China’s Multiple Threat Vectors Toward Japan

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Summary
In Asia and beyond, China threatens Japan on four main vectors:
1. China enables North Korea’s long range missile threat to Japan, providing technology and materials.
2. China poses a growing threat of invasion to part or most of Japan’s Ryukyu Island Chain.
3. China’s growing threat to invade Taiwan in the 2020s would strategically isolate Japan.
4. Chinese control of the South China Sea plus control of Taiwan would enable an era of Chinese global military power projection, allowing China to challenge Japan’s global interests.

Of course in doing so, China poses direct military threats to South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines.

China also threatens the viability of American military leadership in Asia.

What to do?
1. Get very serious about the Arms Race now being led by China.
2. Achieve real levels of military cooperation among the democracies, to include: ROK and Japan; direct cooperation with Taiwan; and pursuit of ROK-Japan-Taiwan-India-US coordination of surveillance assets targeting China.
Threat Vector #1: China Enables New North Korean-Chinese Missile Threats

Since 2003 China has sought to build up North Korea’s nuclear missile capabilities while leading the do-nothing, diversionary Six-Party Talks.

North Korea’s Hwasong-14 ICBM is able to conduct surprise strikes due to its Chinese CASIC/Sanjiang 16-wheel TEL. North Korea’s Musudan MRBM and Hwasong-12 IRBM likely also ride on Chinese-made TELs, via CASIC/Sanjiang.

In the future, North Korea’s new solid fuel MRBM and ICBM may be transported on TELs made at a joint venture in Tokjung, North Korea, with China’s SINOTRUCK. The DPRK MRBM is modeled directly from the early CASIC DF-21 MRBM.

The next Chinese technology transfer may be multiple warhead capabilities for North Korean long range missiles. North Korea’s new 4th Generation SAM and new Precision-Guided Artillery Rocket are likely based on Chinese systems.

By helping turn North Korea into a nuclear missile state, much like China has done for Pakistan to contain India, China indirectly via proxy can divert the main attention of Tokyo, Seoul and Washington and tie down their forces.
Threat Vector #2: Direct China Threats to Japan: the Ryukyus

China uses September 2012 Japanese “nationalization” of Senkaku/Daiyoutai Islands to commence military intimidation campaign. So far, “conflict” mainly confined to rising regular harassment of the Senkakus by Chinese Coast Guard and fishing fleet ships. In 2012 and 2013 China’s state media entertains idea that Ryukyu Island Chain is actually ancient Chinese territory. But conflict could quickly spread to incidents in the air: constant Japanese fighter scrambles; UAVs Many PLAN invasion improvements could be applied to operations in the Ryukyus. Recent 1,000km range DF-16 MRBM deployments in Jinhua now target Okinawa. China may strike the Ryukyus, especially the Sakashimas, as part of a campaign against Taiwan, or if Japan’s defenses falter.

For China, control of the Ryukyus, especially the Sakashimas, assists China’s goal to isolate and conquer Taiwan.

### Tension in the Air

Japan scrambles military aircraft against foreign planes a record number of times

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Source: Japan Ministry of Defense Note: Fiscal years ended March
Arms Race or Race of Arms; Who Will Arrive First? Osprey or Bison?

China and Japan are in a literal arms race to reach and to protect the Ryukyus.

China is building its 500 ton capacity, 40 knot speed Zubr/Bison large amphibious hovercraft; Japan is buying the 10-ton capacity, but 275 knot speed MV-22 Osprey.

China is developing its 15-ton capacity, 180 knot and 800km range Advanced Heavy Lift Helicopter with Russia, PLA may buy 200.

Both the PLA Navy and the Japanese MSDF are developing multi-purpose Trimaran combat ships. Japan’s US-2 amphibian could also transport 20 troops at over 300kts.

Japan now creating its own 3,000 strong “Marine Corp” and will build up missile and ground forces on the Sakashimas by 2020.
Challenging Air Superiority: 5th Gen and 4+ Gen Advances

Benefitting from foreign espionage, China’s 5th Gen fighter program has mastered AESA radar, long-range Distributed Aperture System (DAS) sensors; glass cockpits and data links; stealth shaping and coatings; internal weapons carriage; but remains challenged to develop necessary engines.

CAC J-20A: After about 8 prototypes beginning in 2010, Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) examples appear in 2016 of this estimated 37 ton fighter. Up to three production lines may be formed at CAC. Advanced prototypes reportedly score 10:1 in exercises against J-11 and J-10 fighters. In Decemeber 2016, Hong Kong’s Ming Pao reports that 100 J-20A versions could be produced, powered either by Saturn AL-31F-M1 or Shenyang-Liming WS-10B. WS-10B power version tested in September 2017.

J-20B: This version reportedly will utilize the 15-18 ton thrust WS-15 turbofan, perhaps with thrust vectoring. In May 2016 satellite imagery emerges of what may be a redesigned J-20 with features that would favor axisymmetric thrust vectored engines. Ming Pao’s December 2016 report suggests that up to 400 J-20B fighters may be produced. The J-20’s size and shape suggests is main mission is air superiority at long ranges into the Second Island Chain.

