

China's global maritime power projection: implications for Europe

Subcommittee for Security and Defence (SEDE)
European Parliament

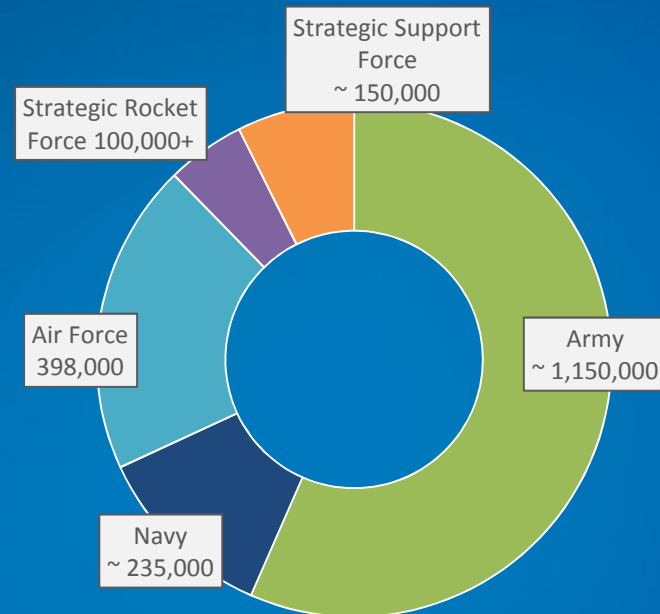
24 January 2018

China's military power

- Latest trends
 - Regional ambitions
 - Global ambitions
 - Implications for Europe
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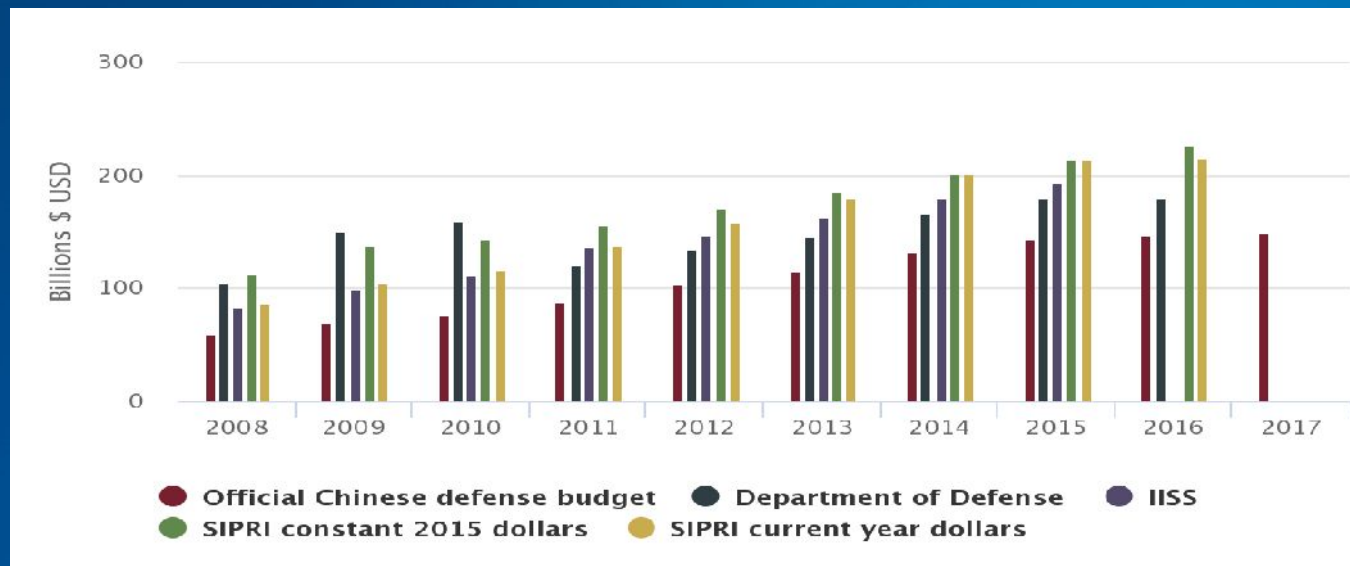
2015 PLA reforms (to be completed by 2020)

