Chapter 2
Naval Power and Its Role in China's Rise

> *"China is a big country, and other countries are small*
> *countries and that is just a fact."*
> —Yang Jiechi, China's then foreign minister, at the 17th
> ASEAN Regional Forum in 2010. Cited from 'China's
> Military Rise' (2012).

The present chapter describes the perceived need for naval modernization from Beijing's point of view. It also discusses the nature and functions of naval power—or "sea power"—in general and through Chinese eyes. Since Mahan's classic treatment of sea power is being widely discussed in China, this chapter will start from this notion and attempt to show the connections between sea power, the Chinese notion of "Comprehensive National Power" and China's self-perception as a "big" country, as well as the various frustrations and limitations imposed on China's naval ambitions by its difficult maritime geography, other development priorities, and international alliances situation.

2.1 Naval Power, Sea Power, Maritime Power, and National Power

While "sea power" seems to stress the naval component of the term and is almost interchangeable in general usage with "naval power," "maritime power" also includes non-military aspects such as the "ability of a state to use the sea to its optimum" and is thus broader in its meaning (cf. Sakhuja 2011: 4). This study is mostly concerned with the narrow field of naval power. Alfred Thayer Mahan's term "sea power" which he coined in his 1890 classic *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* was extremely influential, but not very clearly defined, and has consequently been interpreted by contemporary authors in a wide variety of senses.[1] Its popularity today is unbroken. In China, for instance, Mahan's concept of sea power has yielded extensive discussions, which have been described and

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[1] Cf. Mahan (1987 [1890]: 26–69) and Till (2009: 20).

analyzed in detail by Holmes and Yoshihara (2008: 27–47) and need not be recounted here.[2]

What is the meaning of sea power within the context of this study? If power should be defined in a Weberian sense, as Till implies in his contemporary treatment of the subject, then sea power can be understood as "the capacity to influence the behaviour of other people by what you do at or from sea" (Till 2009: 83). It seems necessary here to discuss the relation between sea power thus understood and the military, specifically naval capability, and their combined influence on total national power.

Military power is viewed by some as "the ultimate yardstick of national power," because "countries subsist in an environment where internal and external threats to security are both common and ever-present." As a result, Tellis et al. write, "the effectiveness of their coercive arms becomes the ultimate measure of power" (Tellis et al. 2000: 133). Nonetheless, the actual translation of military capability into political power is far less immediate in practice than the statement above seems to suggest, especially in a world where armed conflict between great powers—the ultimate test of military power—has thankfully become extremely rare:

> The link between military forces [. . .] on the one hand, and power [. . .] on the other hand, is neither a direct nor a simple one. The immediate effect of using military force is purely physical: killing people and destroying things. Developing and successfully implementing a strategy that translates this capacity for harm into the desired political effect is difficult, and an uncertain proposition at the best of times (Frühling and O'Neil 2012: 83).

In China, the government's attempts to measure and define power through the use of various mathematical formulas is so wide-spread that several analysts have commented on the emergence of a concept called "Comprehensive National Power" (综合国力) or "CNP."[3] In his study of major Chinese think tanks, Leonard describes a seminar at the CCP's Central Party School he witnessed in 2005, where the well-known social scientist Hu Angang explained all the different power ranking systems then in use by China's various think tanks, each of which has apparently developed its very own power index. As Leonard concludes, "China must be the most self-aware rising power in history. [. . .] Measuring 'CNP' [. . .] has become a national obsession" (Leonard 2008: 84). This could very well be true.

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[2] The first translation of Mahan's (chin. 漢 or 马汉) monumental work into Chinese seems to have been the 1954 edition prepared by Yang Zhenjia (楊鎮甲) published under the title *Haijun zhanlüe lun* ("A theory of naval strategy") by Zhonghua wenhua chuban in Taipei/Taiwan. It appears to have sold quickly, for it saw a third printing already in 1955. Much later, in 1998, a mainland Chinese version translated by An Changrong (安常容) and Cheng Zhongqin (成忠勤) was published in Beijing by the PLA Press under the more accurately translated title *Haiquan dui lishi de yingxiang: 1660–1783*.

[3] In a 2004 paper on the subject, Hu and Men define the term as follows: "CNP may be simply defined as the comprehensive capabilities of a country to pursue its strategic objectives by taking actions internationally and the core factors to the concept are strategic resources, strategic capabilities and strategic outcomes, with the strategic resources as the material base" (Hu and Men 2004: 3). A thorough discussion of the concept is provided by Pillsbury (2000: 203–258).

In 2006, a major government-sponsored academic study entitled *The Rise of Great Powers* (大国崛起) was completed by a group of China's top scholars after several years of work comprising hundreds of interviews with politicians and academics (Tang 2006). The study analyzed historical case studies of nine former rising powers—Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, the UK, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the U.S.—with a view to what China could learn from their experiences. The study also gave rise to a very popular book series and a TV documentary series and thus created a sort of "hype" surrounding the issue of naval affairs. In sum, it "suggests that national power stems from economic development fueled by foreign trade, which can in turn be furthered by a strong navy" (Erickson and Goldstein 2009: 402).[4]

For reasons that will be explained in more detail below, many Chinese analysts feel that China is currently at a decided strategic disadvantage compared to other members of the "Asian security complex" that have close political and military ties with the U.S. This is especially true when it comes to securing vital sea lines and enforcing sovereignty over claimed offshore territories. As a consequence, the enhancement of China's sea power both symbolically and materially often claims center stage within the context of an envisaged rise in China's "Comprehensive National Power" status.

After concluding in their analysis that China lags behind other countries with regard to all the various component parts of "CNP," especially in military modernization, Hu and Men offer the following piece of advice to their leaders:

> National security and unification must be safeguarded. At the same time, defense and combat capability in high-tech conditions should be increased, the mechanization and informationization of the military be completed so as to achieve a leapfrog development of military modernization (Hu and Men 2004: 31).

From the point of view of China's military leaders, innovation management becomes a key area in achieving such a "leapfrog development" with the aim of passing over the normal stages of military-technological development which other nations have to slowly traverse.

2.1.1   The Importance of Critical Technologies

Mastery of certain advanced technologies appears to lie at the root of actual or potential military power. Some observers even go so far as to accord it central importance:

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[4] The "Great Powers hype" has also translated to the realm of popular culture, as Gotelind Müller describes in her analysis of the above mentioned TV documentary series *Daguo jueqi*. Both the series and the study were extensively discussed among Chinese intellectuals, cadres, and the general public (cf. Müller 2013: 22–92).

technology—understood as the material instantiation of knowledge, methods, resources, and innovation—[is] identified as the first and most important building block for the production of national power (Tellis et al. 2000: 53).

The strategic function of technological progress in the field of warfare is self-evident. Technological advances can act as "force multipliers" by neutralizing disadvantages such as numerical inferiority and by enhancing combat effectiveness (Hoyt 2007: 5). The connection between advanced technologies and military power is easily made since advances in technology are universally scrutinized for possible military applications by all the great and rising powers, and military research, for its part, traditionally drives much of the world's technological progress. Moreover, in some cases, innovative weapon systems can in effect "change the way war is fought" and thus effectively transform the global security environment (Mayer 2012: 290). Therefore, the study of "[. . .] technology as a building block of national power must include [. . .] the scrutiny of a country's ability to produce all the militarily critical technologies deemed to be vital today" (Tellis et al. 2000: 55). This implies that not all technology is of prime importance for assessing military and national power. Rather, it is primarily a country's ability to produce the so-called "critical" technologies that indicates the power fault lines within the current world order. Exactly what technologies should be labeled "critical" in any given context is subject to debate, but usually there exists at least "[. . .] a loose consensus in government, industry, and among technologists on which technologies today are deemed to be critical," with extensive lists drawn up regularly in the U.S. (Tellis et al. 2000: 53–54).[5] However, it is important to note that the quality of criticality is, as Bimber and Popper (1994: 20) note, "not inherent in the technology itself." Rather, it stems from "[. . .] the importance of the outputs of the system of which the technology is a constituent part, as well as from the significance the technology has for enabling that system." The stance cited here is a practical and functionality-based view of the issue. In order to determine a technology's degree of criticality in any given circumstance, questions such as "Critical for what, to whom, and by what standards?" need to be answered.

In an era characterized by rapid development, especially in the field of information technology, there exists an ever widening "knowledge gap" between "innovators" that drive technological advance and "laggard" countries that currently do not possess the ability to join in the race for progress. According to the above-cited study, the ability to innovate:

[. . .] can be generated only as a result of attaining mastery over advanced scientific concepts and having both the resources and the ability to translate these concepts, first, into new components and, thereafter, into a larger socio-technical system built around the introduction of these new components (Tellis et al. 2000: 53).

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[5] As Tellis et al. note: "The authoritative U.S. study [. . .] has identified about 2,060 militarily significant technologies, of which fully 656 were deemed to be critical for the purposes of developing advanced weaponry, all of which fell within eighteen broad technology areas which, in turn, are further divided into eighty-four subsections" (Tellis et al. 2000: 55).

As this description indicates, the financial resources needed to join the race can be formidable and this effectively limits the number of countries that can hope to join the ranks of the "first-tier producers" of sophisticated military technologies to the group of dynamically growing rising powers. By virtue of abundant resources gained from its successful external trade development over the past few decades, China finds itself among those rising powers that can direct large amounts of money to enhancing their technology profile. This effort not only can raise the quality of China's defense technology, but also reduce outside dependence on foreign suppliers of subsystems. Complete technological self-reliance would be an ideal situation from a security viewpoint, but in reality this ideal is hardly ever achievable for any one country.

