

Hold The Line Through 2035

A Strategy to Offset China's Revisionist Actions and Sustain a Rules-Based Order in the Asia-Pacific

Based On:

Gabriel B. Collins and Andrew S. Erickson, "***Hold The Line through 2035: A Strategy to Offset China's Revisionist Actions and Sustain a Rules-Based Order in the Asia-Pacific***," Houston, TX: Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, 12 November 2020,

<https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/files/1e07d836/ces-pub-asiapacific-111120.pdf>

****These slides exclusively reflect the opinions and views of author Collins.****



Hold the Line Through 2035

- **Impose Costs.**
- **Emphasize adaptive actions.**
- **Embrace risk.**
- **Balance liminal conflict with the real risk of near-peer high-intensity war.**
- **Dynamically adjust, avoid concessions to what is PRC bluffing/miscalculation of own long-term national power.**



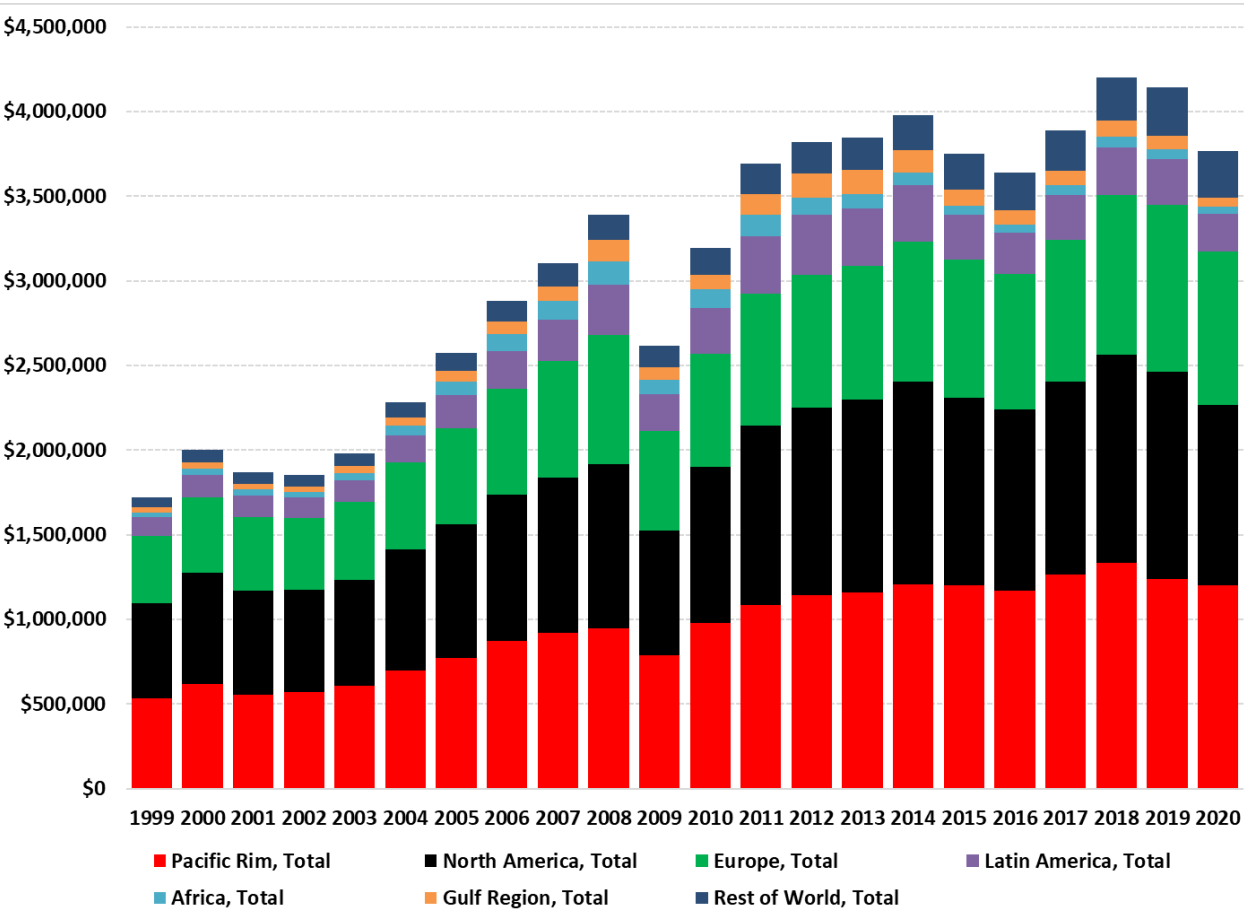
“The United States does not have the qualification to say that it wants to speak to China from a position of strength,” —Yang Jiechi, Director of Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office, March 2021

Source: Wall Street Journal, March 2021

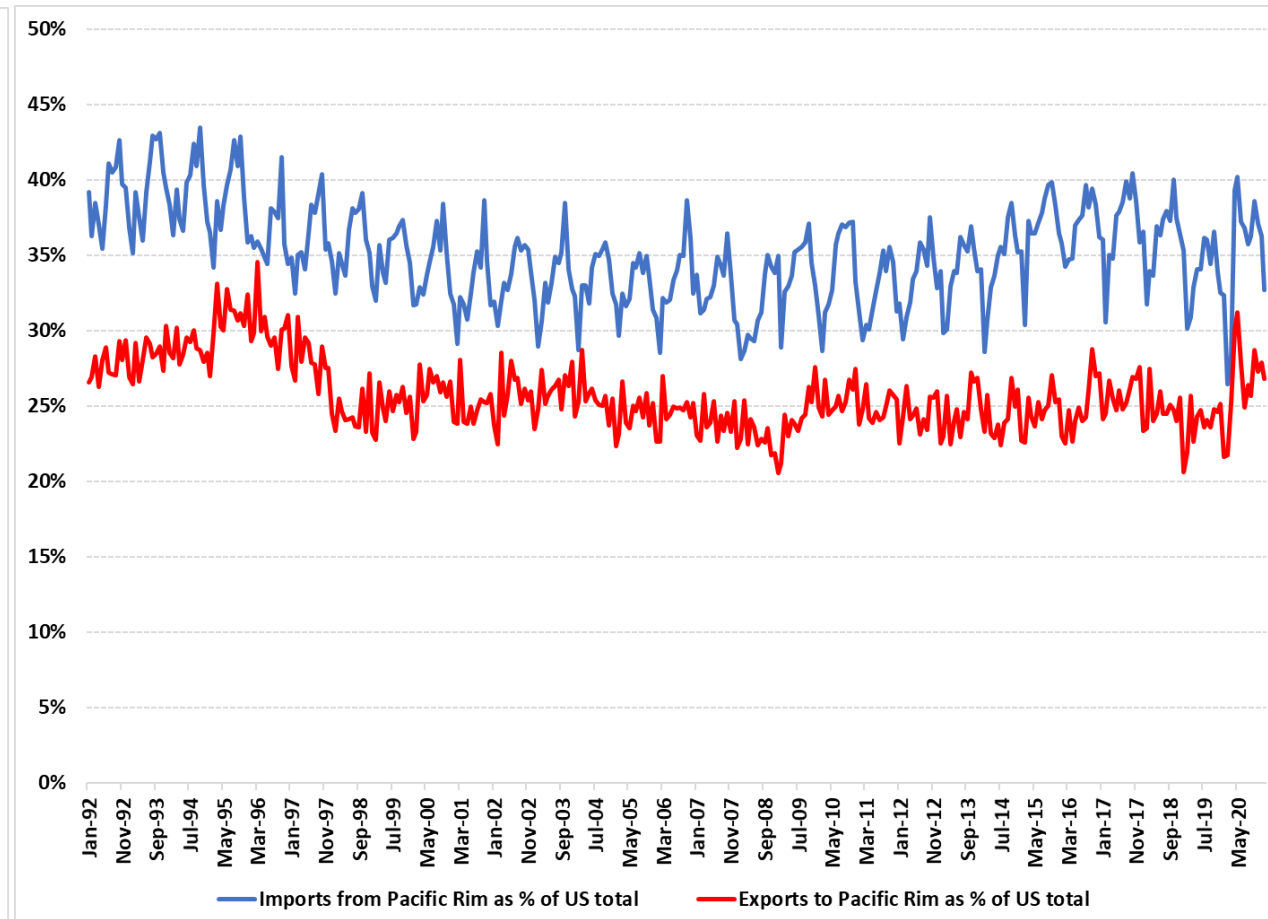
“The time to hold the line in multiple dimensions begins NOW.”

US National Interests Run Deep in Asia-Pacific

US Foreign Trade Turnover, By Region (Million USD)



Pacific Rim as % of Total US Import and Export Trade



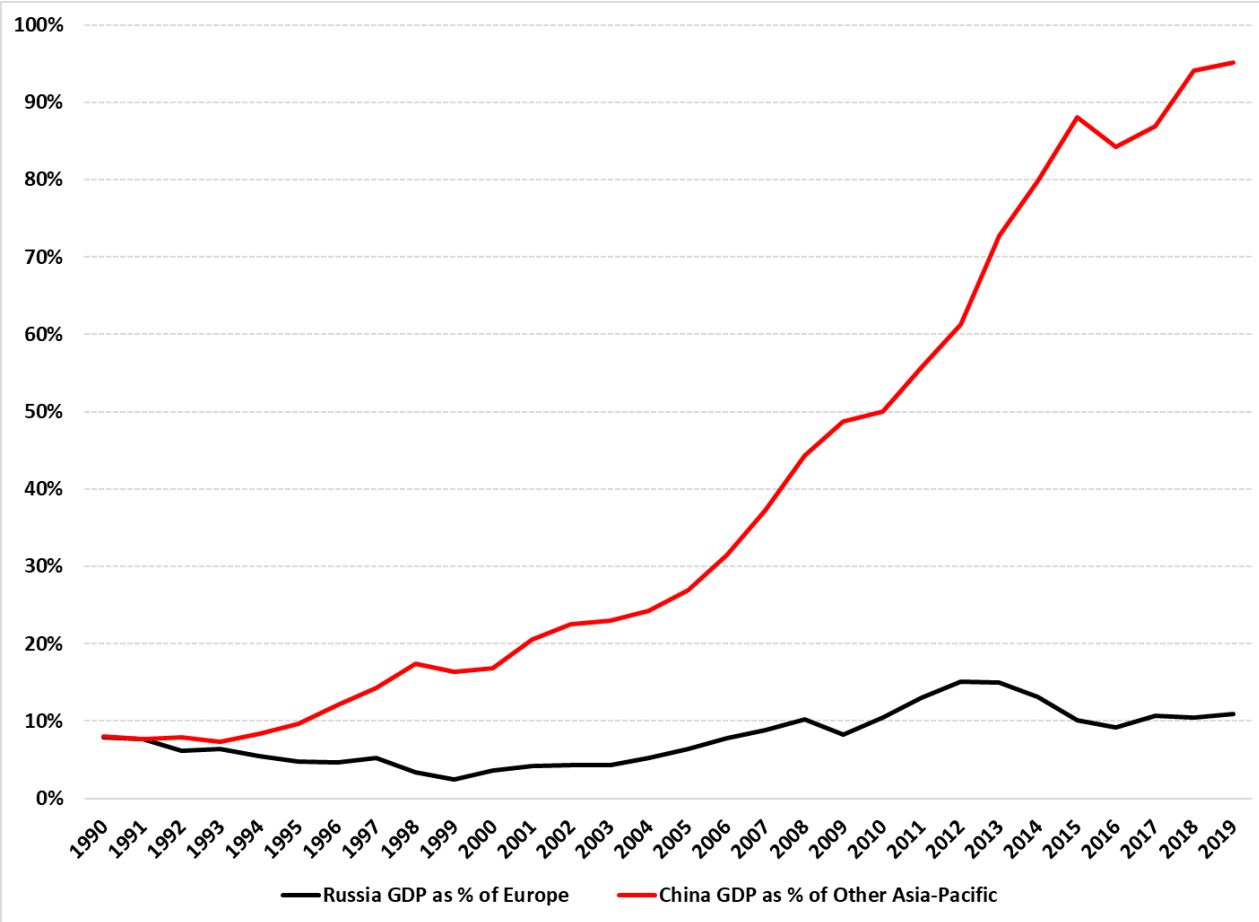
Source: US Census Bureau, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Asia-Pacific Region is a Trillion Dollar-plus marketplace for the United States