- Restructuration (CMC into 15 departments, 5 battle zones, 5 army sections)
- Rationalisation (budget and personnel cuts)
- Modernisation (cyber, space; personnel well-being)
- Reorientation (boost to Air Force and Navy)

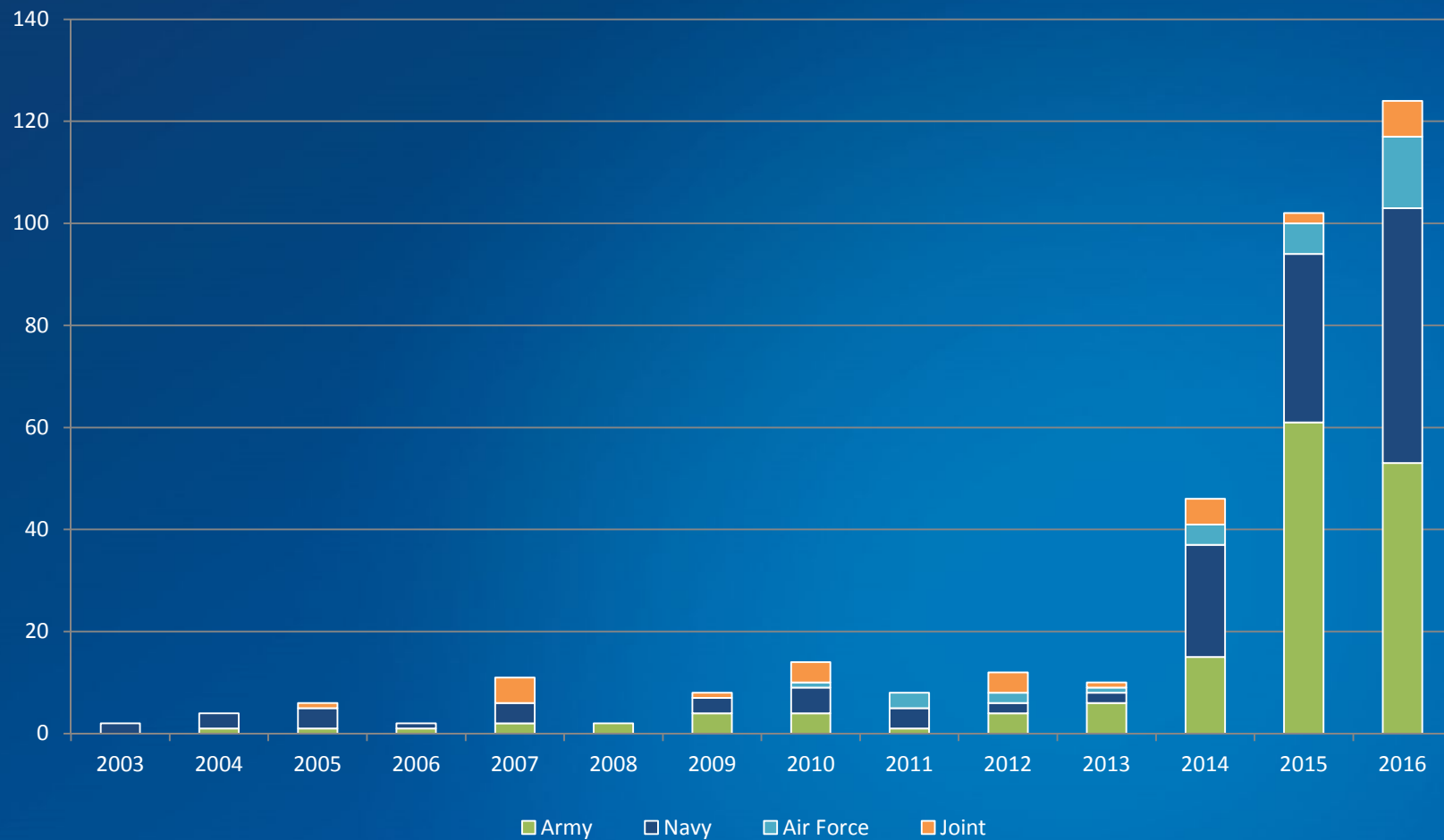


Budget:

