



China Promotes Increased Maritime Capabilities

OE Watch Commentary: Three Chinese academics and military theorists have written articles in the official *People's Daily* newspaper arguing in favor of increasing the country's maritime capabilities. The articles appeared in the 11 February edition of the paper, under the title "Now is the Time to Build a Strong Maritime Nation." The authors represented a cross-section of military and civilian think tanks: He Guangshun is the director of the National Marine Data & Information Service. Liu Jixian is a former deputy president of the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences. Zhang Haiwen is the Party Secretary of the Maritime Development Strategy Research Institute under the State Oceanic Administration.

Zhang Haiwen links China's economic development to its maritime development, pointing out that the Southern and Eastern coastal provinces that grew the fastest after the "Reform and Opening" of the 1970s. He argued that a renewed focus on using maritime resources and developing trade would be the key to continuing Chinese economic development through the "two centenaries"—major milestones for development that China has set for itself in 2021 and 2049.

He Guangshun highlighted recent Chinese scientific achievements in the maritime realm, including advancements in harnessing tidal energy, maritime monitoring satellites and accessing the natural gas hydrates found in the South China Sea that could potentially revolutionize China's energy security. While the majority of his discussion focused on civilian achievements, he highlighted civil-military cooperation's foundational role in building a strong maritime nation.

Liu Jixian argues that building a strong maritime nation necessitates recognizing that a traditional navy is simply one part of strong maritime force. Not only has the navy expanded to include new services, branches and technologies, but maritime law enforcement and civilian organizations (including maritime militia and science vessels) are necessary. Greater coordination, planning and promotion of civil-military integration, he argues, will help strengthen China's ability to build maritime power.

The Chinese government is making a concerted effort across its military and civilian organizations to promote maritime power. This was reflected in the 2015 Defense White Paper, "China's Military Strategy" which stated that "The traditional mentality that 'land outweighs sea' must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests." The fact that the *People's Daily* has devoted a whole page to the topic should be taken as further evidence that this campaign is continuing and has high-level support. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

"In addition to [traditional] naval forces, the modern navy is composed of naval aviation capable of attacking targets on the sea, the conventional missile force, and the strategic support force. Other services and branches maritime capabilities supplement the naval joint combat force system..."

Source: "以强海梦托起中国梦 (Use the Strong Maritime Nation Dream to Support the China Dream)," Zhang Haiwen, *People's Daily*, 11 February 2018. http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-02/11/nw.D110000renmrb_20180211_3-05.htm

The ocean is an important arena for nations to increase "Comprehensive National Power," international influence, and competitiveness. Speeding up the construction of a strong maritime power is an important measure that will preserve and fulfill our national security development requirements, protect our maritime rights and interests, and expand our national strategic interests.

Source: "建设海洋强国是实现中国梦的必然选择, (Building a Strong Maritime Nation is the Natural Choice to Realize the China Dream)," He Guangshun, *People's Daily*, 11 February 2018. http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-02/11/nw.D110000renmrb_20180211_2-05.htm

Deepen implementation of the strategy of innovation and breakthroughs in maritime science and technology. Strive to make breakthroughs in the key areas of advanced security, green, and deep-water technologies. Resolve the issue of our maritime development being fast but not good. Thoroughly implement the concept of coordinated development, and promote the comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development of marine undertakings.

Source: "大力推进新时代海上力量建设 (Forcefully Advance Maritime Force-building in the New Era)," Liu Jixian, *People's Daily*, 11 February 2018. http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-02/11/nw.D110000renmrb_20180211_4-05.htm

The formation of a modern maritime force is evolving in a comprehensive and diversified direction. No single force can adapt to and meet the strategic needs of safeguarding territorial sovereignty and the maritime rights and interests of the country.

Accompanying the changes in the shape of warfare and the speed at which new platforms and weapons have expanded, the trend toward joint naval combat is becoming more apparent and the composition of maritime forces is expanding. In addition to [traditional] naval forces, the modern navy is composed of naval aviation capable of attacking targets on the sea, the conventional missile force, and the strategic support force. Other services and branches maritime capabilities supplement the naval joint combat force system...

Maritime administrative law enforcement has unique advantages in maritime rights protection in peacetime. It can not only exercise the power of law enforcement on behalf of the government, but also effectively avoid direct military confrontation. In recent years as seen in "rights protection activities" in the Diaoyu Islands and South China Seas, the maritime administrative law enforcement force has become the backbone for safeguarding China's sovereignty and maritime rights and interests...

Marine social forces are mainly composed of the scientific research fleet, merchant fleet, militia fishing vessels, etc. Strong maritime non-governmental actors are one of the important symbols of maritime power... Modern transport fleets can take on the important task of providing logistical support to maritime military operations. Militia fishing vessels have a unique role to play in advancing [China's] maritime interests and are an integral part of civilian maritime forces and national mobilization systems.