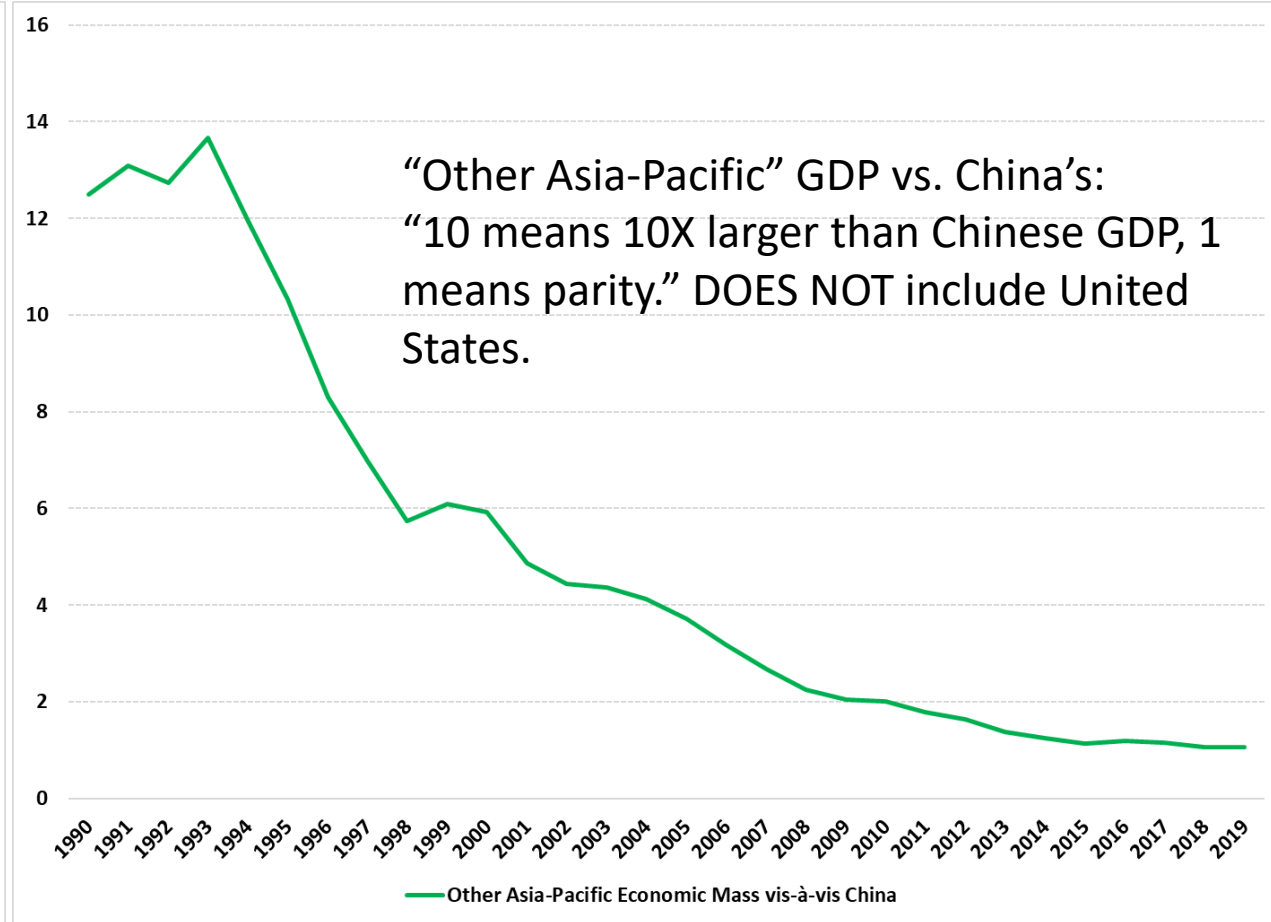
Pacific Rim Countries - Australia, Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (South), Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan.

U.S. as a Strategic Balancer Role Different in Asia-Pacific and Europe

Russia GDP vs. Europe, China GDP Vs. Other Asia-Pacific



China's "Economic Mass" Nearing Parity With Rest of Region



Source: World Bank, Author's Analysis

This dataset has significant implications for how the European and Pacific Deterrence Initiatives compete for funding.

High Stakes if Deterrence Fails

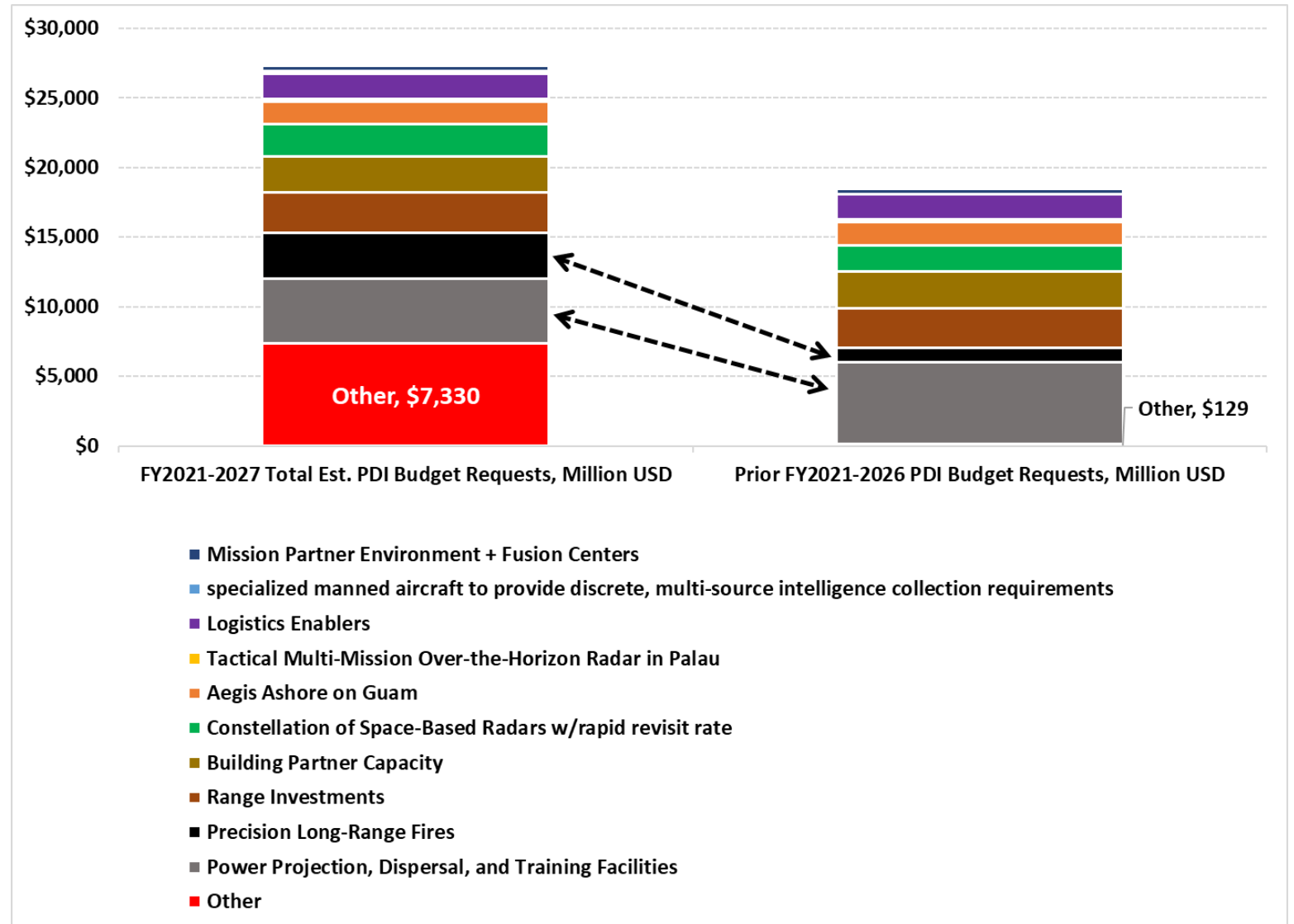
- The last 20 years have been about brushfire wars. Great power conflict could involve full societal mobilization, with dramatic consequences worldwide.
- Total war between industrialized titans is a terrible enterprise. Things that are nearly unimaginable under “normal” circumstances can rapidly become standard and acceptable.
- Cyber, maritime, air, space domains would all be bitterly contested. Everything from factories, to critical home front infrastructure, to pointy end of military spear will be shot at and/or hacked by the adversary.
- Long war the most likely scenario
- U.S. victory far from assured—and could well prove Pyrrhic.
- Massive destruction of global industrial and technological base. Combined, China and the U.S. are in practical terms, irreplaceable across multiple physical, intellectual, and technological value chains.
- Huge setback for progress in multiple key domains
- No country/supernational bloc logically positioned to meaningfully supplant the role of temporarily dis-empowered Chi-Merica colossus
- Likely sets stage for massive follow-on disorder as mid-sized powers compete to fill the temporary vacuum.



2021-to-2023 Is A Critical Action Period

- Four core criteria: (1) have maximum strategic impact, (2) primarily rely upon existing resources, (3) be implementable at a low bandwidth burden, & (4) sustain bi-partisan political support.
- Budget priorities starting to reflect these realities, with INDOPACOM's Pacific Deterrence Initiative allocated \$2.2 billion in FY2021 and an estimated \$4.6 billion in FY2022.

Pacific Deterrence Initiative Funding Ask Increased Significantly Over Past Year



Source: Breaking Defense, US DoD, The Drive

Sample Action Items

Bolster US diplomatic engagement in key Indo-Pacific areas

Commence Negotiations on Grand Trade Agreement 2.0

Robustly defend core US technologies and begin comprehensively revitalizing industrial base

More robustly challenge PRC Maritime Militia operations

Increase procurement volumes for existing standoff land attack and anti-ship munitions such as JASSM-ER, Maritime Strike Tomahawk, and SM-6

Reposition platforms and strategic focus from CENTCOM to INDOPACOM

Further expand PDI funding

Accelerate basing infrastructure improvements in Australia

Accelerate basing infrastructure improvements on Wake, Tinian/Saipan, Aleutians

Accelerate pre-positioning of equipment within First Island Chain

Increase deployment of air defense assets and anti-ship fires within First Island Chain

Offer Japanese, South Korean, and ASEAN firms US assistance in the event of geoeconomic retaliation by PRC

“Stand Our Ground” Can Be Implemented Now Using Existing Resources

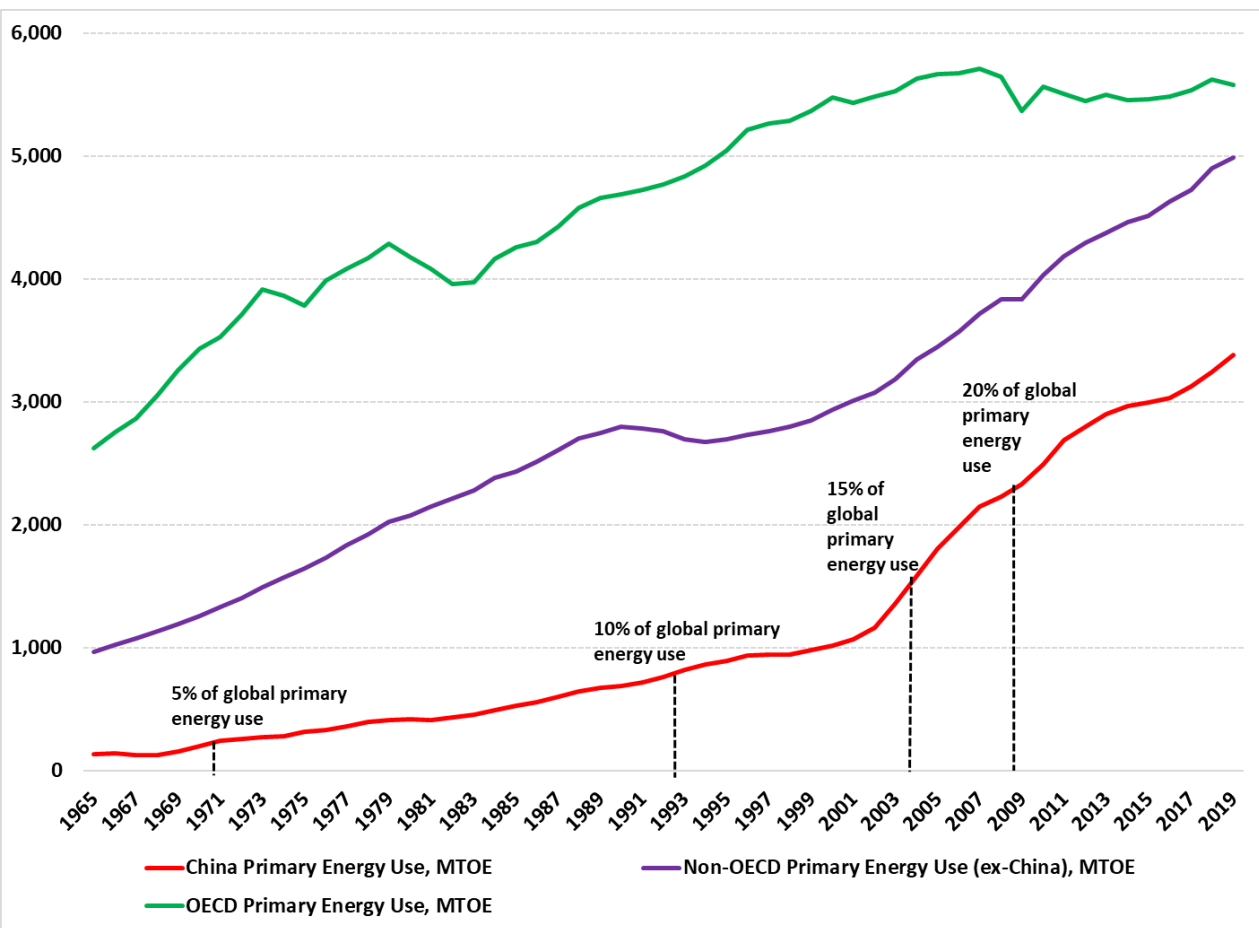
The most important asset—willingness to accept greater friction and higher risk as we leverage our formidable existing capabilities—sits in our hands. Embracing it would allow us to immediately begin recalibrating the Indo-Pacific strategic environment.

The U.S. cannot afford to wait for new military hardware to enter service before challenging the PRC more robustly. Waiting even 12 additional months before stiffening our resolve risks allowing the PRC to further distort the region’s strategic gravity in ways that would potentially permanently jeopardize core U.S. economic & security interests.

