

Conflict Update Day 384

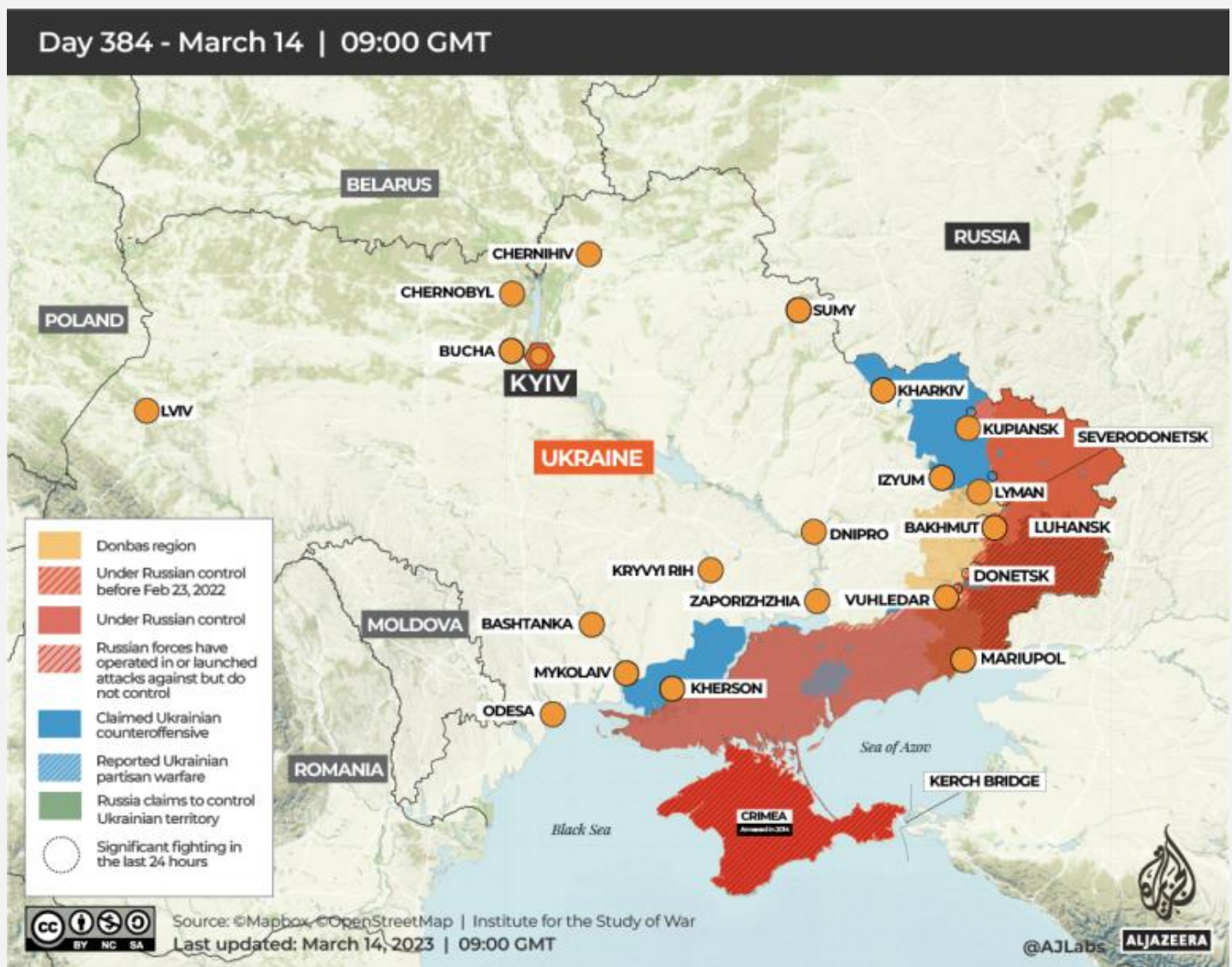
March 14th, 2023

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 160,540 (+740) soldiers killed, 3,484 (+10) enemy tanks, 6,789 (+15) armored combat vehicles, 2,519 (+16) artillery systems, 495 (2) MLRS systems, 260 (+1) air defense systems, 304 (+0) warplanes, 289 (+0) helicopters, 2,120 (+11) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 907 (+0) cruise missiles, 18 (+0) warships/cutters, 5,367 (+13) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 239 fuel bowsers (+0) and 256 (+5) units of equipment.

