



U.S. NAVY (BRIAN G. REYNOLDS)

On 26 February, the *Los Angeles*-class attack submarine *USS Louisville* (SSN-724), moored next to the *USS Pasadena* (SSN-752), visits Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan. Chinese analysts have suggested that the capabilities of a future Type 095-class submarine might “be on par with the *Los Angeles*-class SSN.”

quieting, and more lethal weaponry. Whether it is the new supersonic ASCMs or the ability to strike the U.S. homeland with conventional missiles, there is little doubt that China’s emerging SSN force will constitute a major factor in shaping the future strategic balance in the Asia-Pacific. Indeed, this force is likely to play a prominent role in what one Chinese senior admiral recently termed the imperative to “develop plans for the active wielding of long-range power.”⁹

Today, a dangerous momentum is developing in the nascent undersea rivalry between China and the United States. A recent article in a Chinese naval-affiliated magazine surveying the U.S. Navy’s experience with tactical nuclear weapons may serve to remind us of the perilous course that rivalry could take.¹⁰ Indeed, the future Chinese SSN force may in the coming decades go well beyond symbolic triumphs (such as reaching the North Pole) to adopt a more threatening posture such as patrolling regularly in the Atlantic. Beijing could alleviate related tensions by further increasing transparency regarding the future dimensions of its nuclear submarine programs, which remain quite suspiciously shrouded in a fog of mystery. For its part, Washington should also attempt to ease the tensions fueling undersea rivalry, since the threat perception in China with respect to the U.S. Navy submarine force is now acute.¹¹ ✪

2007), 54. For current Department of Defense assessments of the Chinese submarine force, see *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China* (Washington DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 24 April 2014), www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_DoD_China_Report.pdf, 8.

3. 江雨 [Jiang Yu] “常规潜艇装备和作战效能的优劣辨析” [“Virtues and Defects of Conventional Submarines and Their Combat Effectiveness”], 舰载武器 [Shipborne Weapons], October 2014, 66–67.

4. 钱普 [Qian Pu], “常规潜艇vs攻击型核潜艇” [“Conventional Submarines versus Nuclear Attack Submarines”], 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships], July 2013, 38.

5. 邱贞玮 [Qiu Zhenwei], “中国需要什么样的攻击型核潜艇和巡航导弹核潜艇” [“What Kind of Nuclear Attack Submarine and Cruise Missile Nuclear Submarine Does China Need?”], 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships], January 2014, 75–77.

6. The information in the above three paragraphs is drawn from 小飞猎 [Xiao Fielie], “095型核潜艇会怎么样” [“Conjectures Upon the Chinese Navy’s Type 095 Nuclear-powered Submarine”], 舰载武器 [Shipborne Weapons], October 2014, 30–37. The graphics referenced above are from the front of the same magazine in the January and February 2014 issues.

7. Ibid. On U.S. Department of Defense Assessments, see *Annual Report to Congress*, 8.

8. “国产核潜艇与巡航导弹垂直发射装置” [“Indigenous Nuclear Submarines and Vertical Launch Systems for Cruise Missiles”], 现代舰船 [Modern Ships], October 2014, 36–41; *Annual Report to Congress*, 8.

9. 蒋伟烈 [Jiang Weilie, PLA Vice Admiral], “甲午海战的历史启示” [“Historical Implications of Naval Battles During the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95”], 中国军事科学 [China Military Science], March 2014, 59.

10. 汉斯克里斯滕森 [Hans Kristensen], “一个时代的终结: 美国海军战术核武器全部退役” [“An Era Comes to an End: US Navy Tactical Nuclear Weapons Have Been Completely Retired from Service”], 现代舰船 [Modern Ships], September 2013 A, 32–35. This is a translation of an article by Kristensen, an expert at the Federation of American Scientists.

11. See 邱贞玮 [Qiu Zhenwei], “美国核潜艇如何围堵中国” [“How US Nuclear Submarines Are Containing China”], 舰船知识 [Naval and Merchant Ships], July 2013, 28–31.

1. See “Indian Navy Headless as Chinese Nuclear Sub Prowls the Indian Ocean,” *Indian Defence*, 21 March 2014.

2. Paul H. B. Godwin, “China’s Emerging Military Doctrine: A Role for Nuclear Submarines?” in eds. Andrew Erickson, Lyle Goldstein, William Murray, and Andrew Wilson, *China’s Future Nuclear Submarine Force* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press,

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