China's Rise

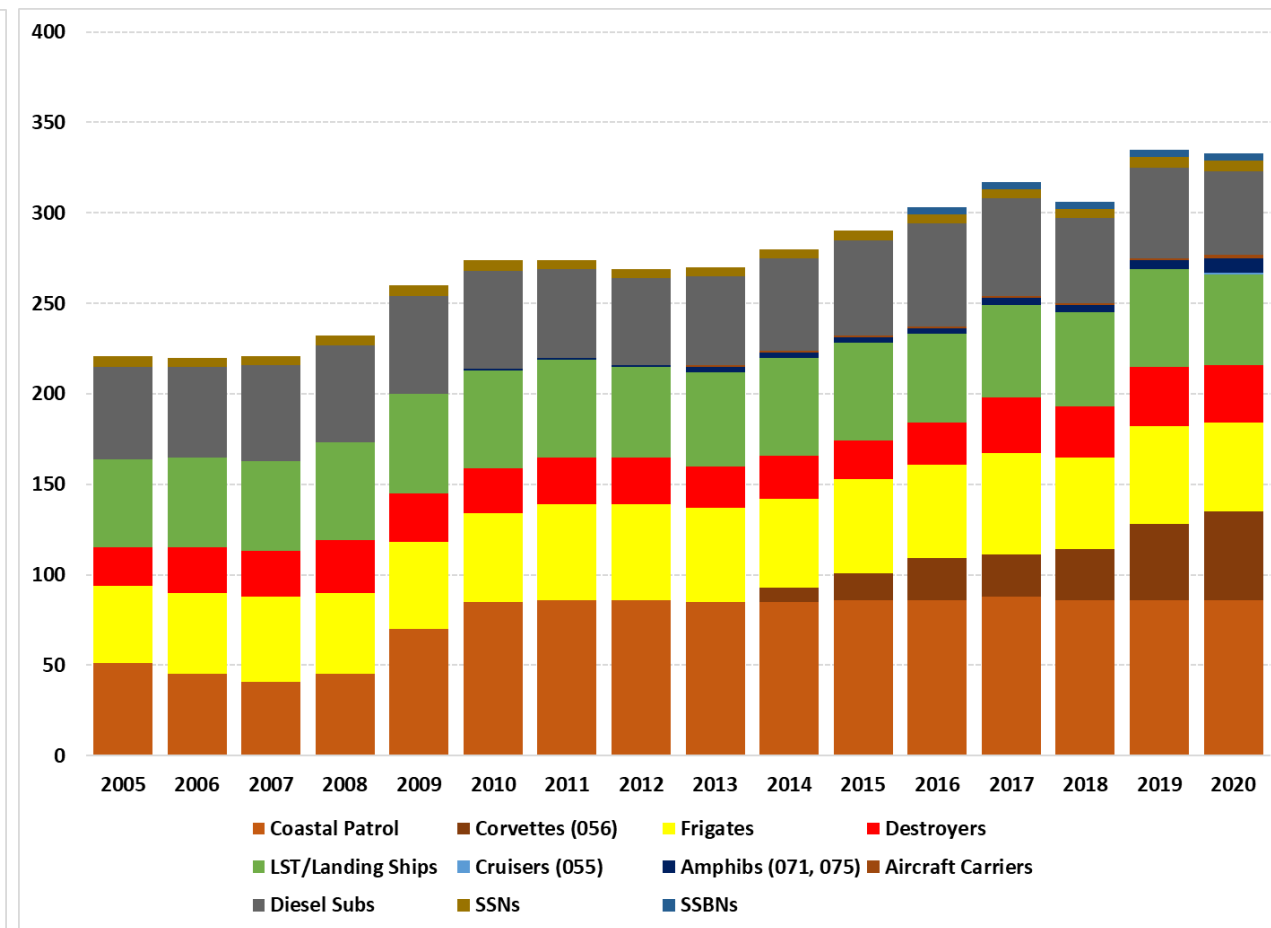
China Has Translated Economic Growth Into Military Power

Primary Energy Use of China and Other Key Economic Actors



Source: BP Statistical Yearbook of World Energy 2020, Author's Analysis

PLAN Combat Vessels in Service



Source: DoD China Military Power Reports, Author's Analysis

Including the Coast Guard and Maritime Militia More Than Doubles Ship Numbers, Albeit At Lower Capability Level

World-Class Platforms Across Maritime Dimensions



250nm-range ASCM, supersonic terminal velocity



Type 055 "Renhai" Cruiser:
Seven launched to date, 2 already in service

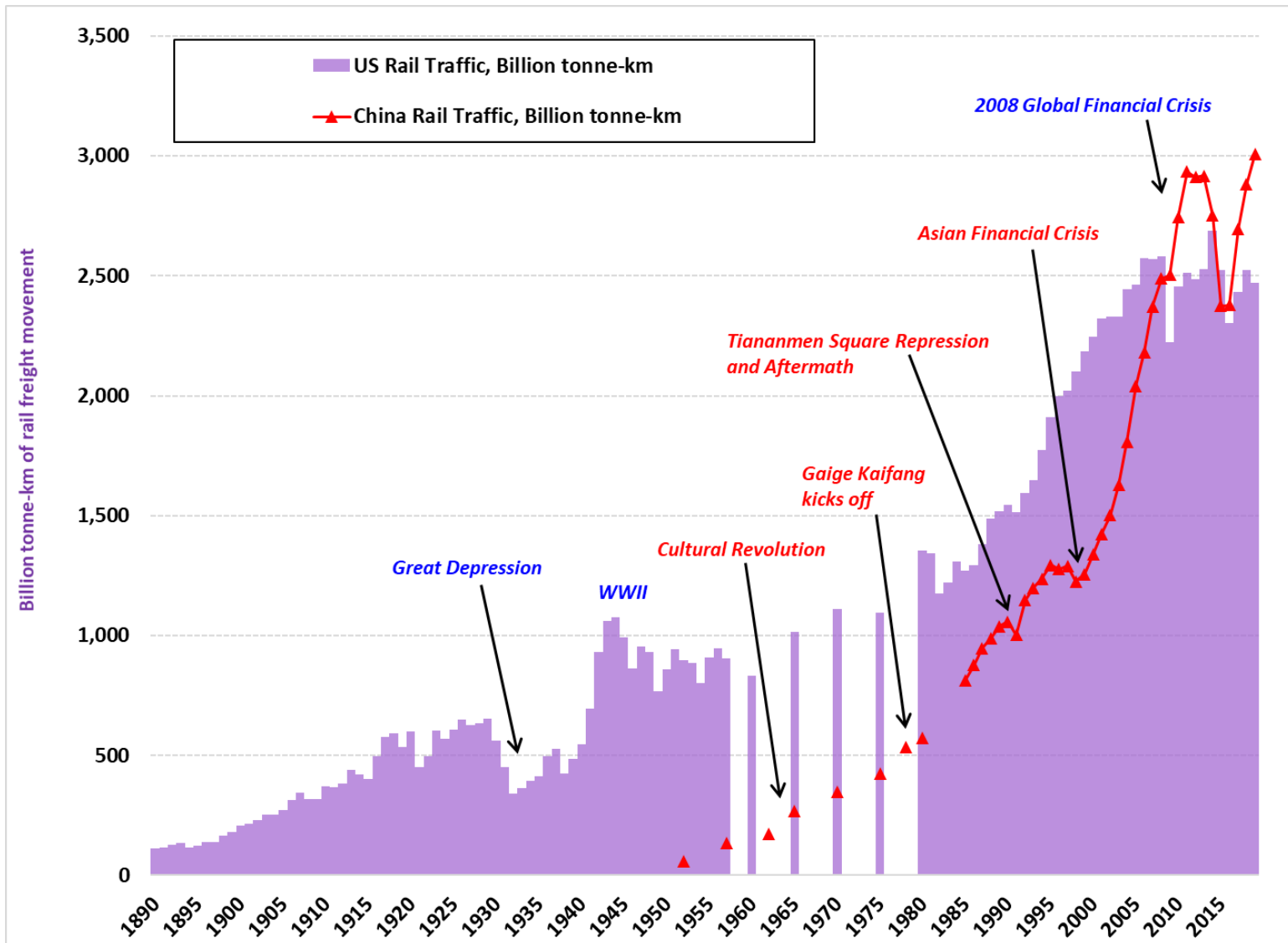


2X the displacement of USCG's Legend-class
high-endurance cutters

China Faces Rising Risk of Demographic and Economic Stasis...With Major Impacts on Ability to Generate National Power

What If the United States of 1920 Had The Problems of 2020?

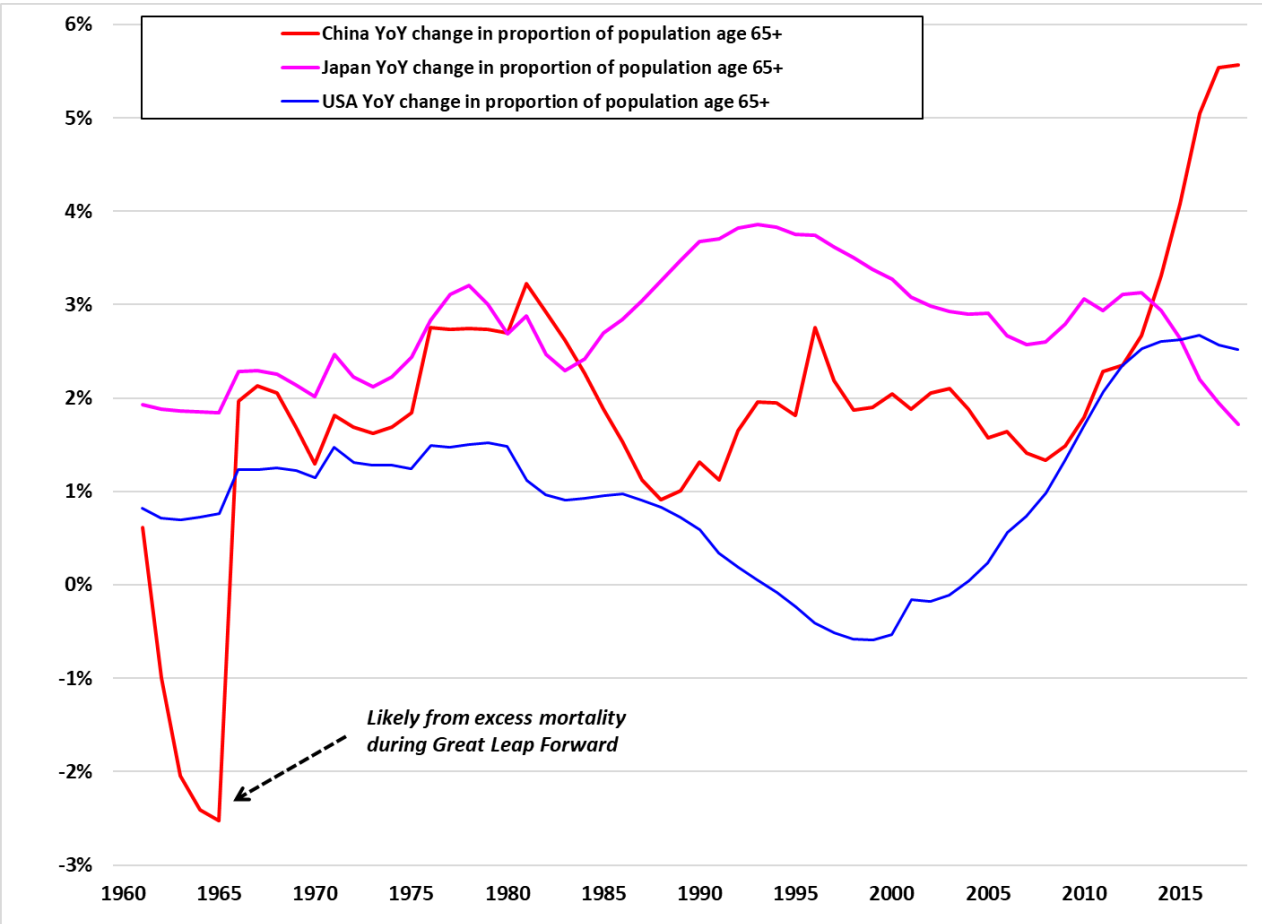
Rail Freight Traffic



Source: U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, NBS China, Author's Analysis

