China, the South China Sea, and Archipelagic Defense

Andrew F. Krepinevich
Senior Fellow
Hudson Institute

February 1, 2018
Overview

• Character of the Challenge

• Archipelagic Defense

• Insights and Observations
How to Deter China

The Case for Archipelagic Defense

By Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr.

In the U.S. military, at least, the "pivot" to Asia has begun. By 2020, the navy and the air force plan to base 60 percent of their forces in the Asia-Pacific region. The Pentagon, meanwhile, is investing a growing share of its shrinking resources in new long-range bombers and nuclear-powered submarines designed to operate in high-threat environments.

These changes are clearly meant to check an increasingly assertive China. And with good reason: Beijing’s expanding territorial claims threaten virtually every country along what is commonly known as "the first island chain," encompassing parts of Japan, the Philippines, and Taiwan—all of which Washington is obligated to protect.

Emerging Chinese capabilities are intended to blunt Washington’s ability to provide military support to its allies and partners. Although deterrence through the prospect of punishment, in the form of air strikes and naval blockades, has a role to play in discouraging Chinese adventurism, Washington’s goal, and that of its allies and partners, should be to achieve deterrence through denial—to convince Beijing that it simply cannot achieve its objectives with force.
Selected Key Contributors

- Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Koichiro Bansho
- Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Masayuki Hironaka
- Nobukatsu Kanehara
- Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Noboru Yamaguchi
- Vice Adm. (Ret.) Masanori Yoshida
- Adm. (Ret.) John Harvey
- Capt. (Ret.) Karl Hasslinger
- Andrew Marshall
- Robert Martinage
- Rep “Mac” Thornberry
- Robert Work
Character of the Challenge
The Chinese tradition has as its primary model for interstate relations a system in which the focus of national policy is, in effect, a struggle for primacy, and legitimate, stable order is possible only when one power reigns supreme. . . . This monist model of global order is not merely a by-product of China’s ancient history. Its central assumptions . . . [are] the need for political unity, the natural order of all politics as a pyramidal hierarchy, and the fundamental illegitimacy of truly separate and independent state sovereignties . . .

Christopher Ford

[The Chinese] expect Singaporeans to be more respectful of China as it becomes more influential. They tell us that countries big or small are equal: we are not a hegemon. But when we do something they do not like, they say you have made 1.3 billion people unhappy . . . . So please know your place.

Lee Kuan Yew
China Moves South

Guam

Losing Positional Advantage

Iwo Jima

Solarium LLC
Proprietary
The “Finlandization” of the Western Pacific

China’s growing “A2/AD” capabilities threaten U.S. freedom of maneuver and action in WPTO and create opportunities to coerce neighbors inside the “threat ring”

- Modern fighters
- Anti-ship missiles
- SAMs and SHORADs
- Modern naval combatants
- Attack submarines
- Cyber / EW
- Counter-space
- Vietnam (Potential partner)
- Philippines (Treaty ally)
- Taiwan (Close partner)
- South Korea (Treaty ally)
- Japan (Treaty ally)
- Territorial disputes
- Critical SLOCs and territorial disputes
- Roughly 800 nmi from PRC mainland (max range of MRBMs, TACAIR)

Philippines (Treaty ally)
Taiwan (Close partner)
South Korea (Treaty ally)
Japan (Treaty ally)
Why Archipelagic Defense?

• East Asia and the Western Pacific an enduring vital US interest

• The US has longstanding security commitments

• The Most Stressful Case: PLA development of advanced anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) network and associated capabilities threaten vital US interests

• Bottom Line: Current trends suggest that unless offsetting actions are taken by the United States the military balance in the WPTO will become increasingly unfavorable and unstable
Exploiting China’s Concerns

What Worries China?

• Air Superiority
• Sea Control
• Information Superiority
• Coastal Assets
• Strategic Depth
• U.S. LRPS Capability
• Protracted Conflict

Corresponding Alliance Missions

• Contest Airspace
• Sea Denial
• Resilient Battle Networks
• Holding Coastal Assets at Risk
• Holding Interior Assets at Risk
• Enhancing LRPS Assets
• Ability to Wage Protracted Conflict
Don’t look at the value of one single piece and its combat strength, look at the total number of pieces and the value of their mutually coordinated disposition.

Wei Ch’i Saying

He who does not have an overall strategy for the game, does not even have a strategy for a single objective. One must have a complete strategy for the whole thing or should not even think about one part.

(Wei Ch’i Saying)
The First Island Chain

- Philippines
- Taiwan
- Japan
- Ryukyus (Japan)
- Indonesia
- Singapore
- South China Sea
- East China Sea

Solarium LLC Proprietary 13
Defending the First Island Chain
"ArcDef": JGSDF Northern Sector Concept

Review of the units stationing in SW region

【Miyako island】
In Jun. 2014, Vice-Defense Minister said “Miyako island is the one of possible island for the new camp”, as well as “MOD requested the cooperation on the field study” and implementing the study with Miyako city’s support

【Amami Island】
〇 Political request has been made and it is accepted
〇 Budget is assessed to acquire the land and etc

【Yonaguni island】
Budget is assessed for establishing of camp and unit

Legend 
〇 : Newly Camp based on Mid-Term Defense Program
JGSDF Preliminary Op Concept

Response to attacks on offshore islands

1. Deterrent posture by units location under normal circumstances

2. Rapid Deployment Units

3. Regain by amphibious units

Deterrence/response posture on other fronts

"1st Island Chain"
Mobility of Air and Maritime forces enables them to serve as operational reserve for First Island Chain defenders, supporting or standing in for ground forces.