The influence of technology upon international relations and military power still remains a somewhat understudied subject, notwithstanding the very real consequences of knowledge fault lines between countries, or the wide-spread implications and "momentous causal impact" that changing levels of technological innovation capability can have in the international system (Crosston 2014: 253–254). In Chap. 3, I will try to outline those areas in naval technological development that appear to be especially "critical" with regard to assessing naval power.

2.1.2 Sea Power and National Power

Regarding the function of sea power within the wider scope of military capability and national power, two aspects seem to be particularly important: First, that sea power is a relative rather than an absolute concept, or "something that some countries have more than others," but that most countries still possess to some degree (either through naval strength, shipbuilding capability, provision of services to seafarers, or through a combination of the above); and second, that sea power is "the product of an amalgam of interconnected constituents that are difficult to tease apart" (Till 2009: 22, 83). Such an understanding of sea power implies that it not only makes sense to directly compare different countries' levels of sea power to each other using certain explicit criteria, but also that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to assign an absolute numerical value to any one country's level of sea power.[6] It also follows that sea power relations between states may be subject to change over time. Just the same, it is nevertheless possible to determine different countries' maximum levels of naval capability by defining demarcated categories. While it may not be possible to further differentiate between navies that are deemed to fall within the same category, a crude relative hierarchy of tiers or ranks can still be established as a heuristic tool (see Chap. 3). It goes without saying that a direct

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[6] Sakhuja's (2011: 20–23) pioneering attempt to create a maritime power formula notwithstanding, it remains to be seen whether naval power relations can actually be quantified like that in a meaningful way when put into practice, which he has opted not to demonstrate.

comparison between countries that are part of the same regional sub-system is especially useful because of the direct influence that their mutual threat perceptions and strategic rivalries have on each other.

Sea power usually does not figure as a variable within the various formulas that Western as well as Chinese scholars have developed for measuring total national power.[7] Usually more generalized indicators of military strength (e.g. total military manpower, defense budgets, nuclear weapons) are used in such calculations. This may be due to the difficulty of quantifying a vague and relative concept, as well as to its somewhat limited applicability, as naval power is less relevant for landlocked countries, even if some of these maintain small inland waterway navies. What's more, navies typically constitute only one branch of any country's total armed forces.

Nevertheless, for coastal countries with access to the high seas the existence or absence of sea power does play a role for determining overall national power. In the case of the handful of nuclear powers, nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) form an essential ingredient of a credible deterrence strategy. Their existence or absence is of crucial importance for assessing a country's realistic nuclear second-strike capability. This is only relevant, however, for the very few nations currently operating or building SSBN—the U.S., Russia, China, India, France, and Britain.

Apart from their purely military function, which is mainly useful in times of conflict, navies also regularly contribute to maintaining their state's territorial integrity by safeguarding maritime borders. In recent years, the protection of maritime resources and safeguarding of coastal installations against asymmetric threats such as terrorism, smuggling, illegal fishing, and waste dumping has become more relevant.[8] Another important responsibility of naval forces and coast guards is maritime search-and-rescue, as well as humanitarian aid during natural disasters or refugee crises. This was well demonstrated in Asia during the Tsunami catastrophes of 2004 and 2011, and during the civil war in Libya in 2011, when a Chinese warship first entered the Mediterranean Sea in order to help evacuate more than 35,000 Chinese citizens from the war zone (Lampton 2014: 162). On a more symbolic level, naval diplomacy and international maritime cooperation can also offer chances of furthering intraregional integration, or can serve to enhance a state's international power perception.[9] Last but not least, navies also have symbolic import that can be used to promote national pride within the domestic

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[7] Pfetsch (1994: 146–157) gives a concise overview of various methodological approaches to measuring national power, starting with Morgenthau's *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace* (1948). Hu and Men (2004: 17–22) list many different mathematical formulas in use by Western and Chinese scholars. Likewise, Chap. 7 of Tellis et al. (2000), "Measuring military capability", give a very good overview and discussion of the relevant methodological questions (pp. 133–176).

[8] Potgieter (2009) gives a good overview of these new maritime challenges.

[9] Oddly illustrative of the last two points were Northrop Grumman's full-page ads in various naval technology magazines during 2008. The ads featured Northrops's latest nuclear carrier design with a byline reading "Meet the world's most persuasive diplomat."

population. In China, there has been a marked rise in recent years in television programs describing China's successes in naval development and other military technology areas, and related Web pages have proliferated in the Chinese Internet (cf. Cheung 2011: 140).

Even though it is hard to quantify the exact contribution of naval power to total national power, it is easy to recognize the consequences of deficient or absent naval power. Providing security from external threats has traditionally been seen as a basic core function of statehood as defined e.g. by Rice and Patrick (2008: 3) in their *Index of State Weakness*. Pugh, moreover, writes in *The Cost of Sea Power*: "A secure defence is one of the greatest benefits that a state can confer upon its populace," while "a state which neglects its defences invites attack" (Pugh 1986: 6). This truism is as old as warfare itself. There are dangers associated with very low levels of militarization, not only externally, but also internally, as noted by the editors of the BICC's *Global Militarization Index* (GMI):

> Adequate militarization can have positive effects if it prevents dangers and preserves security interests—both internally and internationally—and creates a good investment climate. If military resources of a country are too low, however, a government will possibly not be able to sufficiently enforce its state monopoly on the use of force (Grebe 2011: 8).

The protection of maritime borders against exterior threats and the maintenance of territorial integrity must therefore be placed among the central duties of the state.[10] It follows from this reasoning that coastal states with grave deficiencies in this area cannot be considered strong, no matter how well they might perform in other areas.[11]

In the age of globalization, trading nations have become increasingly dependent upon maritime transport, and China, as the world's new largest export nation, is no exception. The narrow Malacca Strait alone is transited by more than 60,000 vessels each year and provides passage to about half of the world's energy transports (Cole 2010: xxi). Apart from this, it is useful to reflect on the fact that seas and oceans cover nearly three quarters of the world's entire territory. Moreover, the sea is a fundamentally hostile environment that can never be truly controlled by humankind. It remains to this day, as Till (2009: 23) writes, "a dark, mysterious and dangerous place in which people cannot commonly live." Nevertheless, since antiquity, the sea has simultaneously served as a resource and a medium of transport, exchange, information, and dominion. Since the advent of globalization, maritime trade has become the primary means of transport for manufactured goods, raw materials, and oil (Till 2009: 25–33).

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[10] According to Rice and Patrick (2008: 3), the core functions of statehood include "*fostering an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth; establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent, and accountable political institutions; securing their populations from violent conflict and controlling their territory; and meeting the basic human needs of their population*" [italics in the original].

[11] China's experience in the nineteenth century is a good example of just such a scenario. Oriented towards the Northwestern continental threat but weak in sea power, China easily fell prey to comparatively small forces of British and French gun boats with superior capability.

2.1.3   China's Strategic Interest in Acquiring Sea Power

As one of the major trading nations, China feels increasingly compelled to protect its overseas investments as well as Chinese personnel deployed in African, Middle East, and Maghreb countries. China's participation in the multinational effort against piracy off the Horn of Africa, as well as its 2011 decision to send a frigate to Libya for the protection of Chinese laborers, are reflections of these concerns and have also signaled a new era of Chinese international maritime activity. In 2006, renowned Chinese strategic thinker Zhang Wenmu (张文木, *1957), a professor at the Center of Strategic Studies at the University of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Beijing, outlined the arguments in an ongoing debate within China on whether or not sea power should be more strongly developed, and towards what end:

> Opinions in China are greatly divided on whether or not, and if so, how China should strive for sea power. Given both the nature of global interdependence and the disastrous naval defeats of certain countries in history, some have put forward that it is unnecessary for China to emphasize sea power in the process of economic development. Others have stressed the importance of vastly strengthening China's navy in order to vie with other naval powers for hegemony. However, both views are inaccurate. China's sea power is uniquely defined. A traditional Western notion of sea power is the ability to control the sea, while China's concept of sea power is a marriage of the notion of equal sea rights and sea power. In the latter, the application of power on the seas cannot exceed the former but rather should serve the aim and scope of a nation's sea rights (Zhang 2006: 23).

In writings such as this, emphasis is not placed on the expansion of a sphere of military influence, but more on the defensive safeguarding of legitimate maritime interests. Chinese analysts, however, tend to include in their definition of China's legitimate "core concerns" (核心利益) the control of conflicted territories such as the Spratly and Paracel Islands, the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands, and the island of Taiwan. The boundaries between a so-called "hegemonial" Western concept of sea power and China's supposedly more "peaceful" approach, as described above by Zhang Wenmu, are therefore somewhat blurred—at least in the eyes of non-Chinese observers.

2.2   The Impact of China's Domestic Politics on Naval Modernization

In order to put naval modernization into perspective in relation to other strategic developmental goals, it is useful to consider the trajectory of China's "grand strategy" articulated by Chinese government officials as well as prominent

academics.[12] An example of the latter is found in the following excerpt from an article on China's national power by influential CCP-affiliated economist Hu Angang (胡鞍钢, *1953) and strategic studies expert Men Honghua (門洪華, *1969). In 2004, they wrote:

> [...] we hold that the objectives of China's grand strategy should be to make the people rich and the country strong, that is, constantly raising the percentage of its CNP in the world's total so as to become a big world power in the middle of this century. The basic objectives of China's grand strategy in the future 20 years should be to including [*sic*] 6 goals: 'high growth, great national power, affluent people, national security, improvement of international competitiveness and sustainable development' (Hu and Men 2004: 30–31).

According to the bluntly worded, non-official, but quite representative position taken here by two leading intellectuals, China's rise to great power status in every sense of the word—political, economic, and military-strategic—is definitely a strategic goal, along with the country's continued economic development and the regime's survival (cf. Wacker 2006: 55). The navy's build-up is critical for attaining these goals, both materially and symbolically.