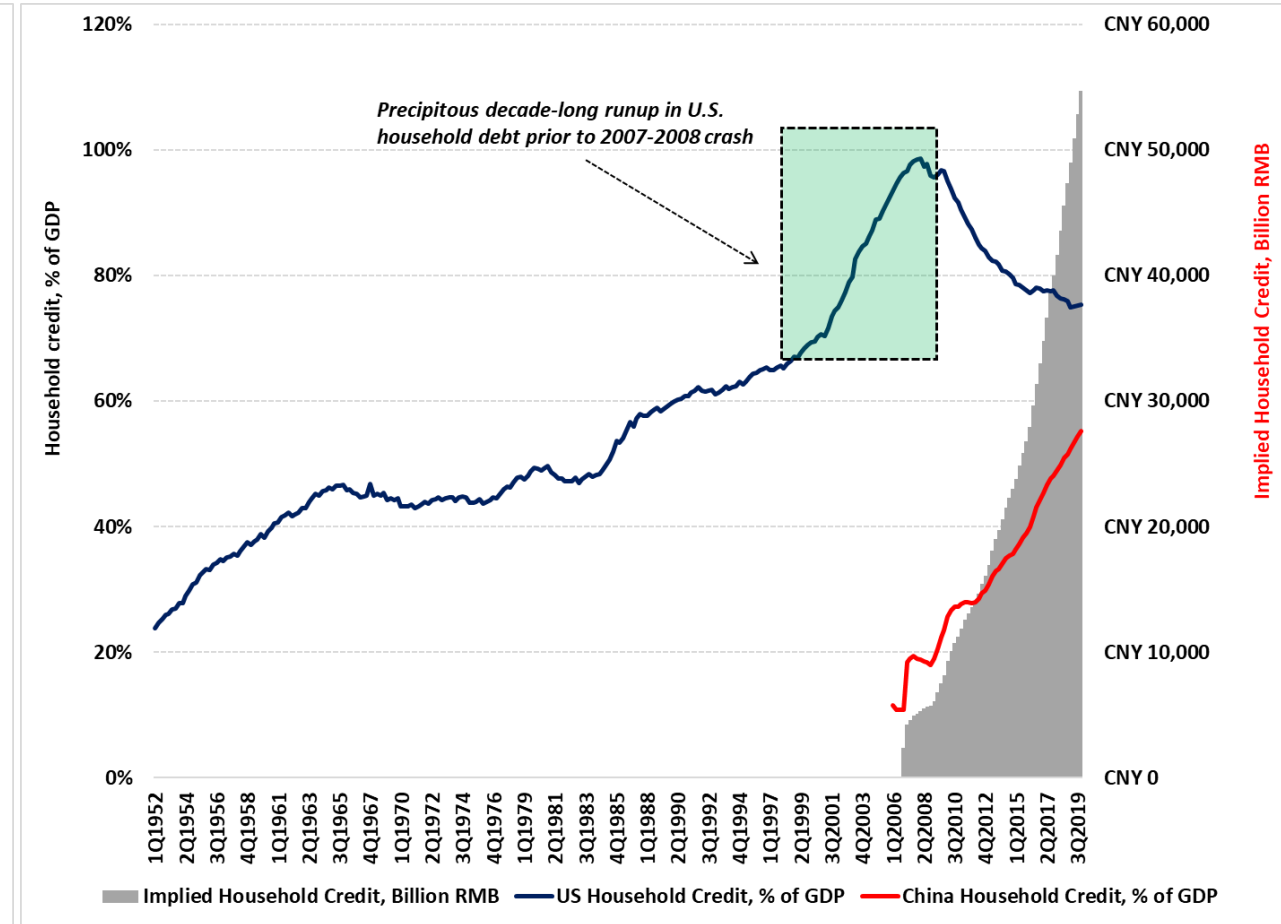
China Slowdown Factors: Demographics & Debt

Proportion of Population Older Than 65 Years



Source: World Bank

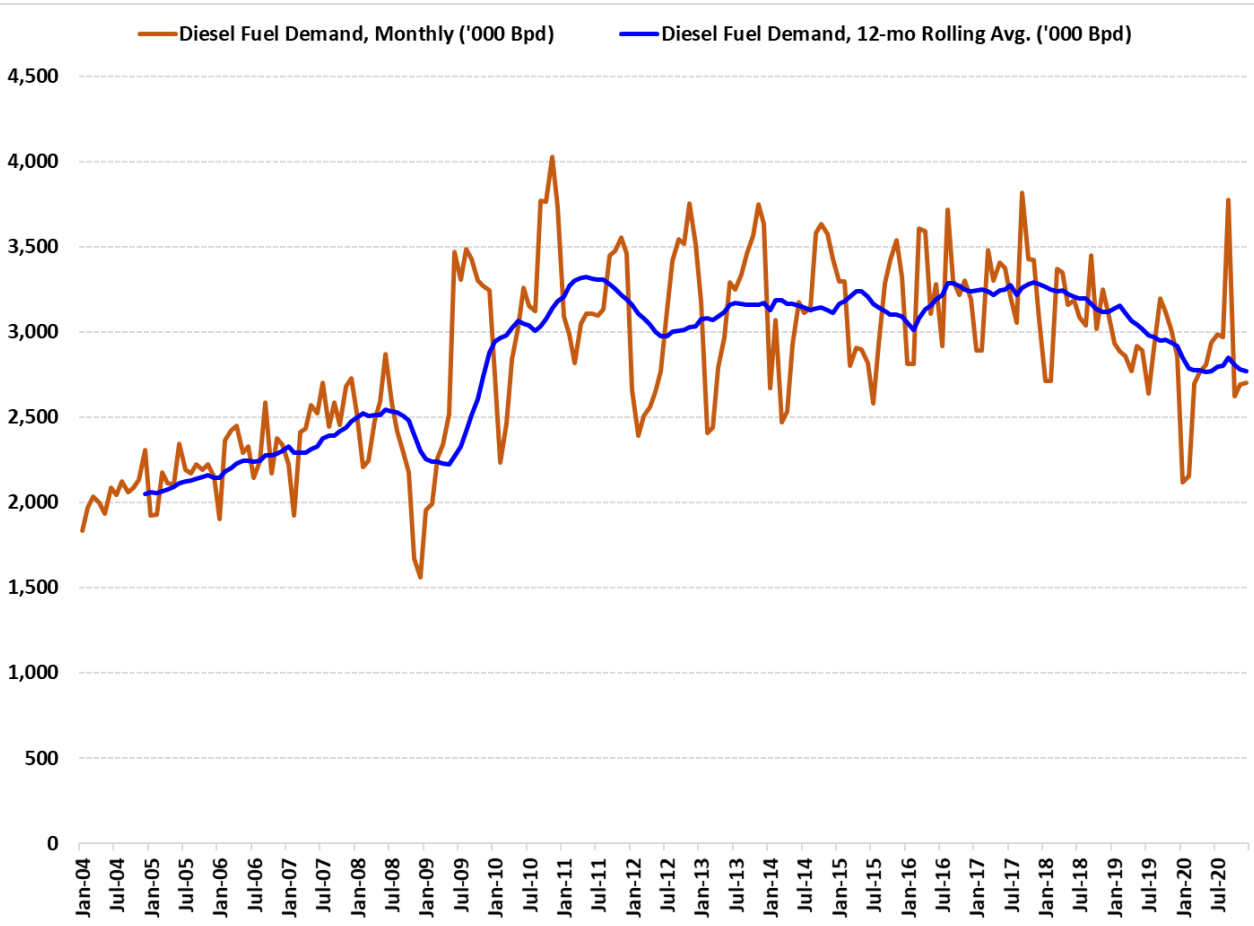
Household Debt Levels, % of GDP and Absolute Level



Source: Bank for International Settlements, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

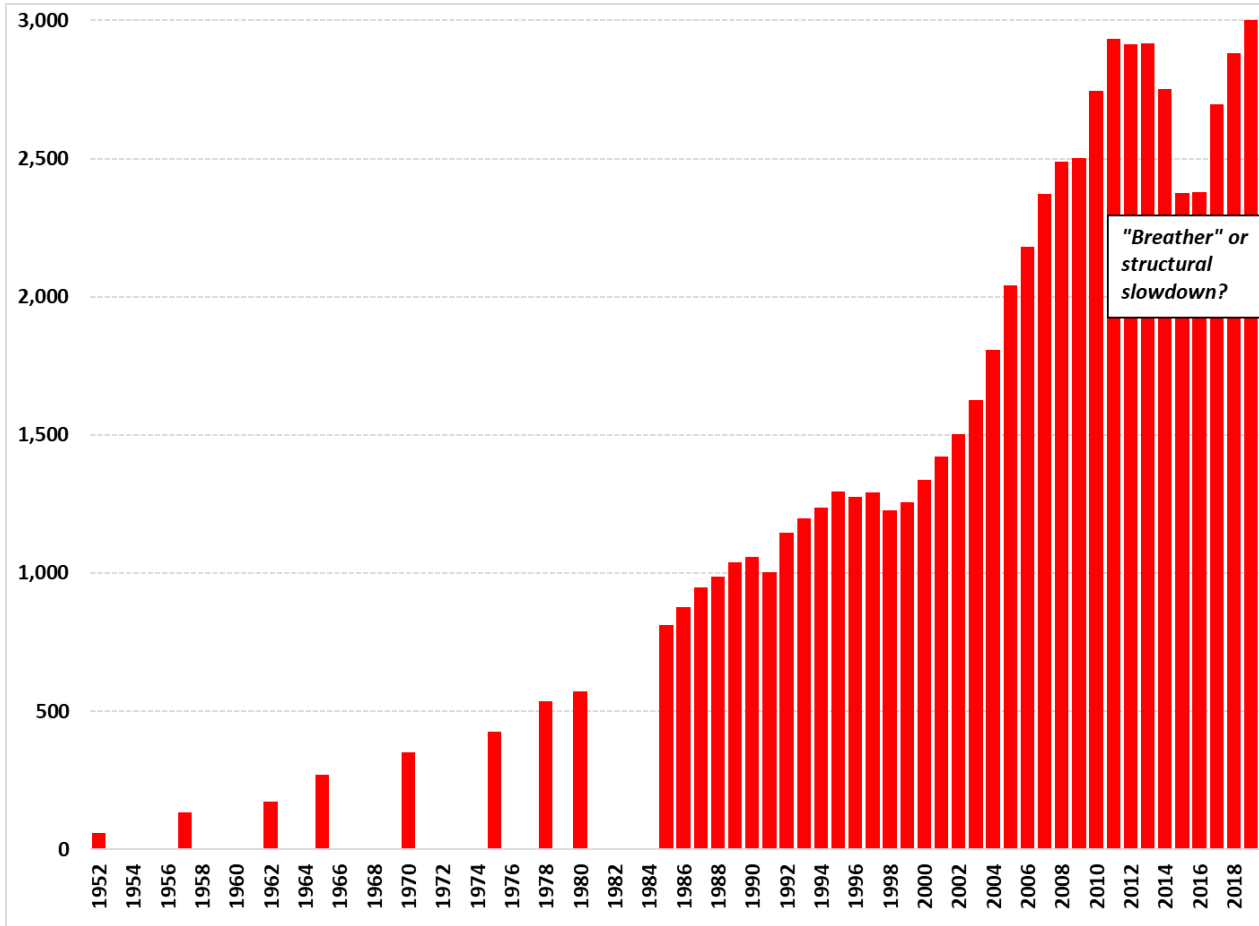
China Real Economy Slowdown

Diesel Fuel Demand, '000 Bpd



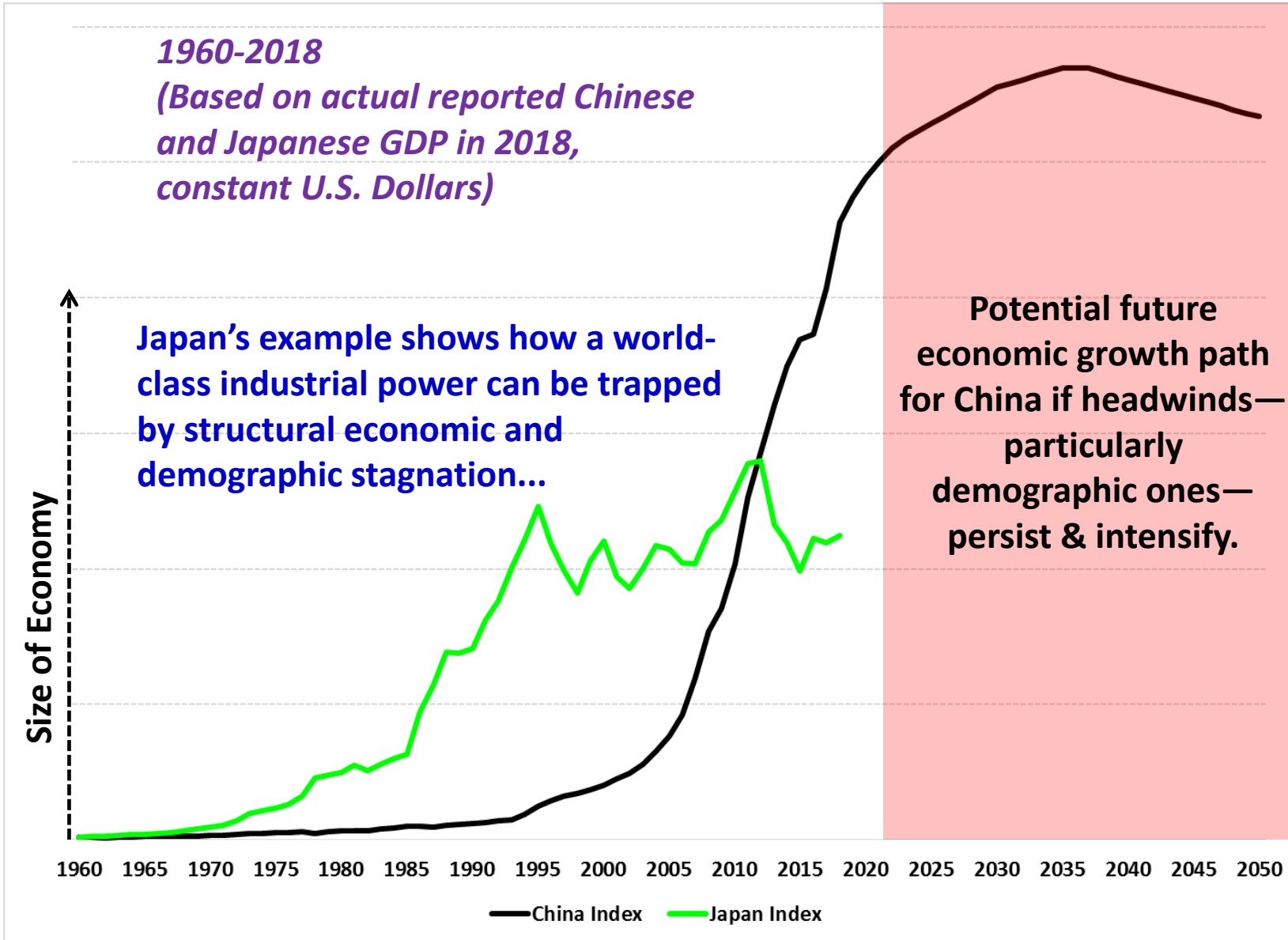
Source: JODI

Rail Freight Movement, Billion Tonne-Kilometers



Source: NBS China

China's Likely Overall Trajectory: "S-Curved" Slowdown



- 2035 = key time horizon for China's grand strategy goals & implementation.
- Great power development history + China's challenges suggest "Peak PRC" growth is already past.