The J-16 strike fighter may prove to be SAC’s most important product for the next decade, especially if it is slated to replace the Xian JH-7/JH-7A family. An Asian government source expects 100 J-16s to have been produced by 2020, but this may be optimistic. But if it replaces the JH-7 and Su-30MKK the total could reach 400.

Outwardly similar to the twin-seat Su-30MKK, the J-16 utilizes Chinese electronics, weapons and the WS-10A or WS-10B turbofan. A second production batch may feature an AESA radar. It may intended to give the PLA a less expensive 4+ generation strike fighter to work in cooperation with 5th gen fighters. The J-16 may be the main carrier of a new 300+km range AAM.
Threat Vector #3: Near Future Invasion of Taiwan

Preparing for the potential to force “unification” with Taiwan perhaps in the early to mid-2020s. 2017 Japan Defense White Paper balance of forces.

• In 2013 and 2014 Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense warned that the PLA “could be capable of invading Taiwan by 2020.”

• For nearly a decade Taiwanese sources have maintained that countering invasion is the “center of gravity” for their strategy.

• Might Xi Jinping use commencement of “Historic Mission” of unification to secure unprecedented Third Term in 2022?

• Acknowledging that such an invasion would require unprecedented levels of mass, transport, coordination, surprise and luck, it is clear the PLA is building toward such an objective.

• Ground trends: 3rd Gen armor for Army and Marine Amphib units; Meager formal amphib lift potentially supplemented by hundreds/thousands of large “civil” RoRo ferry and RoRo barge transports.

• With civil lift, the PLA may be able to take 8 to 12 Divisions to Taiwan. PLA may require 1 million to conquer Taiwan.

• Missile trends: 1,000 to 1,200 SRBMs potential for being multiplied to 4,000+ with new 2x-missile SRBM systems.

• Air trends: 1,500 or more 4th gen combat aircraft by 2020, increasingly armed with varied families of PGMs.

• Anti-Access trends: 2nd Gen PLA-A2AD emerging: DF-26 ASBM; Robust SAT and HALE UAV targeting; multiple ASAT systems; 5th Gen Carrier Air Wing can help interdict; movement to all nuclear submarine fleet.
Impact of Taiwan Conquest on Japan

In a very important soon to be released book titled, *The Chinese Invasion Threat, Taiwan’s Defense and America’s Strategy in Asia*, the Project 2049 Institute’s Ian Easton has uncovered one PLA view from 2013 of how from occupied Taiwan, the PLA can impose an economic blockade on Japan:

“As soon as Taiwan is reunified with Mainland China, Japan's maritime lines of communication will fall completely within the striking ranges of China's fighters and bombers...Our analysis shows that, by using blockades, if we can reduce Japan's raw imports by 15-20%, it will be a heavy blow to Japan's economy. After imports have been reduced by 30%, Japan's economic activity and war-making potential will be basically destroyed. After imports have been reduced by 50%, even if they use rationing to limit consumption, Japan's national economy and war-making potential will collapse entirely...blockades can cause sea shipments to decrease and can even create a famine within the Japanese islands.”


Future PLA Blockade Forces according to retired PLA Navy Rear Admiral Zhao Dengping (see CIMSEC page, soon):

- New small submarines with nuclear powered auxiliary propulsion systems;
- Anti-ship ballistic missiles on ships, perhaps on submarines;
- Carrier air wings anchored around a 5th gen fighter.
Threat Vector #4: South China Sea and Global Power Projection

Control of Taiwan means China will have direct access to the Pacific and divide U.S. allies/partners in North and Southeast Asia.

PLAN SSBNs will have immediate access to some the deepest area of the Pacific for extended patrols.

From Taiwan the PLA can also better control Northern Access to the South China Sea.

Control of the South China Sea helps assure SSBN access and Space Access, and PLAN projection into the Indian Ocean.
Conclusions, Recommendations:

1. Seize the rhetorical high ground and call them “North-Korean-Chinese Missiles” as part of our pressure on Beijing to withdraw their enabling technology.

2. Consider now the deployment of US tactical nuclear weapons on US Navy ships and then to NATO style basing with Allies. Crash development of new class of small tactical nuclear weapons. China may have 500 tac nukes. Short of War, this best deter DPRK use of nuclear weapons, will also deter PLA.

3. Far more attention to winning the Arms Race with the PLA. Greater joint investments in Energy Weapons and Space Combat Systems to deter the PLA’s development of 6th Generation Warfare capabilities that combine Big Information, Energy Weapons and Space Weapons.

4. Leadership in deterring War on the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan needs F-35B fighters and thousands of cheap cruise missiles to deter the PLA Invasion Fleets. Japan and the US should better integrate Taiwan into regional defense planning.

5. Invite India to join an informal Surveillance Data sharing system along with US, Japan, ROK and Taiwan.