In order to better understand China's national and military power sources as well as the challenges it faces in its further economic and political development in relation to the issue of sea power, it is necessary to review China's domestic and foreign policy imperatives—what China dubs its national "core interests." I will then return to the issue of naval development.

2.2.1   The Historical Meaning of China's Economic Growth Miracle

Viewed from a broader historical perspective, China only recently emerged from an era of weakness and trouble that lasted roughly 150 years. The world's most wealthy and advanced country and the self-proclaimed center of civilization in the eighteenth century, China faced a dramatic downturn towards the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was degraded to semi-colonial status in the face of technologically superior forces. China's ultimate humiliation came from the sea when a small fleet of British gun boats inflicted heavy damage on Chinese war junks during the so-called Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860). The twentieth century, however, would prove to be China's most difficult century. Two revolutions in 1911 and 1949, the Japanese occupation and a brutal civil war between Communists and Nationalists had already wreaked havoc in the country by the time

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[12] A grand strategy, according to Wacker (2006: 55), is a "vision and internal logic connecting a country's paramount goals to its diplomatic, security, economic, and military strategies for deploying means and resources, taking into account the possible responses of other actors." It need not necessarily be explicitly stated, but can also be inferred by observers as an "external attribution [...] or an *ex post* rationalization of foreign policy actions" [italics in the original].

Mao's failed economic policies ruined most of the progress that had been made in the few years after 1949. Altogether, the communist takeover, the "Great Leap Forward" (1957–1961) and the class struggle mayhem of Mao's "Cultural Revolution" (1966–1976) claimed at least 50 million lives and left the economy in shambles.[13] This era took its toll on all areas of industrial development as well as on human education and welfare. It also inhibited overall progress in naval modernization, even though some military breakthroughs such as development of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and nuclear-powered submarines were achieved due to high-level backing for projects like these of extreme strategic importance.[14]

When the reform era began in the late 1970s, China's post-Mao leadership inherited a country devastated by natural and man-made calamities. With starvation still widespread after 30 years of communist rule, China was technologically backward and internationally isolated. Apart from the unresolved conflict with its so-called "renegade province" Taiwan, China was on very cool terms with its former ally, the Soviet Union. It had also made the dubious choice of supporting the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia and had recently been at war with India. The People's Liberation Army (PLA), although numerically strong, was so badly equipped and trained that it suffered humiliating losses against the combat-proven forces of Vietnam in 1979.[15]

Starting from a very low pedestal, the development path taken by the Chinese government since then has ushered in a period of accelerated economic growth. Ever vigilant towards threats against its monopoly on power, the CCP leadership chose a gradualist reform approach that was designed to let market forces stimulate productivity without endangering the Communist Party's exclusive control over the political system.[16]

Once the CCP allowed growth to occur in the early 1980s by relaxing growth-stifling policies, China started catching up. Economic progress was fairly steady

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[13] According to CCP Central Committee figures cited by Domes (1980: 66–68), 100 million rural Chinese were still affected by hunger in late 1978, with per capita grain production levels lower than in 1957.

[14] Cole (2010: 7–18) provides a concise overview of naval development during China's communist era until today.

[15] For a detailed description of this war and the Chinese military's perception of it, cf. Li (2009: 252–263). He writes: "Many of the PLA's commanding officers were shocked by the poor discipline, low morale, combat ineffectiveness, and high casualties [. . .]. During the nineteen days of the first two phases, the PLA suffered 26,000 casualties, about 1,350 per day" (2009: 258).

[16] Notwithstanding attempts by some observers to find a trend towards political pluralization in today's China, the political system must still be described as structurally Leninist. This means that the ruling CCP insists on its right to control the three vital pillars of state power: The propaganda apparatus, the armed forces and the Party's control over leadership personnel appointments within all meaningful organizations in China's state administration, economy, and society. Cf. Oksenberg (2002: 193–194), McGregor (2010), Li (2010), Shambaugh (2010: 81–86) and Guo (2013: 23–25).

throughout the entire reform era, reaching an average level of quarterly GDP growth of ca. 9 % during 1989–2010.[17] Systemic shocks such as the 1989 Tian'anmen incident, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/1998, or the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 have not had a severe impact on China's growth, at least as of the time of this writing. The Tian'anmen incident however had grave repercussions on naval modernization, for it was the cause of the still-ongoing arms embargo by the U.S. and the EU that forced China to abandon co-operative projects begun between 1979 and 1989 and to orient itself towards Russian and Ukrainian naval technology. These developments continue to severely limit China's technological cooperation options to this day.

By 2011, Deng Xiaoping's reform strategy had finally made China an economic superpower.[18] Through its hugely successful foreign trade policy, China has been able to assemble the world's largest reserves of foreign currency. This not only bolstered China's ability to withstand external financial shocks such as the 2008 crisis, but also generated the cash necessary for large-scale military procurement and industrial infrastructure development. Military spending has since picked up speed, even though a recent study by Liff and Erickson (2013) has shown convincingly that the increase is still fairly in line with government spending growth overall (cf. Sect. 3.6). Moreover, China's budget for internal security since 2011 has been found to be even larger than the defense budget, pointing to the myriad challenges to regime stability the CCP leadership has to face each day. This also puts the military build-up into perspective as a state priority (Guo 2013: 225).

2.2.2 The Imperative of Regime Survival

Despite China's economic reforms, it is not possible to speak of any softening of authoritarian rule, which modernization theorists often expect to automatically follow from economic liberalization. In addition, the closely interwoven relationship between the Communist Party and the military—a "symbiosis," as Shambaugh calls it—remains more or less intact (Shambaugh 2004: 11–12). Following the revolutionary credo that political power flows from the barrel of a gun, Party control over the PLA—originally the military wing of the Communist Party—is considered to be one of the three pillars of communist rule, next to media and leadership personnel control. This view was expressed in a famous dictum by Mao Zedong, who wrote in 1938: "Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party" (Mao 1965 [1938]: 224).

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[17] Data from *Trading Economics* online, available at http://www.tradingeconomics.com/Economics/ GDP-Growth.aspx?Symbol=CNY (accessed March 4, 2011).

[18] In 2010, China became the world's largest exporter for the first time. As of 2013, it was the world's second largest economy after the U.S. in both nominal and PPP terms and held the world's largest foreign currency reserves of US$ 3.82 trillion. China's public debt stood at a mere 31.7 % of GDP (CIA 2014).

The CCP's dependence on support from the armed forces has been vital in times of increasingly numerous popular uprisings, especially in hot spots like Tibet and Xinjiang. Repeated evidence of this was shown in the years since the PLA ended Cultural Revolution outrages by force. The Party, however, has had to take active measures to ensure PLA loyalty to the Party line, e.g. by adhering to the Leninist principle of adding Party-appointed "political commissars" to each command level and requiring higher-level commanding officers to be Party members, and by establishing about 90,000 Party cells among the troops, or roughly one for every 25 soldiers (McGregor 2010: 110). Nevertheless, in 1989, the Party leadership encountered strong resistance among PLA commanders ordered to take part in the suppression of the Tian'anmen demonstrations, leading to a widespread purge in its aftermath among both the armed forces and within the civilian Party bureaucracy.[19]

It is clear, however, that for the time being and recent overhauls notwithstanding, the PLA remains a Party's army rather than a people's army. The amount of political-ideological training at cadre schools, previously amounting to as much as 30 % of total training, has greatly declined in recent years and given way to a greater emphasis on professional military training.[20] Rising professionalization and less emphasis on ideological indoctrination, however, have given rise to doubts about the military's continued loyalty towards the CCP, especially since the younger top leaders in the politburo usually have few military credentials and connections of their own compared to earlier veteran heroes of the revolution such as Deng Xiaoping. A 2006 article in the CCP's principal theory magazine *Qiushi* ("Seeking Truth") entitled "For the implementation of our armed forces' historic mission, enforce the ideological and political construction within our Navy" by Hu Yanlin (胡彦林, *1943), the then PLA Navy's Political Commissar, was notable for strongly and repeatedly emphasizing the need to adhere to the "basic rule of Party leadership":

> In the process of fulfilling the historic mission of our armed forces, the severity of the political challenges encountered by the naval forces becomes ever more obvious. Therefore we have to adhere strictly to the basic principle of obeying the Party's commands (Hu 2006: 45, my transl.).[21]

Interestingly, the same text continues by blaming destructive "outside influences" for discipline problems inside China's armed forces:

> While preparing for military conflict and finding themselves at the front of Reform and Opening, the naval forces not only encounter the severe challenge posed by Western enemy forces who are employing a strategy of "Westernization" and "splitting" against us; they also face the difficult experience of manifold new contradictions and problems brought

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[19] For detailed statistics on these developments see Heilmann and Kirchberger (2000).

[20] See the description and analysis in Shambaugh (2004: 53–55, 133–134 and 11–13).

[21] I am grateful to Shi Ming for drawing my attention to a highly interesting series of *Qiushi* articles on military affairs published during 2004–2006 that in sum point to an intense internal definition phase regarding military affairs during that time.

about by our country's reform and development entering a decisive phase, and moreover face all kinds of challenges and influences from social discourse. We must not underestimate the danger posed by infiltration and subversive activities of Western enemy forces, by the encroachment of wrong thinking such as 'separation of the armed forces from the Party and their de-politicization' (军队非党化, 非政治化) or their 'becoming state-led' (国家化), by the influence and challenge to the armed forces brought about by society's pluralist value tendencies, or by a decayed ideological culture to the thinking and morale of cadres and soldiers (Hu 2006: 45, my transl.).

