiwan Conflict</th>
<th>Spratly Islands Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(confidence in secure second-strike capability)</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Low confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>