Discussing the Spectrum of Actions Needed vis-à-vis China

Diplomatic

Information

Military

Economic



Need Both Teeth and Armor in Ample Measure

Expensive, active



Cheaper, passive



Source: Lockheed Martin

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Source: Dallas City News

Key Action Items for Accelerated Implementation

Bolster U.S. Strategic Credibility

- “Hands on” maritime security operations and cooperation with partner countries
- Reduce platform wear incurred in CENTCOM AOR
- Additional hardening and dispersion efforts for US bases in INDOPACOM AOR
- Dramatically expand munitions procurement
- Congressional appropriation of funding to accelerate shipbuilding, with objective of 355+ ship Navy by 2030.
- Major expansion of forward ship repair capabilities

Diplomatic/Economic

- Big new free trade deal
- Vaccine diplomacy
- Deploy Seabees and U.S. construction capabilities to enhance island nations and coastal areas with resilience challenges
- Publish annual “PRC Malign Activities Report”
- Publicize corrupt activities, foreign assets, business dealings of key PRC officials and close associates who are plausibly acting as their proxies.
- Provide advice to countries at risk of being entrapped by Belt and Road project loans
- De-link key supply chains from China to the maximum extent possible

Embrace Less-Orthodox Ideas

- F-15EX in maritime strike role
- Or as a hypersonic launch platform
 - *“The reason we went with ARRW was not that HCSW was bad, but ARRW is smaller; we can carry twice as many on the B-52, and it’s possible it could be on the F-15 ... It’s in the class to be able to fit on the centerline” station.*—Dr. Will Roper, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, 28 February 2020
- Produce additional P-8As or re-fit certain aircraft in fleet as hypersonic/standoff weapons carriers?
- ***Re-purposed commercial vessels as rapidly scalable, expendable, and lower cost “maritime trucks” for OTH strike systems such as RIM-174, MST***
- Maintain certain proportion of force that can fight “dumb and analog” in event adversary succeeds in disrupting networked comms.
- ***Leverage commercial ISR redundancy***—think Planet Labs + Ursa Space + ship tracking services + many other COTS. Not perfect, but limited SA much better than trying to operate blind. Adversary probably can’t shut down all COTS ISR options. Proprietary hypersonic drones can help close gaps and could even go Cold War redux to reduce cyber/satellite exposure—think mid-air film recovery.
- F-22 exports to Japan? Other cost-sharing?
- Operations to illustrate PRC’s tenuous hold on militarized reclaimed islands and sub-tidal features in SCS



Source: SXSW 2011 Lego Pile, flickr.com



Source: Christopher McGreevey (original photo), <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/21755/f-15sa-bristles-with-a-dozen-aim-120s-missiles-during-star-wars-canyon-run>

Semi-Kinetic Maritime Security Options

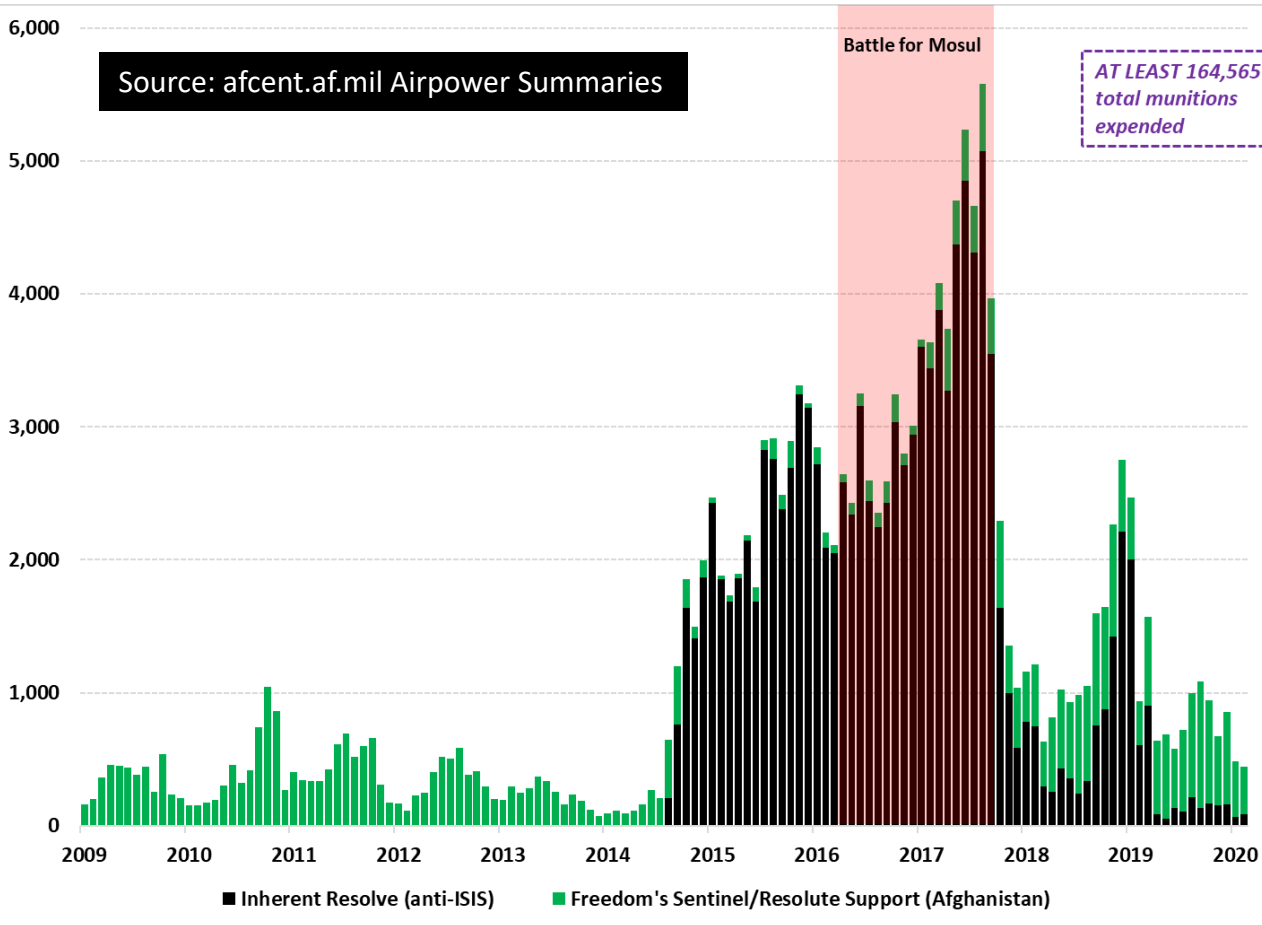
“Semi-Kinetic Operations” to Support Allies and Partners in Maritime Asia

Maritime Rights of Allies	“Definitive” U.S. Actions
Sovereign access to their offshore rocks and reefs.	Escort fishing vessels from allied nations. If necessary, use nonlethal means to protect them.
Sovereignty to fish within their own waters.	Escort fishing vessels from allied nations. If necessary, use nonlethal means to protect them.
Sovereignty to explore and exploit seabed resources in their own waters.	Escort fishing vessels from allied nations. If necessary, use nonlethal means to protect them.
Sovereignty to prevent poaching within their own waters.	Help allies arrest and charge Chinese poachers. Protect allies’ law enforcement vessels from Chinese harassment.
Sovereign right to prevent foreign theft of their seabed resources.	Help allies board Chinese ships and charge Chinese companies for operating illegally in allies’ waters. Protect allies’ law enforcement vessels from Chinese harassment.
Sovereignty to conduct military exercises in their own waters.	Conduct joint exercises with allies in their waters.

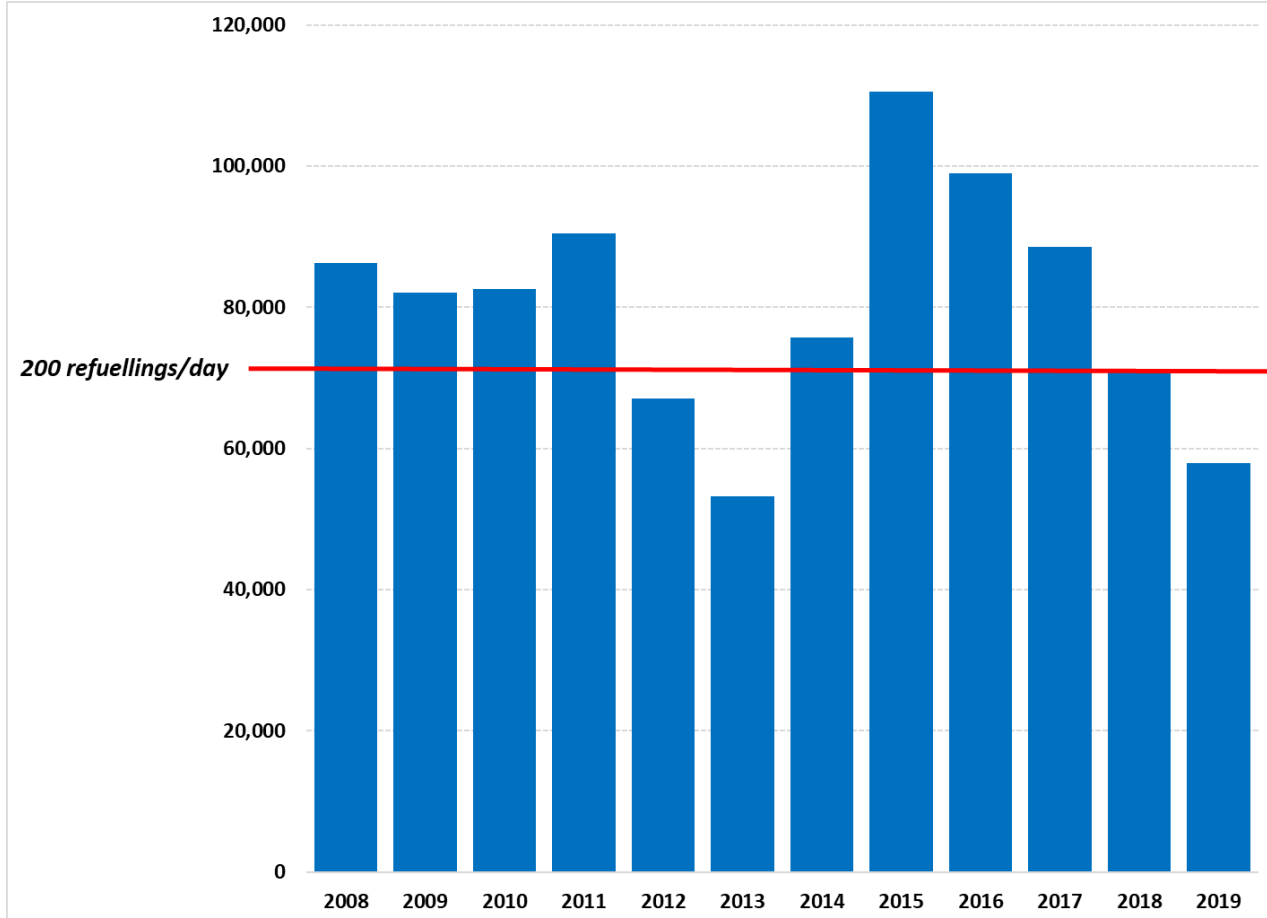
Strategic Prioritization

“Manage the Mileage” Key Platforms Are Incurring in Other AORs

US + Coalition Munitions Expended in CENTCOM AOR



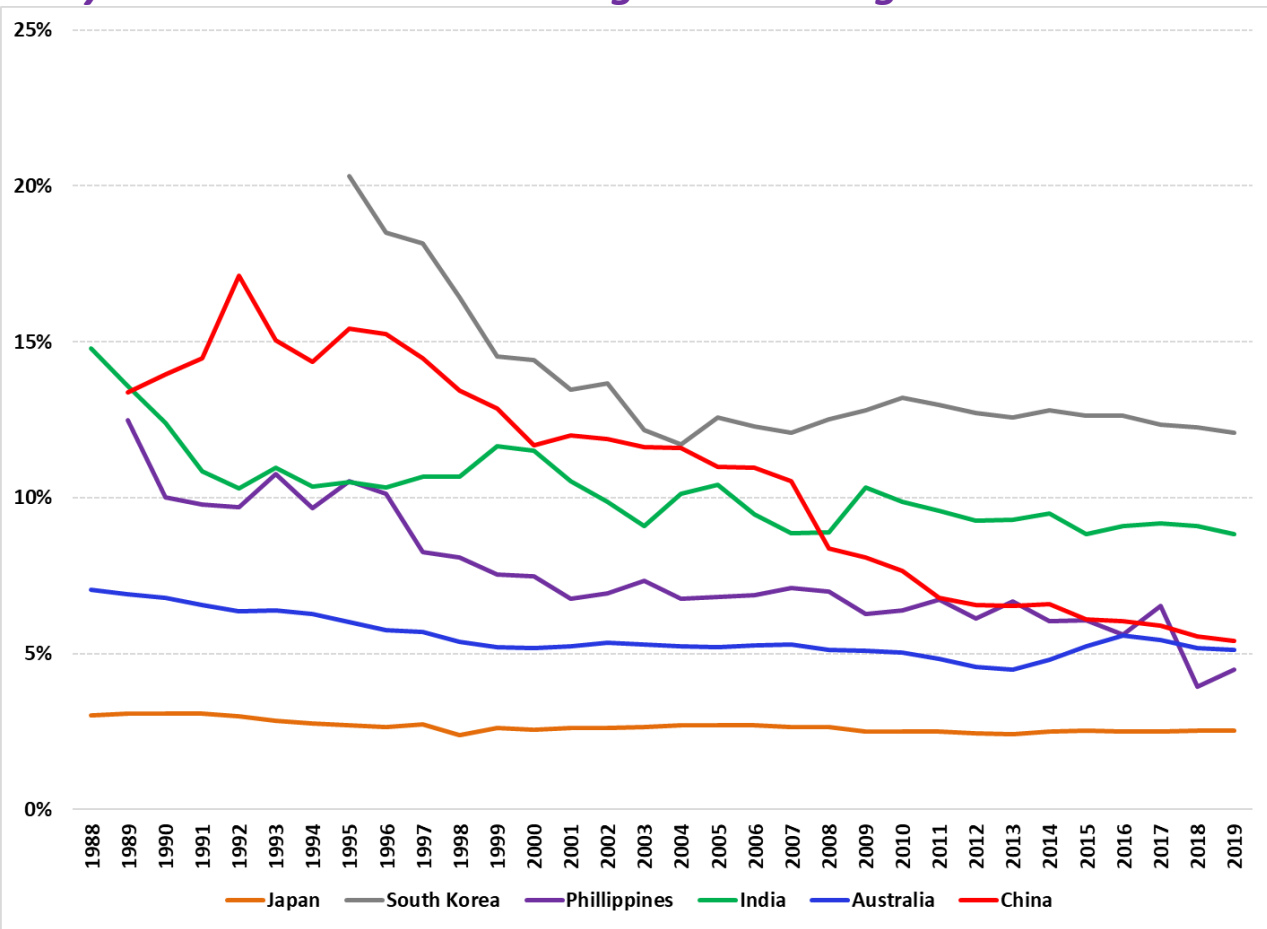
US + Coalition Aerial Refuellings in CENTCOM AOR