The appellative character of this particular article (which for all its length is remarkable for its lack of substance and its repetitive use of identical phraseology centering around the "need to obey the Party Central" while "withstanding" unnamed "enemy forces") is only one example among many similar texts that harken back to a bygone era, specifically 1976/1977 when would-be Mao heir Hua Guofeng issued similarly structured and worded articles to rally support for his claim to leadership—largely without success.[22] At that time, at least, such rhetoric was indicative of weakness more than strength. Whether these much later attempts to boost morale are in fact indications of an "erosion of values" within the armed forces, however, is hard to assess from the outside. They almost certainly allude to the endemic problem of corruption and hedonism among military officers that was targeted by a new anti-corruption campaign starting from late 2012 (cf. Mulvenon 2013b). Evoking the threat of enemy subversion has been a long-standing feature of CCP rhetoric from the beginning, right down to the CCP constitution's preamble itself, which contains similar references to "enemies" through all of its revisions to this day.[23]

A perceived slackening of Party control over the PLA in recent years would at least explain why Xi Jinping, right after taking over the helm from Hu Jintao as the new "core" (核心) of the "collective leadership" (集体领导) in 2012, seemed to cater to the military by embarking on a hardliner course against Japan in the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands issue. China's establishment of an "East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone" (ADIZ) covering the disputed area in November 2013 in an unusually abrupt manner was a source of consternation in the region as well as abroad. Xi, it seems, was bent on proving to observers both at home and abroad that the "core interests" of China are not open to debate. Xi, the son of revolutionary hero Xi Zhongxun, is also the first leader since Deng Xiaoping to have first-hand experience with the military, having served as an assistant (秘书) to General Geng Biao, the Secretary-General of the Central Military Commission (CMC) during the late 1970s when China was at war with Vietnam (Mulvenon 2013a: 1–2; Hu and Liang 2012: 137–138). His position as personal assistant to

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[22] It is not without irony that critical support for Deng Xiaoping's challenge against Hua during that time came, of all places, mostly from the military (cf. Kirchberger 2004: 132–135).

[23] The CCP's Party Constitution was last amended in November 2012 and can be read in Chinese at http://dangshi.people.com.cn/n/2012/1119/c234123-19618241.html and in its official English translation at http://www.china.org.cn/china/18th_cpc_congress/2012-11/16/content_27138030.htm (accessed January 21, 2014).

such a high-level military leader must have given Xi unparalleled insight into the workings of the CMC.[24] Nonetheless, his actual standing within the armed forces—an elusive factor that has often been decisive in phases of leadership transition—is difficult to assess.

Even though the exact state of Party control over the PLA is currently unknown, the CCP's dependency on military support for its rule, as well as the actions of recent leaders (as cited in the examples above) suggest that the Party leadership is heeding the military's modernization needs and policy preferences more than the governments of liberal democracies typically would.

2.2.3 Domestic Threats to Political Stability

Despite widespread inner dissent within the Chinese populace, as reflected in rising numbers of public protest incidents recorded in China year after year, an unprecedented budget for internal security surpassing even the defense budget in 2012, and extreme measures taken by the leadership to control popular discourse through tight Internet censorship and heightened propaganda efforts, there have been no major country-wide uprisings in China's core areas since the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrations in Beijing in 1989.[25] To many observers it appears that the rulers and the ruled have tacitly agreed on a truce: In effect, as long as the ruling party keeps delivering on its promise of progress, the urban population majority will refrain from engaging in political protests. That said, if the economic engine ever grinds to a halt and large portions of the urban population, which soon will make up more than half of China's total population,[26] are put under pressure, this mutual understanding might no longer hold, with incalculable consequences for regime survival. China watchers and Chinese intellectuals alike for the most part agree that regime legitimacy among the populace now rests primarily on the country's economic performance, although quality-of-life issues such as food safety, pollution control, social security, and healthcare seem more pressing of late.[27] Although firmly entrenched and without any rival organization to challenge its power, the Communist Party still has no choice but to deliver on its promise of

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[24] On the functions and positions of various types of *mishu* within the Chinese leadership system cf. Li and Pye (1992).

[25] According to official Chinese figures, instances of public unrest have increased 10-fold between 1993 (8,700 recorded cases) and 2005 (87,000 recorded cases). This means "that each province experienced an average of nearly eight incidents per day" (Chung et al. 2006: 6). For an insightful analysis of the different types and triggers of such incidents and the various types of regime responses see Göbel and Ong (2012).

[26] Cf. the urban/rural population growth projections published in STRATFOR (2007).

[27] According to Qinghua University Professor Yan Xuetong in an Interview with Richard McGregor, this is the mainstream view in China, much to his personal chagrin (cf. McGregor 2010: 107).

progress. Otherwise the leadership fears it could meet the demise of its Soviet sister party—a momentous event that has perhaps been the most extensively studied problem in China's political circles since 1991 (cf. Shambaugh 2010: 53–81).[28] The Romanian military's arrest and execution in late 1989 of the country's leader Ceaușescu, who happened to be a personal friend of Deng Xiaoping, was supposedly shown on videotape to CCP politburo members and Party elders and reportedly horrified China's leadership (Yang 1998: 256–257).

The goal of avoiding the pitfalls that lead to the Soviet Union's collapse has already demanded painful choices. The CCP, once the self-proclaimed vanguard of the working class before officially re-casting itself in the role of a "Marxist governing party" in 2012, presided already in the late 1990s over the large-scale scrapping of inefficient state-owned enterprises which were instrumental for providing urban employees with the so-called "iron rice-bowl" system of social security. Millions of jobs were lost without adequate social security in place to alleviate the hardships. At the same time, the military was stripped of its business empire—a fairly controversial decision at the time that created a great deal of resentment within the armed forces (Cheung 2009: 118–129). Today, about 200 million migrant workers flock to the urban growth centers, attesting to the ever-increasing wealth gap between impoverished rural and flourishing urban areas. They also often only benefit from minimal work safety standards and endure the living conditions of second-class citizens. Such a level of social inequality would have been unthinkable in the egalitarian, though universally impoverished, society of the Mao era. For all its bloodshed, this period is again being idealized by disillusioned segments of the populace and even within some quarters of the ruling CCP, the so-called "Old" and "New Leftists" (老左派/新左派; cf. Zhao 2011: 222–224). The inequality is also hard to justify under the umbrella of a communist state ideology, contributing to a widespread loss of values and an ideological vacuum that creates legitimacy problems for a leadership increasingly perceived as hopelessly corrupt (Holbig 2009: 42).

2.2.4   Creating National Unity Through Nationalist Propaganda

In the face of rising regional wealth disparities, China's leaders have increasingly resorted to nationalist propaganda for engendering a sense of unity and identity—often with quite astonishing success. Outside observers have been appalled by violent manifestations of popular outrage against Japanese companies, as tensions

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[28] Incidentally, a TV documentary series on this subject entitled "Alert to danger while dwelling in safety" (居安思危) that was prepared by Party intellectuals a few years ago became mandatory viewing for all CCP cadres (cf. the extensive analysis of this series in Müller 2013: 133–176).

over the Japanese-controlled Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands issue have been heightened in recent years. Toward this end, the Party-controlled media apparatus is being employed with great efficiency and is now also offering special TV programing on weapons development catering to a youthful urban audience, apparently with the aim of boosting confidence in the leadership and enhancing national pride and self-identification (Cheung 2011: 135–136). As Cheung writes: "Programming portrays a positive and strongly patriotic image of the military as the defenders of the country's sovereignty and ideological purity" (Cheung 2011: 141).

China's government has also succeeded in making a great majority of China's populace uncritically accept a number of tenets that serve the end of "national unity" and "patriotic thinking." Its methods include censorship of school history textbooks, tight media control, strict Internet censorship and an unending injection of repetitive phraseology into the public discourse. As a result, many Chinese firmly believe that Taiwan's reunification with the motherland is inevitable, that it is what the Taiwanese truly desire, and that it must be brought about by the use of force if necessary. Moreover, they are convinced that the South China Sea issue—like the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands issue—is a "core interest" of China worth fighting a major war over, and that there is a consensus among the industrialized powers including Japan that China should be denied its rightful place in the world (cf. Swaine 2013: 4).[29] Such positions have been widely echoed in nationalist bestsellers published by members of the "New Left" movement such as *China Can Say No* (中国可以说不, Song et al. 1996) and *China Is Unhappy* (中国不高兴, Song et al. 2009), and their success reflects a general climate of disillusionment with China's current position in the world order.

By placing the blame for domestic problems on "hostile outside forces" and keeping alive the memory of wartime atrocities committed by Japan, the CCP leadership ensures that a number of skeletons of a disturbing past will remain firmly locked up in the closet of the Party's history. Calamities like the horrific Great Leap starvations and the 1989 Tian'anmen massacre in fact remain unknown to many younger Chinese. Meanwhile, the CCP successfully claims sole responsibility for China's post-1978 growth miracle, without however acknowledging that during the preceding three decades of CCP rule very little economic progress was achieved, while some 50 million Chinese lost their lives as collateral damage of government utopian experiments or due to violent "class struggle" and downright political persecution. This failure to deal with the darker aspects of CCP history is slowly being addressed within progressive circles among the Party's 83-million membership, which is evident in a multitude of commemorative and autobiographical articles published in outspoken media such as the history magazine *Yanhuang*

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[29] See the interesting analysis of official and unofficial Chinese publications on the islands conflict issue with Japan by Swaine. He found that "no major difference seems to exist between the views of civilian and military sources, whether authoritative or otherwise" (Swaine 2013: 11).

chunqiu (炎黄春秋). This intellectual movement—initiated by reform-minded Party elders—is an indication that China still awaits a moment of historical reappraisal for coming to terms with its national history comparable to those already conducted in other post-totalitarian states. If this were officially endorsed at some point in the future, it could bring about a significant shift in the perception of Chinese national identity, and perhaps even influence the Chinese leadership's foreign policy behavior.

