



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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China and the Maritime Strategy

"Improving the interaction between USPACOM and the PLA is critically important – in terms of maintaining stability across the Taiwan Strait and in assuring regional nations. For our part, we will continue to pursue a mature, constructive relationship with Chinese counterparts. We view the effort as the best means to reduce the chance of miscalculation, increase our mutual understanding, and encourage cooperation on areas of common concern."

-- Adm. Timothy Keating, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command

China's influence and buildup of their naval capacities makes engagement with Chinese leaders and the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) critical in regional execution of the Maritime Strategy.

China and the Maritime Strategy

The Maritime Strategy reaffirms our commitment to forward presence, deterrence, sea control, and power projection. It elevates the need to prevent war, and foster and sustain cooperative relationships with our partners around the world.

The Maritime Strategy applies to the Navy's relationship with China in several ways:

- Building cooperative relationships – as our economies are inextricably linked, an expanded cooperative relationship between the Sea Services and the PLAN contributes to the security and stability of the maritime domain for the benefit of all.
- Forward presence and deterrence – mindful of the sovereignty of other nations, the Navy will continue maintaining a robust presence in the Pacific.
- Maritime security and freedom of the seas – the Navy intends to continue to exercise the right of free passage through all bodies of international waters.

The issue of transparency and assessing intent

Navy leaders should seek opportunities to communicate and promote building relationships with China. Here are a few issues which concern Navy leadership:

- Development of military capabilities – without robust dialogue, it is difficult to assess how the PLAN intends to employ weapons in development, which include long-range cruise and ballistic missiles, anti-satellite technology and area denial weapons. To improve understanding of each organization's intentions, Navy and PACOM leaders continue to engage Chinese counterparts.
- Regional military intentions – the Navy continues to keep lines of communication open in order to better understand the PLAN's goals, objectives, and intentions.
- Openness and cooperation between the Navy and the PLAN works to reduce misunderstanding and tension, as well as alleviate the concerns of other nations in the highly complex Asia-Pacific security environment. As stated by Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, the Navy would be interested in greater collaboration and cooperation with the PLAN, but at appropriate times and in the right settings.

Key Messages

- The United States maintains a one China policy based on the three U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act; it does not support Taiwan independence, and it opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by either side.
- The Navy is interested in a cooperative, collaborative, and mutually beneficial relationship with China.
- Cooperative partners must be able to have open and candid dialogues on all issues of mutual interest. The foundation for improving relations is the development of trust, confidence and transparency.
- Uncertainty over the motivations and directions of China's military expansion leads others to hedge. This could lead to a security environment less favorable to China's interests, the region's, and our own.

Facts & Figures

- Additional Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) Plenary talks took place in February, with the potential for a MMCA Working Group in the summer and fall of 2008.
- China's defense budget has been growing at double-digit percentages annually for the past decade, to about \$46 billion in 2007 (+18%).
- The PLAN has approximately 250,000 men, roughly 800 aircraft, and more than 100 major combat vessels.