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The steady growth of China's military power

China's armed forces are steadily catching up with their US counterpart. According to the Military Balance 2018 report, produced by the IISS (International Institute of Strategic Studies), a combination of foreign acquisitions and domestic innovation have led to a huge push in modernizing the Chinese military.

In the air, this includes the Chengdu J-20 combat aircraft entering service in 2020, which means the US losing its monopoly on stealth aircraft. Meanwhile, its PL-15 extended-range air-to-air missile system will be equipped with active electronically scanned array (AESA) active and passive seeker—a technology very few other nations possess.

The Chinese navy regularly makes headlines by expanding its defensive perimeter outward throughout artificial islands in the South China Sea. Over the last 15 years it has been updating its naval vessels, especially in the area of submarines and anti-ship cruise missiles and built more corvettes, destroyers, frigates and submarines than Japan, India and South Korea combined.

China is also on course to deploy greater quantities of missiles with greater ranges than the systems that could be employed by the US Navy. China is on track to have at least: a quantitative parity, if not a superiority, in surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs); a parity in missile launch cells, and a quantitative inferiority only in multi-mission land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs).

Additionally, the Chinese are developing fifth-generation aircraft, the J-20 and J-31, which are said to rival the US F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, that has started being deployed with the US Marines' amphibious assault ships.

China has a large number of space assets, including 70 military satellites used for communications, navigation, positioning and timing, meteorology, and electronic and signals intelligence.

Moreover, China sees the US's reliance on GPS technology and space assets as a weakness, and has developed anti-satellite capabilities, such as directed-energy weapons, satellite jammers, and anti-satellite missiles.

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