2.2.5 Necessary Conditions for China's Further Development

So far, China's vibrant growth has kept all potential dangers to regime stability in check. What, then, are the major factors that have contributed to this economic boom? Experts in the field of China's economic development tend to agree that high global demand for China's manufactured goods, bolstered by the still (as of 2014) relatively low value of China's currency, plus a proportionally high influx of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) with their associated technology transfers, are at the root of China's current economic success. Domestic demand however is still relatively underdeveloped. Political stability (domestic and regional) thus furthers a positive investment climate, while internal unrest or conflict with regional neighbors would likely endanger it.

There is a second dimension to the imperative of keeping a positive investment climate that is often overlooked. The systemic problem of widespread official corruption and rent-seeking—which is common to most post-socialist economies and which has already resulted in the misappropriation (sometimes euphemistically dubbed "informal privatization") of large portions of state wealth by corrupt cadres—has so far not impacted as severely on China's economy as it did on the Soviet Union in its final phase. The major reason for this, according to relevant studies, seems to be China's dynamic investment climate, which ensures that most of the misappropriated funds never actually leave the country, but are reinvested in China itself, even if privately. This means they still contribute in some way or another to overall growth and infrastructure development. Late Soviet cadres-turned-oligarchs in contrast preferred to transfer their misappropriated funds overseas, effectively draining the Soviet Union's national economy of resources (cf. Dickson 1997: 197; Heilmann 2000: 232, 241). Lately, there have been massive indications that the tide may be turning in China, with increasing numbers of high-ranking cadres transferring both family members and funds to secure overseas destinations (Boehler 2014). If left unchecked, this alarming tendency could represent a real threat with regard to regime stability. In any case, it should be clear from the discussion above that China is even more dependent on maintaining

domestic and regional peace for its "peaceful development" or "rejuvenation" strategy[30] than many observers tend to realize.

It was thus no exaggeration when veteran China watcher Susan Shirk remarked in her 2007 study of China's domestic and international constraints that China, because of its multitude of unresolved domestic problems that could yet endanger its rise, can be considered a "fragile superpower" at best. Addressing a U.S. audience, Shirk writes: "Seeing China objectively by recognizing the domestic fragility of this emerging superpower can help us avoid mistakes that could provoke a confrontation" (2007: 269). Similar points have recently been made by David Shambaugh, an expert noted for his long-term experience in analyzing the complexities of China's party state and military. Shambaugh argues that "China is a confused and conflicted rising power undergoing an identity crisis of significant proportions" and, what's more, that "it is not so much an aggressive or threatening China with which the world should be concerned, but rather an insecure, confused, frustrated, angry, dissatisfied, selfish, truculent, and lonely power" (Shambaugh 2013: 316–317). These observations nicely capture the complexities and pitfalls of China's transitory international identity.

2.2.6   China's Integration into the World Trade System

As the graph in Fig. 2.1 shows, China's share of global trade volume as of 2012 was already the second largest in the world and almost on par with the United States. If Hong Kong's share were added, which is calculated separately by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), China would actually surpass the U.S. The figure also shows that world-trade participation is highly uneven. Twenty-nine countries (18 % of all WTO members) altogether represent a share of more than 80 % of total world trade; the remaining 130 WTO member states, or 82 % of trading countries, represent a share in world-trade volume of less than 1 % each. Only a small number of countries therefore can be considered highly or well integrated into the world trade system, while the majority of countries are still left on the sidelines.

One effect of China's high degree of integration into the world trade system has been the fact that China and its major trading partners have entered into quasi-symbiotic relationships. This is especially noteworthy in the case of the U.S., China's main trading partner, which is ironically also its most powerful potential adversary in a possible military conflict over Taiwan. The U.S. also leads a quasi-military alliance in the Asia Pacific composed of U.S.-bilateral security partnerships with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and several other strategically positioned

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[30] China's leaders have struggled to put a fitting name tag on their national development strategy for some time. Before 2004, "Peaceful Rise" (和平崛起) was advocated, and later abandoned for the less ambitious-sounding "Peaceful Development" (和平发展). "Rejuvenation" (复兴) is another term expressing the desire to put China back to its rightful place in the world. It was originally coined by late-Qing reformer Liang Qichao (1873–1929).
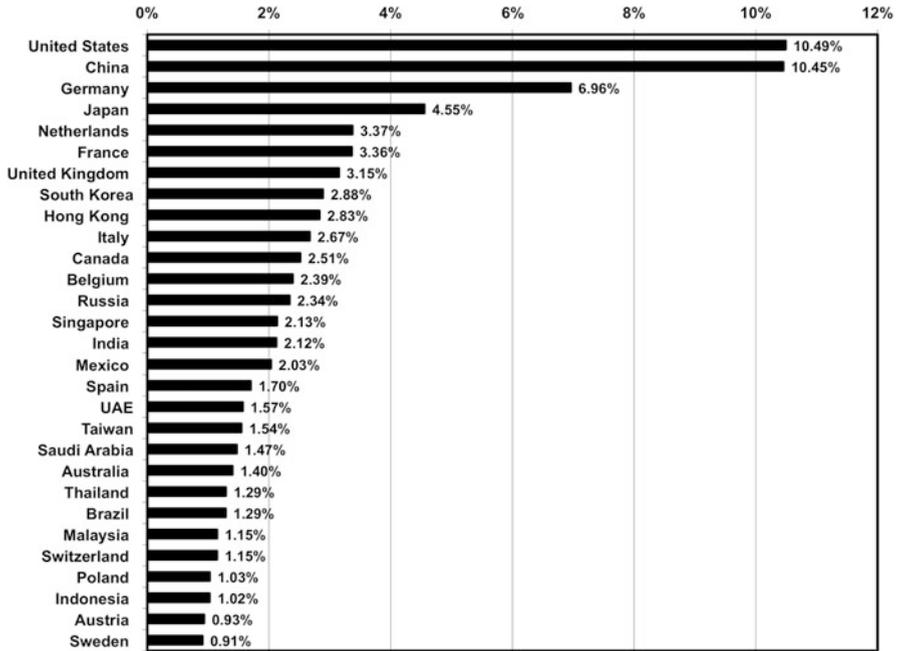
Source: Shares computed from the WTO International Trade Statistics Database (WTO 2013).

Fig. 2.1 World trade shares, 2012 (%)

countries, and maintains numerous costly military bases in these and other countries in the region. China meanwhile finances a large portion of the foreign-owned U.S. state debt. The economic interdependency between China and the U.S. is however mutual and, again, fraught with irony. China, for instance, needs its major export customers, foremost the U.S., to fuel export growth, which, in turn, is necessary to generate the vast financial resources China needs for its military modernization, internal security, as well as other costly projects such as infrastructure development, social security, and pollution control.

China, as Mark Leonard puts it, is on "a quest for markets, natural resources and political support" for its continued development (Leonard 2008: 87). Such a grand strategy however effectively precludes belligerent behavior, notwithstanding the hawkish rhetoric sometimes voiced by Chinese military officials.[31] For Western observers, this means that those arguing in favor of "containment" against China, or those adding fuel to the fire of mutual threat perceptions by publishing texts

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[31] Examples in recent years have included the various publications by air force Colonel Dai Xu (戴旭, *1964), who has written a book named "Totem of the Sea" (海图腾) on China's aircraft carrier programme (Dai 2009) and another one on China's so-called "C-shaped encirclement" (C-形包围) by the U.S. and other Asian powers (Dai 2010).

implying an inevitable military conflict with China,[32] would perhaps do well to think through the myriad implications of China's complex role in the world trade system alone before advocating any such strategy.

2.3 Maritime Geography as a Factor for China's Naval Development

2.3.1 Dependence on Maritime Trade Routes

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned factors necessary for China's continued development, what is their relation to naval power? One obvious concern is the need for uninterrupted access to crucial materials (steel, oil, other raw materials, machinery) that fuel China's growth and that rely heavily on maritime transport. China also needs secure sea lanes for the transport of its export merchandise. Already in 2007, a report stated that China's oil reserves would last for only 7 days. In 2013, China became the world's largest importer of oil from the OPEC countries after the United States. Its dependence on maritime transport routes are such a source of concern for China that it actively supports the construction of the planned Thai Canal at the Isthmus of Kra, which would offer an alternative to the piracy-infested Strait of Malacca. China is also building pipelines across Pakistan, and, as of 2013, it has taken steps to open up the Northern Sea Route across the Arctic for commercial shipping. China invests in oil refinery installations in Singapore and Sri Lanka, and is heavily involved in building the port of Gwadar in Pakistan, which could eventually be used by China as a naval base (cf. Ruppik 2007: 27). China's need for food imports could soon become another critical issue. In sum, these few points illustrate why maritime security in the global trade choke points (shown as red circles in the map in Fig. 2.2) is as much a strategic concern to China as to any other nation largely dependent on maritime trade (cf. Holmes and Yoshihara 2008: 4–5). Western critics of China's "hunger for resources" however often fail to acknowledge the fact that China has the same legitimate concerns in this regard as other industrialized nations. As a relative newcomer, however, it finds