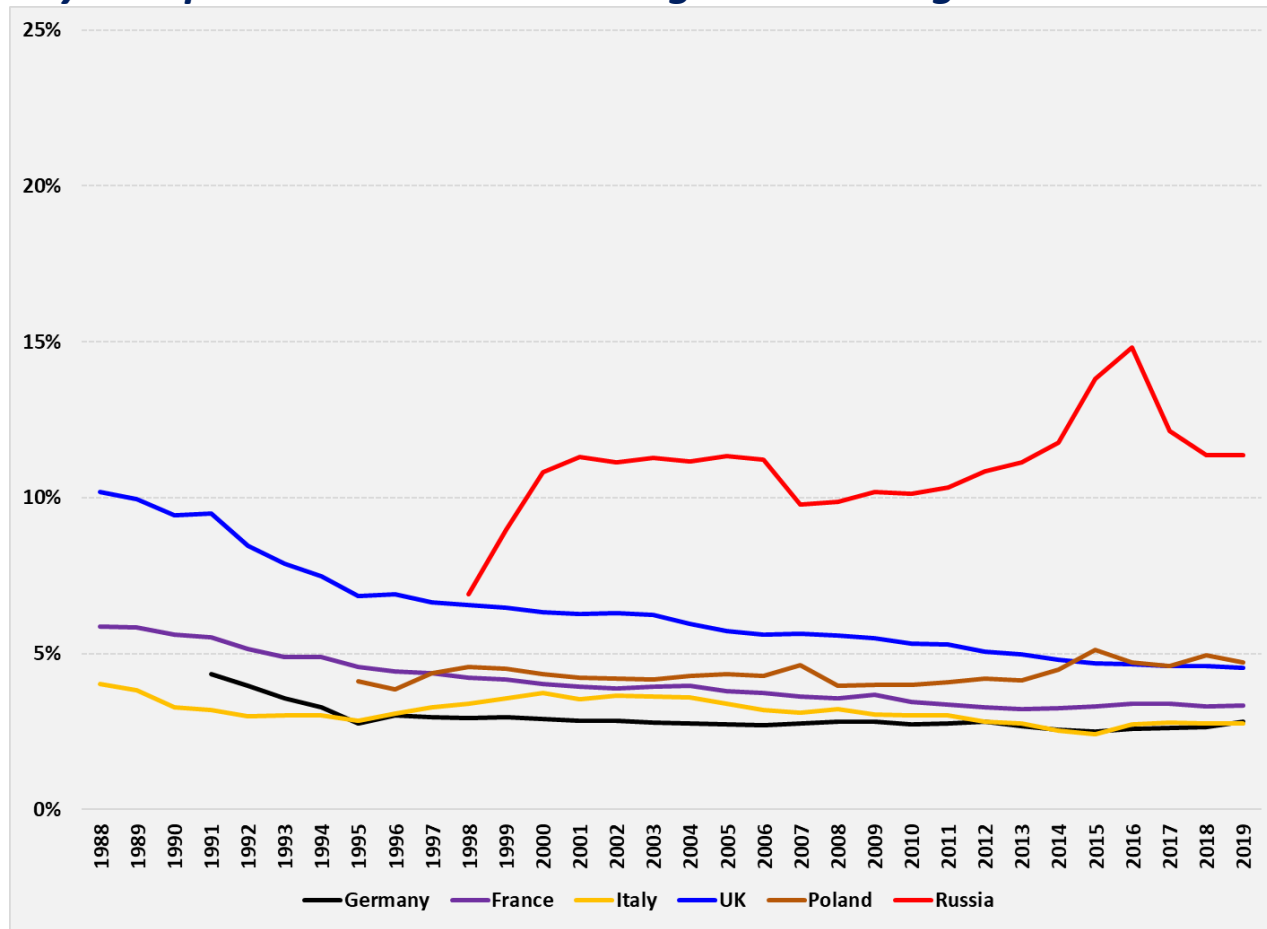
- In April 2019, the commanding general in charge of U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command noted that U.S. commitments in the Middle East “overextended” the B-1B Lancer bomber force and triggered premature maintenance.
- Such force readiness issues directly affect the U.S. posture and credibility in the Asia-Pacific, particularly when as in this case, they implicate hardware systems that would play a core role in potential East Asian contingencies.

Selected Partner Countries: Is Defense a Priority?

Key Asian Partners vs. the Regional "Pacing Threat"



Key European Partners vs. the Regional "Pacing Threat"



Source: SIPRI Milex dataset, Author's Analysis

This dataset also has significant implications for how the European and Pacific Deterrence Initiatives should compete for funding.

Basing

Focusing Principles: Chinese Power Projection Capabilities

China's Rocket Force

System	Launchers	Missiles	Estimated Range
ICBM	100	100	>5,500km
IRBM	200	200+	3,000-5,500km
MRBM	150	150+	1,000-3,000km
SRBM	250	600+	300-1,000km
GLCM	100	300+	>1,500km

Source: China Military Power Report



Source: The Drive



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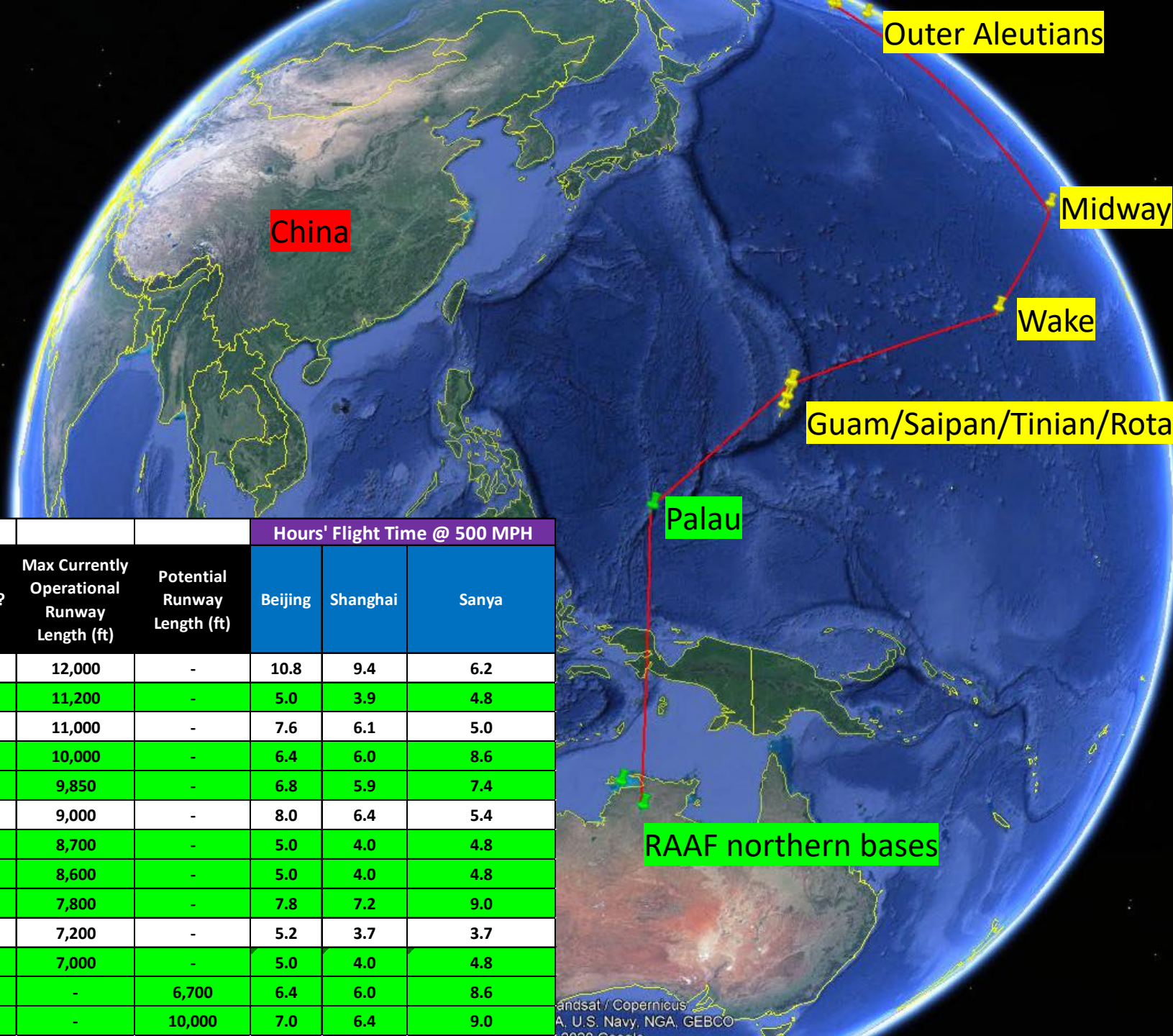
Source: dailymail.co.uk



Source: U.S. DoD



Source: wikimedia



Place	U.S. Territory?	Max Currently Operational Runway Length (ft)	Potential Runway Length (ft)	Hours' Flight Time @ 500 MPH		
				Beijing	Shanghai	Sanya
Diego Garcia	N	12,000	-	10.8	9.4	6.2
Guam (Andersen AFB)	Y	11,200	-	5.0	3.9	4.8
RAAF Darwin	N	11,000	-	7.6	6.1	5.0
Shemya (Alaska)	Y	10,000	-	6.4	6.0	8.6
Wake Island	Y	9,850	-	6.8	5.9	7.4
RAAF Tindal	N	9,000	-	8.0	6.4	5.4
Saipan	Y	8,700	-	5.0	4.0	4.8
Tinian	Y	8,600	-	5.0	4.0	4.8
Midway	Y	7,800	-	7.8	7.2	9.0
Palau	N	7,200	-	5.2	3.7	3.7
Rota	Y	7,000	-	5.0	4.0	4.8
Attu (Alaska, Casco Cove)	Y	-	6,700	6.4	6.0	8.6
Amchitka (Alaska)	Y	-	10,000	7.0	6.4	9.0

Dispersal + Unpredictability=Survival

The "Old" Threat to Bases



The "New" Threat to Bases



<https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/dong-feng-26-df-26/>



2014: Tinian



2016: Estonia



2018: Campbell/Dugway



2017: Hurlburt Field



2018: Wake Island



2020: Texas-to-Guam



2021: Texas-to-Norway



2021: Louisiana-to-Guam

Note that this is not showing multiple recent CONUS-to-CENTCOM deployments

Dispersed Operations: Places and Bases

Expeditionary Sea Bases: 2 commissioned, 1 delivered, 1 under construction, 1 under contract



Access to third-country territory within the Island Chains not assured, especially if regional players are hedging their bets early in a crisis or conflict

Total contract value for ESB-6 and ESB-7 could max out at \$1.63 billion



Next Steps For Dispersed Operations

- Publish images of B-1B/B-52 flights using Eareckson Air Station on Shemya in the Aleutians. Test hot pit refuelling.
- Construct hardened munitions igloos and fuel storage on Johnston Atoll, Kwajalein, Shemya, and potentially also Attu.
- Construct underground fuel storage on Shemya sufficient to sustain 30 days of high-intensity air operations.
- Test landing/refuelling/re-arming/takeoff of tactical air assets from all main US services using roadways and civilian airports in at least 5 distinct INDOPACOM locations



Source: Globalsecurity.org



Source: Shreveport Times



Source: af.mil

Munitions

Let The Missiles Do The Work

- ***“To defeat lower technology platforms, the Department is procuring additional 4th generation F/A-18E/F and the F-15EX aircraft, which nominally have lower operating costs when compared to 5th generation combat jets such as the F-22 and the F-35.”*** —FY2021 DoD Budget Request, Program Acquisition Cost by Weapon System, Page 6 [emphasis added]

Or, creative thinking + better munitions + updated legacy platforms = net increase in practical combat power

Quickstrike-ER



Source: CSIS (SM-6), USAF/Naval News(Quickstrike-ER), Raytheon (SM-6)