- Official defence budget 2017: EUR 136,9 billion (7% increase from 2016)
- 2nd after US, 13% of global expenditure
- Equally split between personnel, operations & training, and equipment procurement



PLA Exercises by Service (2003-2016)



Maritime interests:

- National security / traditional defence (Taiwan)
- Sovereignty interest / territorial integrity (ECS, SCS)
- Economic exploitation (resources, energy/fish)
- Shipbuilding industry
- International trade - SLOCs protection
- Protection of overseas diaspora and assets
- Desire for a global status / leadership

“Near seas”

“Far seas”

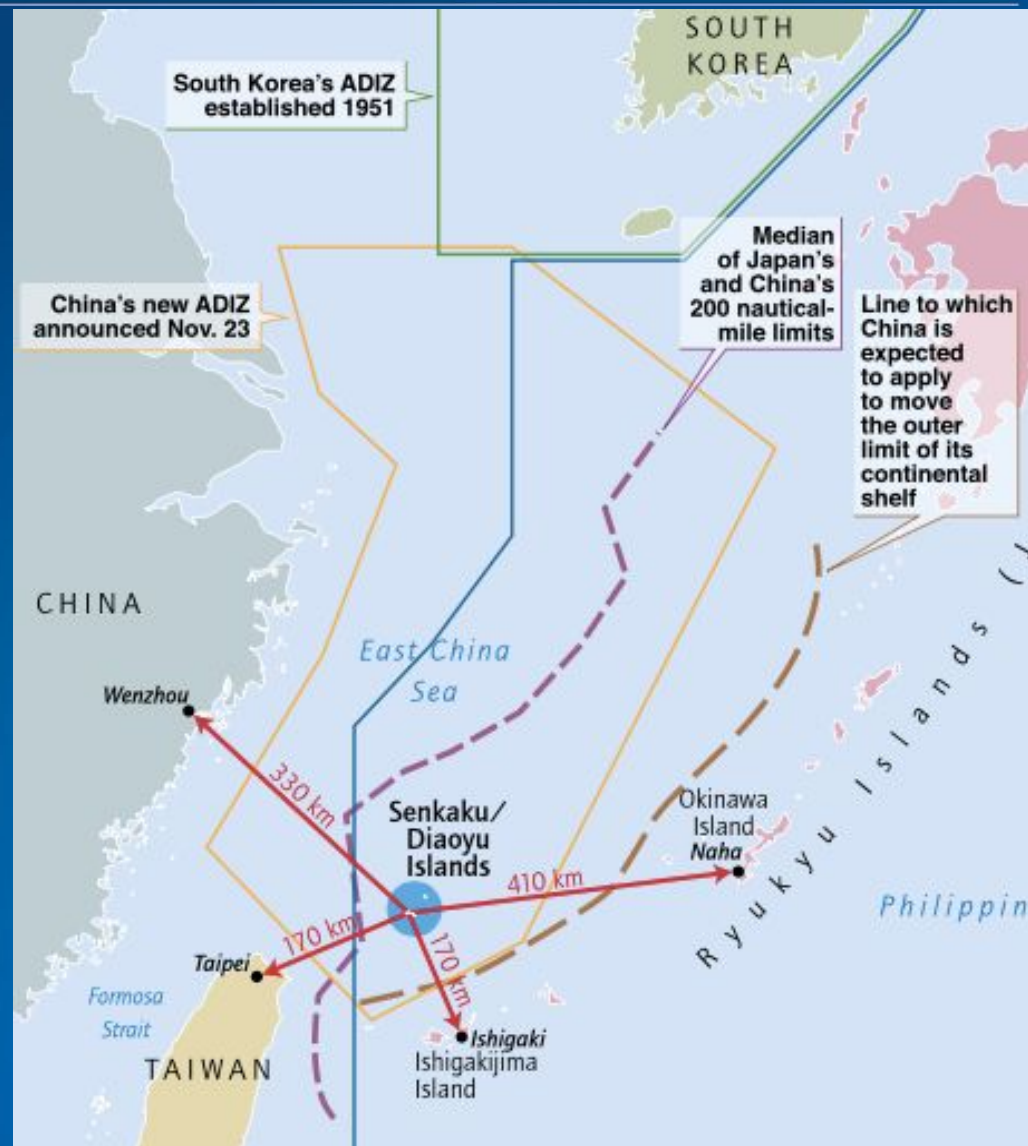
Blue water/ "far seas" capabilities (projection by 2020)