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[32] Examples of articles sure to fuel mutual distrust include Kaplan's (2005) piece in *The Atlantic* entitled "How We Would Fight China" that was featured on the magazine cover together with a photograph of a grim-looking Chinese seaman; or Kraska's (2010) article entitled "How the United States Lost the Naval War of 2015" depicting a hypothetical scenario of a successful Chinese attack on a U.S. aircraft carrier. This tendency is nothing new. Yang and Liu, in their highly interesting quantitative analysis of "China Threat" content in U.S. print media between 1992 and 2006, have found that since 1995, the military threat theme was the dominant strain, before economic/trade threat and political/ideological threat, and has made up almost 70 % of all "China Threat" related media content over a 15 year period (Yang and Liu 2012: 706). For an outline of the original "China Threat" argument see Roy (2009).
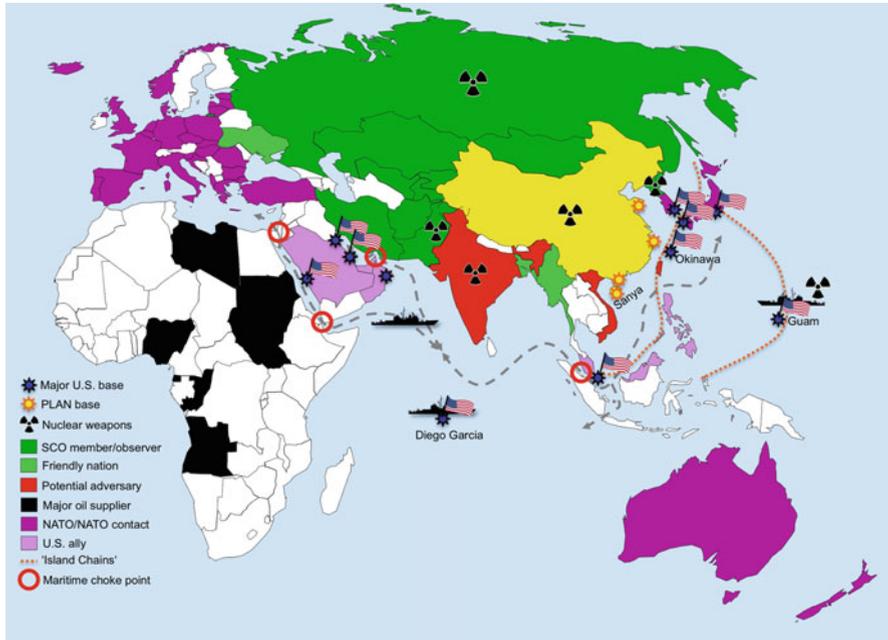
Source: Map concept adapted from Le Monde, Atlas der Globalisierung (2006) with additional data from various news reports.

Fig. 2.2 China's geostrategic situation from Beijing's point of view

itself at a disadvantage compared to the established powers when it comes to accommodating its needs on the global market (cf. Gu and Mayer 2007: 1–6).

The systemic danger inherent in China's economic vulnerability to blockades and embargoes, the so-called "Malacca Dilemma" (cf. Chen 2010), has been clearly noted by Chinese naval strategists such as Zhang Wenmu, who wrote:

> [...] China is almost helpless to protect its overseas oil import routes. This is an Achilles heel to contemporary China, as it has forced China to entrust its fate (stable markets and access to resources) to others. Therefore, it is imperative that China, as a nation, pay attention to its maritime security and the means to defend its interests through sea power (a critical capability in which China currently lags behind) (Zhang 2006: 20).

Zhang also states that, in an age of economic globalization, "national defense must go where a nation's economic interests lie," thus making a case for extended out-of-area operations (Zhang 2006: 20).

Apart from this problem, however, China has several traditional maritime security concerns as well. The need for keeping up credible nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis the five de-facto nuclear-armed powers in its immediate vicinity—India, Pakistan, Russia, North Korea, and the U.S. Navy's 7th fleet—is one factor. At the moment, though, it seems that its first submarine-borne nuclear ballistic missile system still awaits completion, even though China has operated indigenously built

nuclear-powered submarines for some decades. A long-range ballistic missile—the *JL-2*—is now finally in the testing phase (Wertheim 2013: 105). This means that, for all intents and purposes, China probably does not at present have an operational sea-based second strike capability, although this could soon change. Another Chinese concern is the safeguarding and policing of China's large coastline and its 200 nm EEZ against maritime threats such as smuggling, illegal fishing, infiltration by spies, maritime terrorism, and piracy, to name just a few. In line with overall economic growth, China's maritime economy grew steadily by ca. 11 % annually between 2001 and 2005, adding another incentive for enhancing maritime security (Li 2010: 291–292).

China furthermore has unresolved maritime claims that conflict with Japan (the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands) and with several of its Southeast Asian neighbors (especially Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia) in the South China Sea, which China has claimed almost in its entirety since 1947. To demonstrate to the other claimant countries its commitment to these offshore territories, China must remain prepared to regularly deploy patrol vessels there. And, last but not least, in the absence of a formal peace treaty, China's unresolved conflict with Taiwan over the island's sovereignty remains a geostrategic problem of prime importance due to the close proximity of the island to the Chinese coastline, its close relations with the U.S., which acts as Taiwan's effective guardian power, and due to a possible U.S. involvement in a military conflict.

2.3.2   Military Alliances in China's Neighborhood

The main military-strategic problem from China's point of view is the presence in its close vicinity of a powerful informal alliance of countries led by the U.S. composed of bilateral U.S. security partnerships. This coalition has for all practical purposes achieved a high level of interoperability through shared technology, extensive military contacts, and regular joint large-scale maneuvers. In fact, the U.S. can be dubbed a "resident power" in the Asia Pacific region given the nature of its permanent forward presence and vested interests, which it pursues through a combination of bilateral trade and security partnerships as well as through arms trade relations (Sakhuja 2011: 58). Without a doubt, U.S. forces in Asia are the most powerful military power in the entire region, with more than 120,000 troops, 6 aircraft carrier battle groups carrying up to 500 fighter aircraft, 31 nuclear-powered attack submarines, 12 heavily armed cruisers, 29 destroyers, and 12 frigates deployed there in 2008, among them *AEGIS*-equipped surface vessels armed with cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-ballistic missiles (Holslag 2010: 31). The so-called "first island chain," as Chinese strategists call the line of islands ranging from the Korean peninsula Southwards over Japan, Okinawa, the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands and Taiwan, is literally dotted with U.S. military installations and listening stations that are positioned close to Chinese shores. Altogether, as of 2013, the U.S. has officially deployed more than 57,340 military personnel to

23 countries within the Asia Pacific region, excluding the large force at Hawaii. The vast majority, about 54,400, are stationed in Japan.[33] As of early 2014, six of the ten currently serviceable U.S. aircraft carriers have been deployed to the region, as have 60 % of the nuclear-powered U.S. submarines, among them eight SSBN (cf. Park 2014).

In sum, the high number of U.S. troops stationed permanently in South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Australia, and on U.S. bases such as Guam, Hawaii, and Diego Garcia, as well as intensifying U.S. political and arms trade linkages with historic opponents of China such as India and Vietnam, present a formidable challenge to China's own regional aspirations. U.S. relations with its former war enemy Vietnam, China's primary contender for control over the South China Sea, were elevated to the status of a defense agreement in 2011 (which included negotiations for the use of ports) and were intensified in 2013 with an agreement on the transfer of nuclear technology from the U.S. to Vietnam.

The fact that, in the field of naval technology, more and more of the region's U.S. allies—South Korea, Japan and Australia, to be exact—have chosen to adopt the *AEGIS* combat system for their latest surface vessels to increase interoperability and intelligence sharing with U.S. forces is also worrisome from China's viewpoint, not least because its only military ally in East Asia is currently North Korea.

One major security benefit enjoyed by all members of the informal U.S.-led alliance is a kind of "extended nuclear deterrence" provided by U.S. forces to its non-nuclear allies both in Asia and in Europe, and to NATO as a whole:

> [...] US nuclear weapons provide critical reassurance against conventional and nuclear threats from regional adversaries. The United States continues to station nuclear weapons in five European countries—each of whom is a non-nuclear weapon state under the NPT—and strongly reaffirmed the extension of its nuclear umbrella to Japan and South Korea in the wake of North Korea's nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 (Frühling and O'Neil 2012: 86).

For the above-mentioned reasons, it is useful from a strategic viewpoint to conceive of the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and Australia as members of a hypothetical strategic alliance of powers that China would be pitted against more or less alone in the unlikely case of military conflict—for North Korea is hardly a reliable partner—and has no hope of ever joining. As General Yao Yunzhu (姚云竹, *1954) of the Chinese Academy of Military Science observed, "the international military order is U.S.-led—NATO and Asian bilateral alliances—there is nothing like the WTO for China to get into" (quoted in 'China's military rise' 2012). Japan, China's primary contender for control over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands has, on the other hand, decided to issue a Joint Political Declaration with NATO in April 2013 that is intended to further mutual cooperation and formalize Japan's relations with the organization. Developments such as these are directly related to a growing sense of a "China Threat" within the region, while the alliance-building resulting from this,

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[33] Deployment data as published by the U.S. Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) on September 19, 2013, available at https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/getfile.do?fileNm=SIAD_309_Report_P1307.xlsx&filePathNm=milRegionCountry (accessed January 22, 2014).

in turn, creates a feeling of exclusion among China's leaders that fuels distrust and gives rise to a perception of being "trapped" or "encircled" (cf. He and Feng 2011: 20).

Moreover, apart from the main members of the informal U.S.-led alliance, other countries within the "Asian Security Complex" such as Taiwan and the Philippines are directly dependent upon U.S. aid, arms exports, and interventions for their security and therefore have close political and military ties with the U.S., even in the absence of formal security treaties. As a result, they lean heavily on this alliance politically, economically and culturally.

During the past 10 years, news media in Asian and Western countries have repeatedly drawn attention to China's attempts to forge closer military ties with some of the lesser powers in the region, notably Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. China's strategy of building, refurbishing, and operating ports in some of these countries has been referred to as a "string of pearls"[34] strategy aimed at the eventual establishment of a Chinese overseas base network (cf. Blazevic 2009: 63–64). So far, this has yet to materialize. Within the above-mentioned group of countries, Pakistan must be considered the most dependable and influential bilateral partner, and mutual security relations have been enhanced by China's involvement in building the port of Gwadar and numerous joint arms procurement projects also in the naval shipbuilding sector. China has officially been asked by Pakistan to build a naval facility next to the commercial port of Gwadar, but Chinese officials have so far publicly declined the offer (Mahadzir and Hardy 2011). Gwadar, therefore, is the most likely candidate for eventually becoming a true PLAN forward base. However, Pakistan is also a long time U.S. ally, mutual irritations notwithstanding. Therefore I concur with Moss who wrote in 2011:

> [...] the PLAN's steps into the wider world have so far been tentative. Chinese-built ports in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka certainly have strategic potential, but there is no evidence yet to suggest that the PLAN intends to use these facilities as forward naval bases, although it may ultimately do so (Moss 2011).

