

SOVIET MARITIME POLICY AND CHINA'S FAR SEAS OPERATIONS

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Preview

- Evolution of Soviet Union Maritime Defense Policy
 - Maritime Policy pre-1965
 - Maritime Navigation Policy 1958-1972
 - Maritime Navigation Policy in the mid-1960s
 - Navy Maritime Navigation Policy in 1973
 - Maritime Navigation Policy at UNCLOS III 1973-1975
 - Maritime Policy at UNCLOS III 1976-1982
 - Return to Common Interests in Navigation
- Chinese Maritime Defense Policy and Strategy
 - Navigation in and over the EEZ
 - Navigation in TS and Straits
 - PLA Navy
 - China's Military Strategy 2015
- Conclusions



Soviet Maritime Policy pre-1965

- Coastal defense...keep foreign ships far away
- In 1960s Soviet Union greatly expanded its naval, fishing and research capabilities
- Now a major maritime power with a need for unimpeded access to open waters far from home



Soviet Maritime Navigation Policy in the mid-1960s

- In run up to UNCLOS III began discussions with USA to promote freedom of navigation and overflight while limiting breadth of TS to 12 nm



Navy Maritime Navigation Policy in 1973

- Admiral of the Fleet Gorshkov promoted these ideas in a series of papers published in *Morskoi Sbornik*, under the title “Navies in War and in Peace: Some Problems in Mastering the World Ocean”
- He expanded on it in “Sea Power and the State” in 1976



Maritime Navigation Policy at UNCLOS III 1973-1975

- Soviet Union strongly supported limiting breadth of TS, a regime for transit passage through straits used for international navigation, and freedom of the seas
- So did the United States



Soviet Maritime Policy at UNCLOS III 1976-1982

- Having achieved these goals, during remaining sessions of UNCLOS III, Soviet and US cooperation reduced as interests in the other issues diverged



Return to Common Interests in Navigation

- Changes in Soviet domestic legislation from 1983
- Joint Statement on Innocent Passage (1989)
- Maritime Doctrine of 2001 until 2020
 - Based on treaties to which Russia is party
 - Implemented for Arctic in 2008 and 2012



Chinese Maritime Defense Policy

- Navigation in and over the EEZ
 - In 1973 China proposed navigation and overflight should not be prejudiced in the economic zone
 - 1998 EEZ law provides similar rights as in article 58(1) of the LOS Convention
 - In practice right of foreign ships and aircraft are not recognized



Chinese Maritime Defense Policy (2)

- Navigation in TS
 - Since 1973 China has maintained that foreign non-military ships have the right of innocent passage while denying that right to warships and other government ships
 - UNCLOS III expressly rejected this distinction
 - Article 17 of LOS Convention provides the right of innocent passage applies “to ships of all States”
- Navigation in Straits
 - In 1973 China urged that the waters of straits were part of the TS
 - Article 34(1) of LOS Convention so provides



PLA Navy

- Coastal defense mission from 1971
- By 2013 largest force of major combatants, submarines and amphibious ships in Asia
 - 77 major surface combatants
 - > 60 submarines
 - 55 amphibious ships
 - ~ 85 missile-equipped small combatants
- Conducted Far Seas Operations since 2008

China's Navy Navigates Global Expansion

Before Adm. Wu took office in 2006, China's navy primarily operated near the country's coast. Since then, Adm. Wu has overseen an expansion of China's naval operations across the globe.



1 Gulf of Aden, Dec. 2008
Deployed naval ships off Africa for first time in 600 years to join antipiracy patrols

2 Libya, Feb. 2011
Conducted first naval operation in the Mediterranean to help evacuate Chinese nationals from Libya

3 Dalian, May 2012
Commissioned its first aircraft carrier

4 Daiyu/Senkaku Islands, Jan. 2013
A naval ship directed fire-control radar at a Japanese destroyer near the disputed islands

5 Philippine Sea, Oct. 2013
Ships and planes conducted their largest-ever open ocean drills

6 Malacca Strait, Dec. 2013
Sent a nuclear submarine to the Indian Ocean for the first time

7 Sunda Strait, Feb. 2014
A task force traversed this to conduct China's first naval drills south of Indonesia

8 Hawaii, June 2014
Naval ships made debut at the U.S.-led Rim of the Pacific exercises

9 Spratly Islands, Sept. 2014
Adm. Wu went to inspect several artificial islands China is building

10 Hainan, 2015
The Pentagon expects China to launch its first patrol by a fully armed nuclear-missile submarine

Sources: Office of Naval Intelligence (pre-2006 operational areas); Chinese state media; Ministry of Defense; the Pentagon; U.S. and Asian military officials

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Long Serving Navy Chiefs

Admiral Sergei G. Gorshkov



CINC Soviet Navy
1956-1985

Admiral Wu Shengli



CINC PLA Navy
2006-2017



China's Military Strategy 2015

- Elaborates on China's aspirations toward a blue-water navy and increased Chinese naval presence outside China's national waters
- Forecasts move from "offshore waters defense" to combination of "offshore waters defense" with "open seas protection"
- PLA armed forces to protect China's maritime rights and interests
- PLAN will maintain a military presence in relevant sea lanes



Conclusions

- Soviet blue water capabilities and defense needs led Admiral Gorshkov to change maritime defense policy from coastal defense to freedom of navigation and overflight
- Russia has maintained that policy
- Increase in PLAN capabilities and of distant water fishing and research fleets have led to Far Seas Operations
- Will China change policy as Russia has? China's new military strategy suggests it should take advantage of LOS Convention legal regimes for navigation and overflight, and not be inconsistent or try to change the regime which is overwhelmingly favorable to new military strategy
- Nations act in own self-interest