Major Focus
Winning the “Concentration/Counter-concentration Competition”

STOVL FARPs
CSG & ESG “line backers” & “gap-fillers”
Long-range “swing forces” (LRS, MPA, AWACS)
Enabling Archipelagic Defense

- Land-based sea denial
- Land-based long-range strike
- Alternative air and missile defenses
- Land-based radio-electronic warfare
Land-Based Air Denial (& BMD)

1. Elevated sensors
2. Long-range radars
3. Wide-area IAMD
4. Mobile Air Defenses
5. Longer-range SAMs (SM-6 ashore?)
6. Alternative BMD systems
7. Sanctuary areas for AWACS, tanker ops
Countering PLA A2/AD

United States is at the wrong end of a cost imposition ratio vis-à-vis opponents with large missile arsenal

• The need to defend a small number of fixed bases and carriers from potentially catastrophic attacks forces US to incur high costs

Measures that could favorably alter this ratio:

• Increasing strike aircraft range/stealth
• Hardening bases would force adversaries to use unitary warheads (and thus more missiles)
• Dispersing aircraft to satellite bases would force adversaries to use more missiles
• Disabling enemy RSTA/BDA assets would limit enemy targeting and BDA, enable preferential BMD

✓ Increases enemy’s cost per-shot
✓ Decreases enemy’s expected return
Land-Based Sea Denial (Surface)

1. Elevated sensors
2. Unmanned ISR UAVs
3. Joint/partner RSTA providers
4. Over-the-horizon radars
5. Defensive minefields
6. Offensive minefields
7. Mobile ASCM batteries
8. Joint/partner "linebackers"
Land-Based Electronic Warfare

1. Elevated comms nodes & EW platforms
2. AESA radars w/ inherent electronic attack capabilities
3. Mobile jammers
4. Ground-launched electronic attack weapons
5. Fiber-optic comms
6. Radio--fiber gateways
Land-Based Long-Range Strike

- Naval base
- Air base
- Over-the-horizon radar site
- Amphibious Group Army
- Missile brigade
- Space launch facility

- Pershing IIs – 1,770 km
- GLCMs – 2,500 km

Solarium LLC Proprietary
China, Wei Ch’i and Positional Advantage
China, Wei Ch’i and the South China Sea
Placing Stones in the Western Pacific

Restoring Positional Advantage
Archipelagic Defense Summary

Surface-to-surface missiles provide prompt fire support and deny PLA strategic depth and sanctuary.

Air forces disperse to additional airfields in Japan's Home and South Western Islands, challenging PLA targeting and improving resiliency.

Long-range anti-ship and anti-air missile batteries hold at risk PLA forces and constrain PLA power projection through First Island Chain.

Naval forces utilize mobility to serve as operational reserve supporting First Island Chain defensive line.

Amphibious forces provide operational reserve and utilize "FARPs" to conduct distributed STOVL operations.

Long-range air forces serve as operational reserve and deny PLA strategic depth and sanctuary.
Insights and Observations

“It's supposed to be hard. If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. The ‘hard’ is what makes it great.”

Jimmy Dugan
Sources of Positional Advantage

**Essential:** Japan, Philippines

**Highly Desirable:** Taiwan, Vietnam

**Desirable:** Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea

**Game Changer:** India
Paying the Bill

- Time-Phased Adaptation

- Enhanced Efficiencies
  - Priority to Warfighting vice “Shaping”
  - An Operational Concept to Inform U.S. and Ally/Partner Resource Priorities
  - Terminate BCA

- Increased Risk
  - Korea
  - In Extremis: EUCOM/CENTCOM

- “Outsourcing”: Allies/Partners

- Enhanced Positional Advantage

- Cost-Imposing Strategies
  - Long-range stealthy scouting/strike platforms
  - Forward-deployed missile artillery
  - Missile Sinks
  - Advanced irregular warfare forces
  - Economic Warfare

- Augmented Defense Resources
Conclusion

• The ongoing diffusion of A2/AD capabilities is progressively challenging the U.S. ability to preserve access to areas of vital interest

• At present, the PLA has by far the most robust A2/AD capabilities, and is moving rapidly to enhance them—confronting the US and its allies with a strategic choice

• Archipelagic Defense “1.0” is designed to maintain a favorable, stable military balance in the WPTO

• The PLA buildup, US/ally resource limitations, and the substantial changes in the U.S. defense posture and program of record called for by “ArcDef” suggest the need for prompt action
Questions?
What is Needed

- Augmenting U.S. defenses in the WPTO and shifting to a forward-deployed posture with a highly mobile operational reserve—primarily of air, cyber, long-range strike, and maritime forces;

- Emphasizing air, sea, and information denial operations and long-range scouting and strike capabilities;

- Improving the U.S. battle network’s robustness through alternative satellite- and terrestrial-based architectures;

- Creating and/or augmenting cross-domain ground forces;

- Creating and/or augmenting advanced irregular warfare ground forces—especially in Philippines and Taiwan; and

- Fostering greater Alliance and Coalition partner cooperation