Holmes and Yoshihara present a similarly balanced view of the issue in their 2011 paper on the "string of pearls."

Irrespective of the true intentions of China's leadership regarding such a base-building strategy, it is a useful exercise to compare the current situation of China's tentative out-of-area bases with the firmly entrenched network of military bases operated by U.S. forces worldwide for assessing the strategic balance. Analysts have had surprising difficulty when trying to establish a reliable figure of worldwide

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[34] Apart from the Pakistani ports Gwadar and Karachi, other Chinese-built or refurbished ports often mentioned in connection with the "string of pearls" include Hambantota on Sri Lanka and ports on Small and Great Coco Island, Sittwe, Kyuakpu, Mergui and Hainggyi Island (Myanmar). As Blazevic notes, "In spite of the impressive number of projects, few appear to have notable military resources. Moreover, even if China does intend to use the pearls for military purposes, its access to them in a time of conflict is doubtful" (Blazevic 2009: 63–64).

U.S. military bases due to perhaps intentional lack of official transparency. Nevertheless, according to estimations by several critical analysts, the U.S. maintained between 700 and 800 bases in about 63 countries around the world 10 years ago, and has more than 1,000 today (cf. Dufour 2007; Turse 2011; Vine 2012). Many of the newer ones seem to belong to a new type of small, unobtrusive installation dubbed a "lily pad" that is designed to have a low profile.[35] In addition to the bases on land, the 10 currently active aircraft carrier task forces are, in effect, large floating air bases. The level of military integration with host countries is supported by about 170 exercises and about 250 U.S. Navy port visits each year. The total cost of maintaining the vast network of overseas bases has been estimated to amount to about $250 billion annually. This huge investment may be justified from a U.S. point of view because, as Vine has observed:

> Beyond their military utility, the lily pads and other forms of power projection are also political and economic tools used to build and maintain alliances and provide privileged U.S. access to overseas markets, resources, and investment opportunities (Vine 2012).

All in all, when viewing the issue disinterestedly, it would seem that worrying about a hypothetical "string of pearls" strategy of China as a challenge to the U.S. is somewhat disingenuous, or at the very least, premature.

2.3.3   China's Difficult Maritime Geography

In sum, it must be conceded that China's geostrategic situation, as illustrated by the map in Fig. 2.2, is indeed unusually complex. China has land borders with 14 countries, and it has been at war with two of these since the 1960s. Four of its immediate neighbors are nuclear powers. Several potentially hostile powers are not only allied with the U.S., the sole remaining superpower, but also located unnervingly close to China's maritime borders. In the case of Taiwan, the shortest distance is only 100 nm (or 185 km). Douglas MacArthur's famous phrase that Taiwan is an "unsinkable aircraft carrier," which is moreover located next to vital sea lines, has resonated widely in Chinese strategic thinking, partly explaining the near-obsessive quality of China's preoccupation with the Taiwan question (cf. Holmes and Yoshihara 2008: 54–62).[36]

China's challenging maritime geography—its so-called "littoral dilemma"—has been extensively analyzed in Mahanian terms by Homes and Yoshihara (2008:

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[35] They are in officially called "lily pads" in reference to the way water lily pads are used by a frog for "jumping across a pond toward its prey." They are "small, secretive, inaccessible facilities with limited numbers of troops, spartan amenities, and prepositioned weaponry and supplies." Vine (2012) estimates that "the Pentagon has probably built upwards of 50 lily pads and other small bases since around 2000, while exploring the construction of dozens more."

[36] Interviews conducted by me in 2001 with Chinese analysts in a Beijing think tank support this view.

48–70). The characteristic of the "first island chain" as a natural barrier separating the "Chinese Caribbean" from the Oceans has been summed up by them as follows:

> For Chinese Mahanians, Taiwan, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and the Southeast Asian Archipelago represent an exceedingly long natural geographic barrier to Chinese naval power projection. [...] Proximity, especially along the southeastern and northeastern shores, is a problematic characteristic of the island chain for Beijing. At its closest point, Taiwan is less than 100 miles from China's shoreline, the Korean Peninsula only 50 miles farther. To the north, commercial and naval shipping entering or exiting the Yellow and East China seas confronts something akin to layered defense. As Chinese vessels, both commercial and military, transit past the Korean Peninsula, they quickly encounter the Japanese archipelago. The governments of these territories are treaty-based allies of the United States (Holmes and Yoshihara 2008: 69).

The combined effects of the geographic proximity of numerous foreign military installations and listening stations plus the existence of U.S.-dominated military alliances mean that China is under much heavier surveillance by powerful strategic rivals than is customary or would even be possible in the case of most other rising powers. This situation renders the free movement of Chinese naval vessels into deeper Pacific waters without prior detection difficult.

The resulting threat perception in China occasionally finds expression in the form of writings such as PLA Air Force Colonel Dai Xu's *The C-shaped Encirclement*, a book from 2010 that deplores the perceived "shutting in" of China by U.S. partners in the Asia Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. Chinese fears of "encirclement" should be taken note of by outside observers, and it should be granted that this perception is not unfounded. Polemical writings like Colonel Dai's capitalize on such fears to make an impact on the mass-market audience, but they are also a reflection of deeper concerns within the Chinese military regarding the country's actual strategic vulnerability.

To illustrate the effect upon the thinking of Chinese strategists, the tables can be turned and a hypothetical situation envisioned where numerous Chinese military installations are located close to U.S. borders, on e.g. the Caribbean Islands, in Central America, and Southern Canada. The question may be asked, along with Vine (2012): "[H]ow would the United States respond if China, Russia, or Iran were to build even a single lily-pad base of its own in Mexico or the Caribbean?" When contemplating the possible range of U.S. reactions to such a development, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 certainly comes to mind as a historical precedent, even if the analogy is arguably flawed due to a much-different world political climate today. Nevertheless, it is helpful to realize that Chinese strategists may conceive of the waters inside the first island chain, and of the South China Sea, as the "Chinese caribbean", and of the Malacca Strait as a counterpart to the Panama Canal (cf. Crisp 2010: 205).

A more sober, but no less dire assessment of the Chinese surveillance situation can be found in a recent article on China's electronic warfare challenges by three academics from Wuhan's Naval University of Engineering (Liu et al. 2013). This article describes the problem confronting the Chinese Navy as follows:

> We are facing a full-fledged surveillance with communication electronics covering all bands. [. . .] The surveillance range extends all over the Asia-Pacific region. Using Japan as a forward base, the U.S. forces perform multi-faceted, full-fledged, and three-dimensional communication surveillance operations against our navy using ground stations, surface vessels, electronic surveillance systems, and reconnaissance satellites. Advanced surveillance installations and specialized personnel are active 24 hours a day, watching our navy's every move. Electronic surveillance ships and aircraft in all parts of the world, as well as reconnaissance satellites in space, also perform monitoring tasks. Meanwhile, the U.S. has established reconnaissance intelligence sharing agreements with Japan, South Korea, and other countries (Liu et al. 2013: 197, my transl.).

The authors continue by describing in more detail the comprehensive nature of surveillance measures directed towards China:

> The surveillance basically extends to all radio bands. The U.S. military listening station at Misawa on the Japanese Island Honshu, Yokohama's Kamiseya Communications Station and Okinawa's Sobe Communication Site [decommissioned in 2006, S.K.], as well as the listening stations at Osan and Kunsan Airbases in South Korea simultaneously listen to all kinds of shortwave communication in Russia, China, and North Korea and also locate and decipher the signals. In Australia, the [Defence Satellite Communications] Station established at Geraldton and the [Joint Defence] Facility Pine Gap have Antennas capable of intercepting all kinds of signals from satellite dishes, and intercept primarily the shortwave communication of all the Asia-Pacific countries. The [Boeing] RC-135v/w, [Lockheed] EP-3E and [Boeing] EA-18G electronic reconnaissance aircraft deployed at Misawa Air Base, Kadena Air Base and Naval Air Facility Atsugi also conduct comprehensive surveillance and intercept our military's shortwave and VHF communications signals. The U.S. military "Magnum" class electronic reconnaissance satellites with their large antennas of more than 90 m in diameter can intercept a very wide frequency range of radio communication signals (Liu et al. 2013: 197, my transl.).

The authors conclude that "the wide range of surveillance is able to cover our entire sea area." More research on electronic countermeasures, the authors point out, could effectively prove to be "the Chinese Navy's life insurance in the event of a maritime conflict" (Liu et al. 2013: 197–198).

From the above example it seems clear that as a result of China's sudden establishment of the new "East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone" in late 2013, conflicts with the U.S. about surveillance flights over Chinese-claimed territory are almost certain to get more intense.