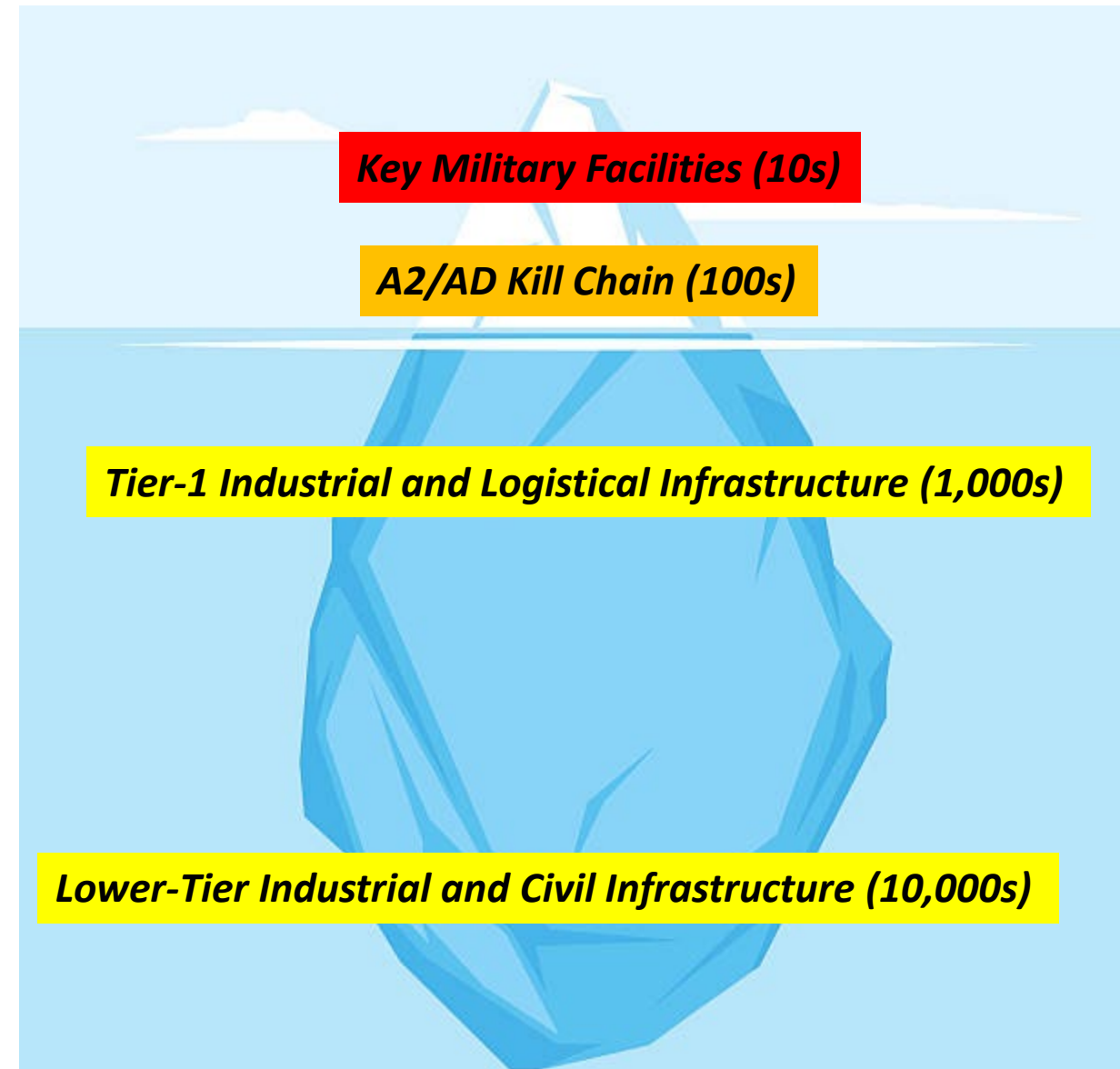
Standard SM-6



“We’re modifying the SM-6, so that in addition to missile defense, it can also target enemy ships at sea at very long ranges. This is a new anti-ship mode. It makes the SM-6 basically a twofer. Can shoot down airborne threats. And now you can attack and destroy a ship at long range with the very same missile.” —SECDEF Ash Carter, February 2016

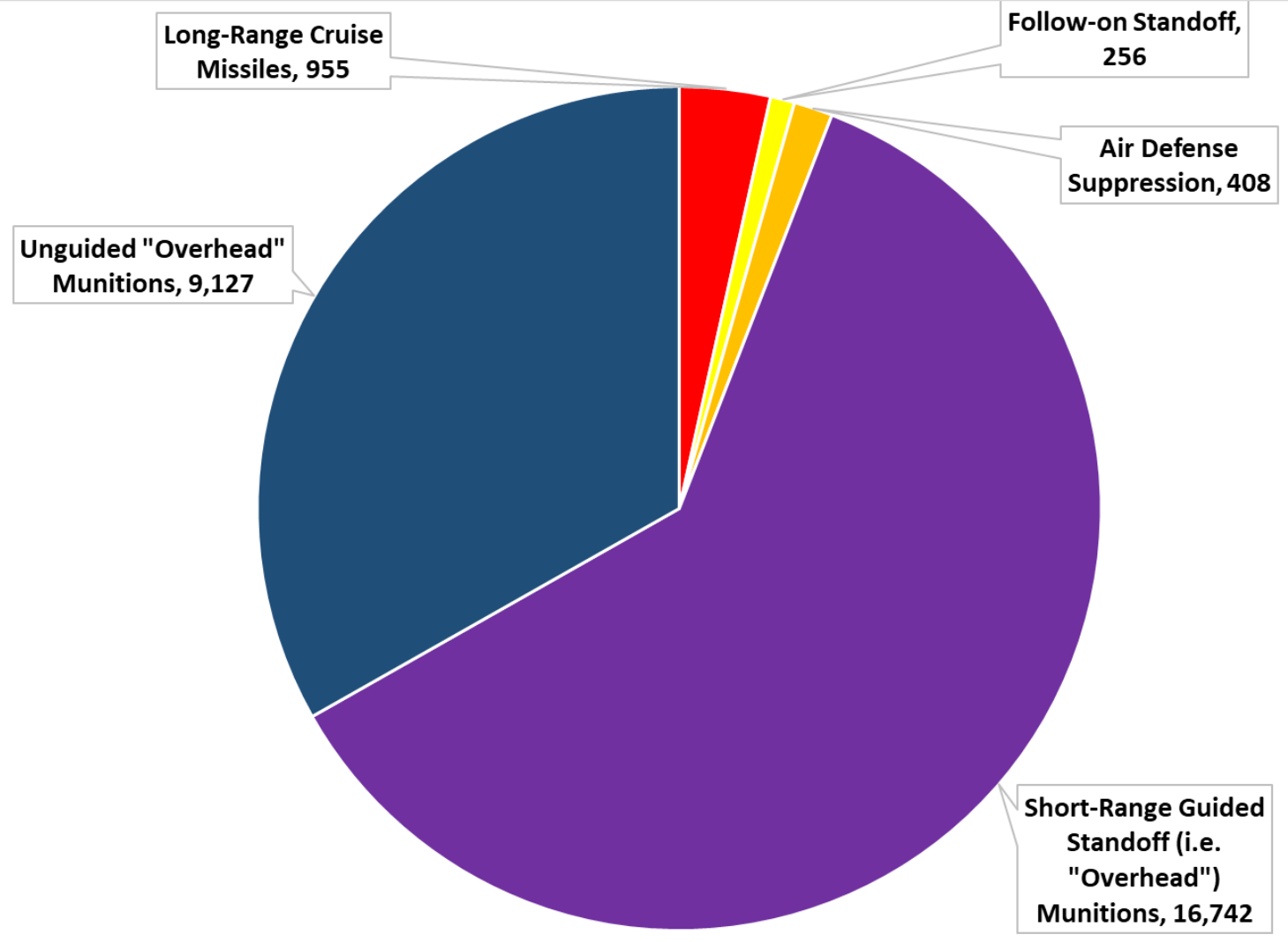
Potential Targets and Munitions Needs

- Bases/Key Military Facilities
- A2/AD suppression (Long range SAMs, ballistic missiles, Late Gen Strike Aircraft)
- Surface combatants (heavies and Type 056/Maritime Militia Vessels)
- Commerce interdiction
- Industrial and Logistical Infrastructure



Massive Munitions Needs for Credible Deterrence

U.S. Aerial Munitions Expenditure During Operation Iraqi Freedom Through 30 April 2003



• China is about 22 times physically larger than Iraq and has exponentially more military and strategic industrial and infrastructure points that might be targeted under various scenarios.



Combat in maritime East Asia would amplify demands, esp. for AAMs, ASCMs & torpedoes.

Source: US CENTAF

Avoiding Winchester: Supporting Data

Guided Munitions		Unguided Munitions		Gun Rounds	
Long-Range Standoff (200+ Miles)	Units Expended	M117	1,625	20MM	16,901
BGM-109 TLAM	802	MK-82	5,504	30MM	311,597
AGM-86 C/D CALCM	153	MK-83	1,692		
		MK-84	6		
Medium-Range Standoff (50-200 miles)	Units Expended	CBU-87	118		
AGM-154 JSOW	253	CBU-99	182		
AGM-84 SLAM-ER	3		9,127		
SEAD	Units Expended				
AGM-88	408				
Short-Range Standoff (less than 50 miles)	Units Expended				
AGM-65	918				
AGM-114	562				
AGM-130	4				
EGBU-27	98				
GBU-10	236				
GBU-12	7,114				
GBU-16	1,233				
GBU-24	23				
GBU-27	11				
GBU-28	1				
GBU-31	5,086				
GBU-32	768				
GBU-35	675				
GBU-37	13				

Unclassified

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM – By The Numbers
Assessment and Analysis Division

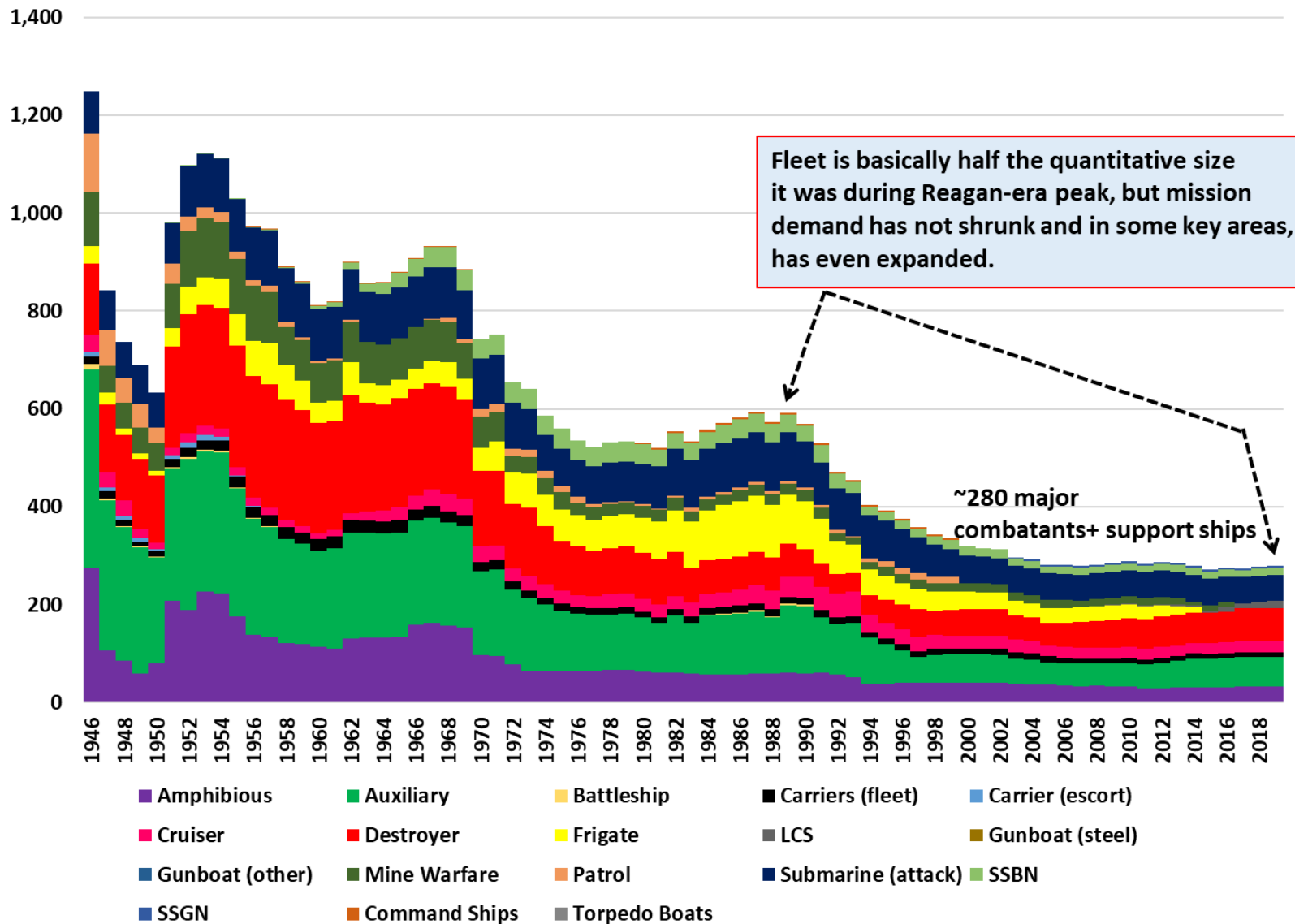


30 April 2003

Shipbuilding/Acquisition

US Fleet Has Shrunk—Mission Demand Has Not

Major Combatants and Auxiliaries in U.S. Fleet



Source: U.S. Navy, Author's Analysis

A Fleet without a Rudder

By Lieutenant (junior grade) Artem Sherbinin, U.S. Navy

October 2020 | Proceedings

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The Navy could soon deploy the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and *Theodore Roosevelt* carrier strike groups—again. The USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69) spent a record 206 consecutive days at sea during its last deployment. The USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN-71) made national headlines after a quarter of the 5,000 sailors on