	PLAN	USN	France	Japan	India	Russia	UK
Carriers	2	11	1	0 (6 helicopter carriers)	2	1	2
Destroyers (Aegis-style)	18-20	88-91	2	8	5-6	0	6-8
Frigates	30-32	0	6	4	3-10	9-11	1-2
Submarines	34-36	73	10	22	8-10	38-40	11

Source: RADM Michael McDevitt, "Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream", USN, June 2016

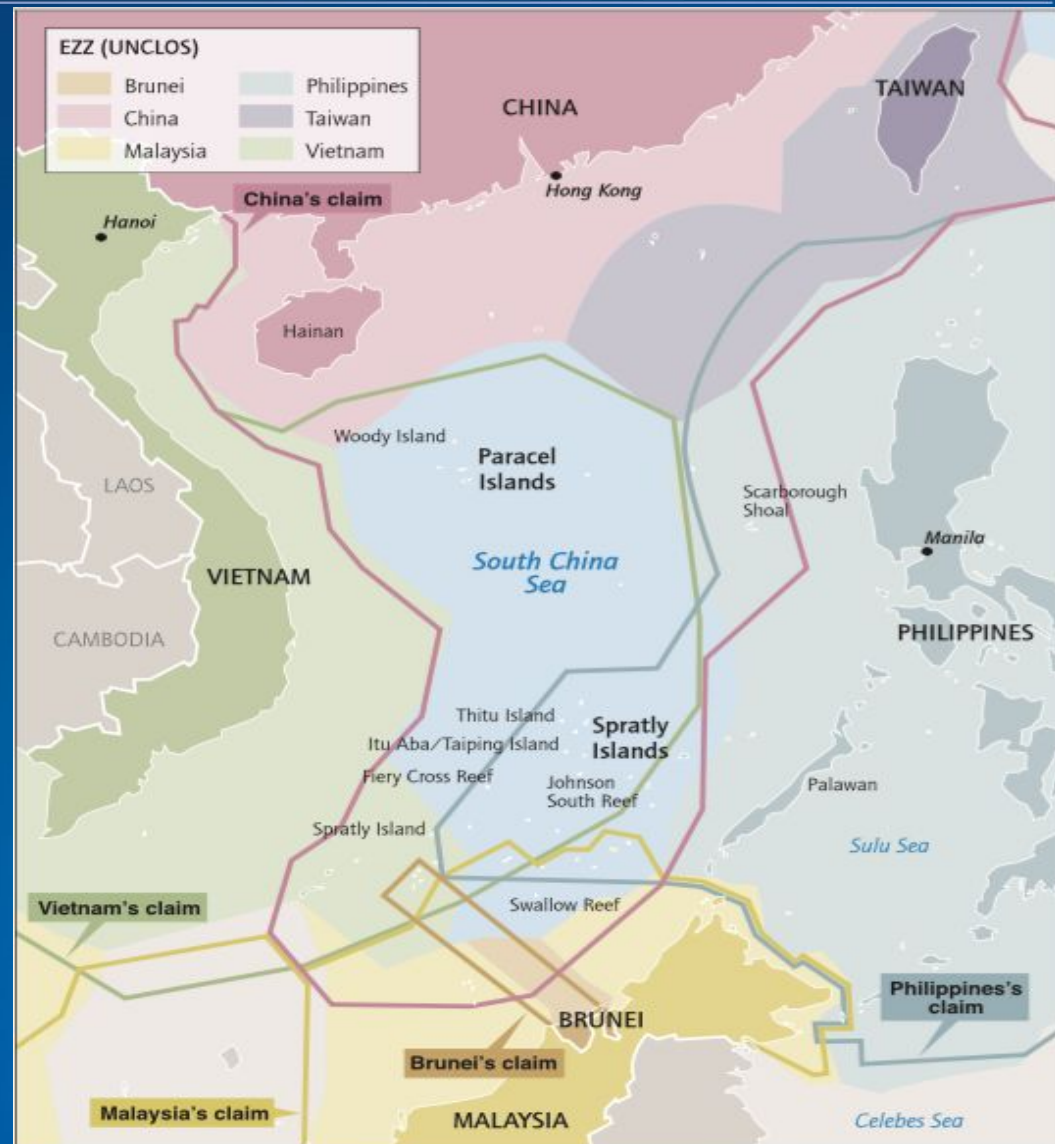
East China Sea

- Senkaku/ Diaoyu dispute
- Overlapping maritime boundary claims
- Hydrocarbon reserves
- Escalation of tensions since 2012
- ADIZ in 2013



South China Sea

- 90% claimed by China (70% VN, 30% PH)
- Overlapping boundary claims; disputed sovereignty claims (Paracels, Spratlys)
- Deterioration since 2013; evidence of island-building + militarisation
- 2016 PCA ruling on the PH-CN case



Global ambitions

Indian Ocean presence



- Anti-piracy presence since 2008 (28 escort task force groups)
 - Port development (“string of pearls”)
 - Submarine deployments (port visits to Sri Lanka and Pakistan)
 - Djibouti naval base opened in Aug 2017 (logistical support)
 - Live-fire exercises in WIO (Aug 17), Mediterranean (Jul 17)
 - Underwater surveillance network, regular patrols
 - Gwadar next?
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Global ambitions

21st century Maritime Silk Road



A 'hybrid' maritime power?

Use of non-conventional methods

- Use of civilian elements: coast guards, fishing fleet/ maritime 'militia', SOA, etc.
- 'Salami-slicing' > *fait accompli* (SCS)

Use of economic and diplomatic pressure

- Bilateral negotiations > ASSYMETRY
- Trade incentives (FTAs)
- Debt-trap diplomacy (Hambantota seaport case) > erosion of sovereignty!