China's geostrategic situation becomes even more challenging when taking underwater geography into account. From the point of view of naval development, China's surrounding waters have two major characteristics: The extreme proximity of foreign military installations discussed above, and a striking shallowness of average water depth (see the map in Fig. 2.3). Almost three-fourths of the East China Sea is less than 200 m deep; the average depth is 350 m (cf. 'East China Sea' 2014). The situation in the Yellow Sea further to the North is even more extreme: With a maximum depth of 152 m and a mean depth of only 44 m, it is difficult terrain, especially for submarine operations. In effect, it "[. . .] forms a flat, shallow, and partly enclosed marine embayment. Most of the sea, which is deeper than the Bo Hai, consists of an oval-shaped basin with depths of about 200 to 260 feet (60 to 80 metres)" ('Yellow Sea' 2014). The South China Sea, which is claimed by

Fig. 2.3 East China Sea: depth contours and submarine features

China almost in its entirety, is much farther removed from the Chinese mainland, and with an average depth of about 1,210 m it is the only sea area significantly deeper than China's directly accessible territorial waters (cf. Cole 2010: xxi). Its deepest portion is the China Sea Basin, which "[...] has a maximum depth of 16,457 feet (5,016 metres) and an abyssal plain with a mean depth of some 14,100 feet (4,300 metres)" ('South China Sea' 2014). This body of water "[...] contains the most heavily used SLOCs between the Indian and Pacific oceans. It opens to several strategically vital seaways, none more important than the Singapore and Malacca straits" (Cole 2010: xxi). To reach it, Chinese vessels from the Yellow and East China Seas must first transit the Taiwan Strait, which is only ca. 100 nm wide and, according to Cole, who cites interviews with U.S. meteorological experts, "is potentially one of the most dangerous bodies of water in the world" to navigate. Its mean depth is just under 70 m, and it is

> [...] marked by even shallower areas, wide-ranging tides, unpredictable currents, and the potential for sudden bad weather. Its waters are also extremely 'noisy' due to the extensive ship traffic, fishing boats, shipwrecks, and biological activity, making the use of both passive and active acoustic sensors (sonar and sonobuoys) difficult for submarine and antisubmarine warfare operations (Cole 2010: xxi).

This peculiar, as well as completely inescapable fact of maritime geography is surprisingly little discussed with regard to China's naval development. Nonetheless, it has grave strategic consequences. The problems resulting from China's narrow and shallow territorial waters are most relevant for submarine operations but also affect naval surface vessels, at least to some degree. The defining characteristic of the submarine as a naval weapon system is, after all, its ability to hide from enemy view. This ability is compromised in shallow waters, at least for transiting submarines, because "[t]he deeper the submarine can go the bigger the volume of sea it can hide in" (Canadian Forces n.y.: 49). Shallow waters are also difficult terrain to navigate safely, especially for larger submarines such as China's giant new *Jin* class SSBN. At over 130 m in length, its hull diameter must be large enough to accommodate the *JL-2* missile, which is about 13 m long. Shallow waters therefore not only make such vessels vulnerable to detection, but also to accidental grounding.[37]

The question of using smaller submarines in shallow coastal waters gets mixed reviews, as there can also be some strategic benefits. An older Canadian training manual for the *Oberon* class submarine sums it up this way:

> The submarine is vulnerable in shallow water, and many writers consider that the use of submarines for cloak and dagger or pinpricking operations is unnecessarily hazarding a valuable major war vessel. Nevertheless, there have been many examples of submarines landing agents, special parties and V.I.P.s, landing saboteurs and commandos, attacking targets ashore, watching enemy coast lines and harbors, acting as navigational beacons (Canadian Forces n.y.: 48).

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[37] The table of recorded submarine accidents in Sect. 5.3.3 shows quite a number of navigational errors in shallow areas and crowded sea lanes as the main cause of such accidents within the U.S. Navy.

Smaller diesel submarines would be better able to cope with shallow waters. Moreover, since several large rivers empty into the Yellow and East China Seas, causing varying levels of salinity and carrying large amounts of sediment, anti-submarine warfare is also heavily compromised, not least because sonar pulses reflect off the sea bottom as well. This means that the maritime territory in question is probably best suited to the "classic" submarine tactic in shallow water: "to lie on the bottom, with engines stopped, to minimise noise" (Friedman 1984: 175). In addition, diesel submarines can be used to covertly mine an area with ground mines (Scott 2011).

The confined and shallow nature of China's territorial waters, which are comparable in this regard with Europe's Baltic Sea, effectively means that Chinese surface vessels can hardly leave shore unnoticed by foreign surveillance, and they have a hard time hiding during transit. It further means that submarines and surface vessels have more limited options for tests and training (as certain minimal water depths are necessary for both submarines and surface vessels conducting tests and trials as well as for a variety of training missions), and, finally, that the terrain is uncommonly dangerous and difficult to navigate. If water depth levels around Hainan island are taken into account, China's decision to secretly build a large submarine base on the Southern tip of Hainan by drilling deep tunnels into the rock for launching submarines directly into deeper water to avoid surveillance becomes much more understandable (cf. 'Secret Sanya—China's new nuclear naval base revealed' 2008).

Some observers nevertheless have difficulty conceding this point to China. Cole writes:

> PLAN strategists have written much about China's lack of access to the open Pacific due to the presence of the 'first island chain.' This is cited as one reason why China must control Taiwan to 'break' this restriction. As a practical matter, and considering the geography, it is difficult to accept an assertion that Taiwan or any other entity significantly limits China's access to the Philippine Sea or other parts of the Pacific Ocean, any more than Cuba could be seen as blocking U.S. access to open Ocean (Cole 2010: 36–37).

The problem, however, is not so much that the island chain in any way "blocks" China's access to the open ocean, but that bathymetry and narrow distances between China and the first island chain provide easy conditions to China's neighbors for electronic and other forms of surveillance. This consequently makes some kinds of naval training and testing operations difficult to accomplish, putting China's vessels at a strategic disadvantage compared to all the other nations in the region who have direct access to deep oceanic waters at least from some parts of their coastline. The same cannot be said of the U.S., India, Brazil, South Korea, Taiwan, or Japan, because all these countries have ready access to deep waters more or less directly from their shores.

This situation would of course be remedied to some extent if Taiwan were brought back under Chinese control, for the waters to the East of Taiwan are extremely deep and Taiwan could thus serve as a springboard for, among other

things, China's nuclear submarines. This author therefore tends to agree with Holmes and Yoshihara who think that

> [...] the Chinese leadership almost certainly conceives of Taiwan not only in the nationalist terms that are the stock-in-trade of Western China watchers, but as a barrier to the nation's maritime destiny (Holmes and Yoshihara 2008: 56).

This line of reasoning is supported by statements made by Chinese maritime strategist Zhang Wenmu, who wrote:

> In the near to medium term, unifying Taiwan with the motherland and recovering China's sovereign islands is both the great historical mission that the Chinese government must shoulder and a necessary foundation for China to safeguard its national sea rights. [...] Whether these goals are realized peacefully or otherwise, the Chinese navy's future military role in unifying the country will be of great importance. In this sense, and only within the scope of national sovereignty, the expansion of China's sea power is unlimited (Zhang 2006: 25).

Maritime geography can also go a long way towards explaining China's curious insistence on its "historical" sovereignty rights over the Spratly Islands, which are essentially nothing more than largely uninhabitable reefs and shoals that harbor rich fishing grounds and possibly also rich deposits in hydrocarbons, but little else. China's claim seems untenable at first glance because these rocks and reefs are much farther removed from its Southern coastline than they are, for instance, from Vietnam's. Nonetheless, as the map in Fig. 2.3 shows, the South China Sea is the only maritime area directly accessible from China's shores that is markedly deeper than China's average coastal waters. Controlling these islands and claiming a 200 nm Exclusive Economic Zone around them would give China effective control over much deeper waters and thus help remedy the strategic weakness posed by its enclosed and shallow coastal waters described above.

Be that as it may, this critical disadvantage, as difficult as it may be for Chinese naval strategists such as Zhang Wenmu to accept, is a fact of life and China will have to come to terms with what is an accident of history. It is no different for other states that find their geographical surroundings challenging. Thus, while China's interest in Taiwan, the Spratly Archipelago, and the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands may seem understandable from the geostrategic point of view, this of course does not give China any natural right to enlarge its territory by military means and violate other countries' legitimate interests. If this were not the case, then many other nations with foreign-held territories close to their own shores could make a plausible argument for war. Therefore, Zhang Wenmu's assertion that "[i]f Taiwan and other islands are not within China's control, China will not be able to guarantee the border security of commercial centers such as Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen" (2006: 25) sounds eerily akin to statements made in the 1930s by invaders of peaceful neighboring countries such as Stalin and Hitler, who justified their wars of aggression against Poland, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia

with similar "Lebensraum"-type arguments.[38] In fact, as Hughes notes, it is quite strange that in Zhang's as well as other Chinese writings discussing Mahanian notions of sea power,

> nowhere in this theory can there be found any awareness that it may be controversial to base a theory of China's rise on a set of ideas that contributed to the naval arms race that led up to World War I and had a decisive impact on the architects of naval power in rising Germany and Japan, feeding into the *geopolitik* thinking that drove the policies of those rising powers (Hughes 2011: 603, italics in the original).

Viewed from a European historical perspective this line of reasoning, in combination with an unhesitant use of problematic terms such as "Lebensraum" (生存空间) in Chinese strategic writings is worrisome. It is therefore reassuring to note that in the above-mentioned government-commissioned *Rise of Great Powers* study (Tang 2006), Germany was explicitly cited as an example of a rising power that made the mistake of trying to upset the balance of power by force, leading to disaster. The path of peaceful development taken up by Germany after its crushing defeat in 1945, on the other hand, is credited in the same analysis with ultimately making it the leading economic power in Europe, and thus an example worth emulating (cf. Tang 2006: 276–277).

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[38] Arguments with explicit mentioning of the Chinese term 生存空间 ("Lebensraum") are also made in *China is Unhappy* (Song et al. 2009, p. 164). Stalin cited the supposed threat to the security of Leningrad as the major reason for invading an almost demilitarized Finland in 1939, while Hitler claimed a supposed need for more "Lebensraum" as his justification for invading Poland. Another example of aggressive expansionism justified in a similar manner was the Japanese occupation in China from 1937 to 1945.

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