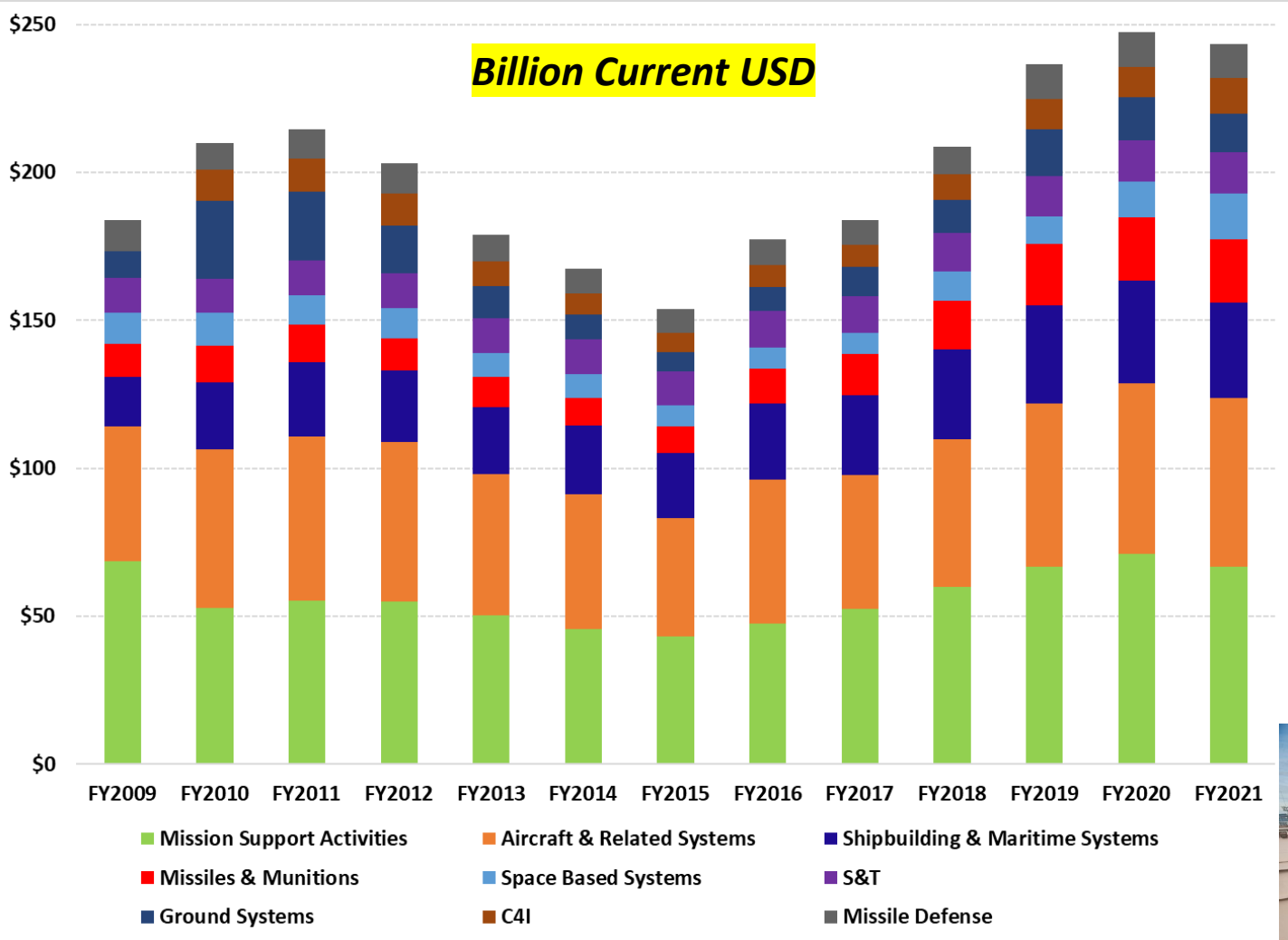
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USS John McCain, 2017. Source: CBS News

How Can USN Get to a 355+ Ship Fleet?

U.S. DoD Acquisition Budgets Are Not Pricing a Massive Fleet Build



Source: U.S Navy



Source: USNI



Source: Jane's

Source: U.S DoD, Author's Analysis

Repair and Regeneration

Defense Industrial Base: Repair

- *“The most dramatic demonstration of the importance of the mobile drydocks was given during the long drawn-out naval support of the invasion of Okinawa, when the fleet was subjected for weeks to continual and desperate “Kamikaze” attacks by Japanese suicide-bombers.”*
- *“The fleet suffered great damage, but the ready availability of the mobile drydocks at nearby advance bases, and the yeoman service rendered by their own crews and the ship repair components at these bases, save many ships and minimized the time ships were out of action for repairs, to such an extent that these docks may well have represented the margin between success and failure.”--Building the Navy's Bases in World War II, Volume I (Part II), Naval History and Heritage Command*

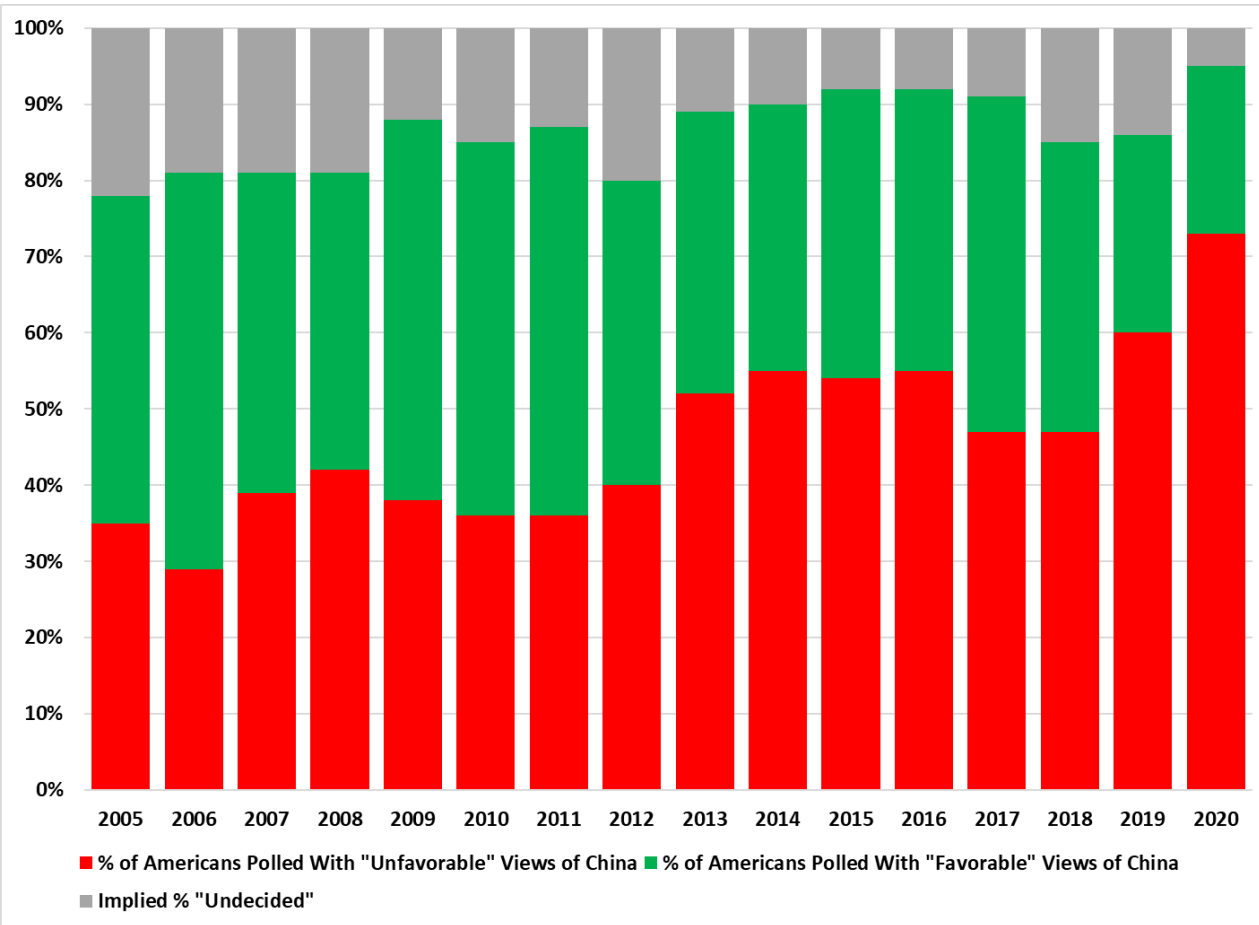
Apra Harbor, Guam (1945): USS ABSD-3 Large Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock repairing USS Pennsylvania after kamikaze attack.



The Home Front

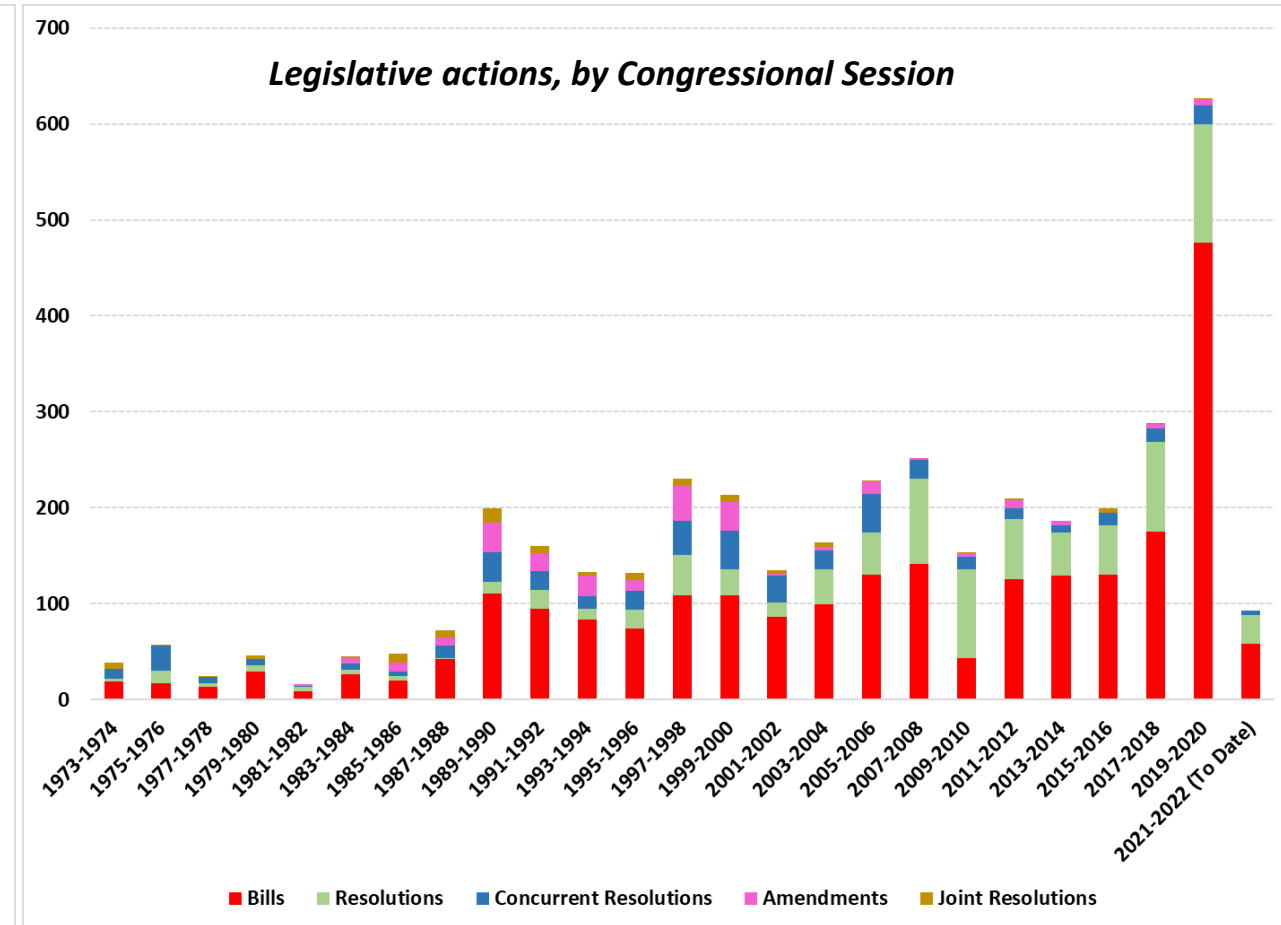
China Challenge Capturing Attention of American Public and Capitol Hill

U.S. Public's Increasingly Negative Views of China...



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Survey

...Are Translating Into Increased Legislative Activity



Source: Congress.gov, Author's Analysis

Priority Strategic Action Items That Are “Beyond PDI”

- Supply chain de-linking
 - Category 1: Anything that goes in American consumers’ bodies, esp. critical medications (antibiotics, antihypertensives, vaccines and components, etc.)
 - Category 2: Medical equipment and PPE
 - Category 3: Critical mineral inputs, including, but not limited to rare earths
 - Category 4: Key electronics components
- Federal procurement standards would create enormous leverage.

Thank you!

gbc3@rice.edu

<https://www.bakerinstitute.org/experts/gabe-collins/>