- Purchase of political goodwill

Generating ambiguity

- Discourse vs. reality (non-intervention; no sphere of influence; no hegemony/ dominance)
- Disrespect of IL; self-interested interpretations of UNCLOS
- Mahan, Zheng He or Sun Tzu?

Evolving

- Adaptive
- "Evolutionary theory"

What maritime power?

Zheng He “Art of collaboration”	Sun Tzu “Art of war”
Transparency (clear articulation of intent)	Win-all-without-fight
Generosity (display of goodwill)	Use weaknesses/ avoid strengths (no direct confrontation)
Win-win (equality of treatment)	Knowledge of enemy and self
Securing external environment	Preparation
Trust (no conquest/ aggression)	Control (use of partnerships)
Good leadership	Good leadership

- Changing strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific (Quadrilateral alliance)
 - Influencing political goodwill (in EUMS and Western Balkans, “16+1” framework) > risk of fragmentation/weakening of EU positions
 - Danger for rules-based global order/ international law (incl. erosion of sovereignty)
 - Lack of governance (inclusive, multilateral structure to cooperate on functional security issues)
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- United international front > rules-based international system/
UNCLOS
 - Proactive approach towards the Belt and Road Initiative > control,
transparency
 - Protection of strategic infrastructure (ports, communications),
resilience in the neighbourhood
 - Promotion of good governance (multilateral > IORA, IOC, IONS;
bilaterally)
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Thank you