

according to Huang Xueping, spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Defense.³⁵

In this regard, the deployment signals a new measure of international cooperation for China, one that may generate sufficient goodwill to brighten prospects for deeper foreign military partnerships. To the extent that the 2000 Defense Authorization Act permits, American commanders may push for expanded bilateral ties with China or even suggest a strengthened trilateral (U.S.-Japan-China) or multilateral (i.e., Global Maritime Partnership) approach to continued naval cooperation and diplomacy.

Cooperation Despite Self-Interest?

We often conclude our courses at the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Naval War College by asking our students to look ahead 15 years. Students expect to witness a major Chinese maritime presence later in their careers, but they struggle to explain how such a transformation could materialize. They mention that China has dispatched more UN peacekeepers than any permanent member of the Security Council (more than 11,000 on 18 UN missions). But students have difficulty linking this to naval power.

That is because until December 2008, no maritime equivalent existed. It does now—and it could be the first of many blue-water patrols that may one day familiarize our students with their Chinese counterparts via bridge-to-bridge radio. If we welcome China's contributions to international maritime leadership and China reciprocates, our students may patrol the seas of a more secure and prosperous world. ✨

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