Key Takeaways



The Nazi message – Putin and the Kremlin continually relay the message that their Ukrainian “special military operation” is geared to, among other objectives, defeating “Nazi’s”

We all know there are no Nazis in Ukraine, as does Putin and his upper echelons of power. So why does he make this statement?

Because it rings a very loud bell, it resonates personally and extremely well collectively in small town Russia, particularly in western and central regions of the Federation.

During WWII Nazi execution squads followed German armies into war areas, incrementally advancing from western to central Russia, rounding up and mass executing hundreds of thousands of Russian citizens in areas vacated by conventional Berlin armies marching east – clearing the way for Hitler’s desired “Lebensraum” for an expanding German Empire. These peoples were Untermensch – “sub-human” – and could be exterminated en masse, was the Nazi message.

These terrible experiences live long in Russian memory, and so they should, and should forever, as in the Holocaust.

Putin is using this horrific collective and personal memory to his advantage.

Every Russian family in western and central small town Russia has forefathers and mothers who experienced the horrors of these Nazi extermination squads and camps. First the squads rounded up Jewish citizens, then teachers, professional officers and anyone identified as a risk to their invasion, and executed them en masse.

Men, women, children, the infirm – all executed unceremoniously and indiscriminately. Then the squads pursued the remaining population, clearing out area after area for Hitlerian advancement.

Now the Kremlin returns and tells them “the Nazi’s” are back and they are in Ukraine, ready to return here again.

The Kremlin, by outlawing any independent or neutral news commentary, has ensured their message in unadulterated and clear – we have a problem, a “Nazi problem.”

This “Nazi” message resonates exceptionally well in these communities, conjuring memories of horrific days gone by.

A cynical but extremely manipulative and successful message from Putin and his henchmen and women. He broadcasts the message at every opportunity and State TV channels amplify the rhetoric and disinformation – en masse!.

Russian fighters collide with US drone, force it down close to Ukraine - Russian fighter jets collided with the rear propeller of an unmanned U.S. military drone (pictured below) earlier this morning, forcing the U.S. to bring down the drone into the waters off the Black Sea close to Ukraine, U.S. officials said.

U.S. European Command labeled the incident as "dangerous" and miscalculation and unintended escalation."

"At approximately 7:03 AM (CET), aircraft struck the forces to have to international said in a statement.



said it could "lead to

one of the Russian Su-27 propeller of the MQ-9, causing U.S. bring the MQ-9 down in waters," U.S. European Command

"Several times before the collision, the Su-27s dumped fuel on and flew in front of the MQ-9 in a reckless, environmentally unsound and unprofessional manner," it added.

EUCOM said the incident "demonstrates a lack of competence in addition to being unsafe and unprofessional." The incident is apparently the latest in what EUCOM labeled a "a pattern of dangerous actions by Russian pilots while interacting with U.S. and Allied aircraft over international airspace, including over the Black Sea."

Containment

Ukraine just got a new type of weapon that could change everything - The US has finally supplied the Ukrainian Air Force with a guided air-to-surface bomb that will change how Ukraine attacks invading Russian forces.

Speaking at the African Air Chiefs Symposium, U.S. Air Force General James Heckler said Ukrainian forces have been supplied with a new type of precision munition that would give them some extended range and capabilities.

“The complete JDAM kit consists of a new tail, which contains a GPS-assisted inertial navigation system (INS) guidance system, and strakes that go elsewhere along the bomb body giving it a limited ability to glide to its designated target.”

Comments, Updates, Developments and Reports

Florida Governor de Santis - Ron DeSantis says America should stop protecting Ukraine, the New York Times reported Monday evening. The Florida governor's capitulation to Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion puts him in league with what conservative writer Kimberley Strassel called the "G.O.P.'s surrender caucus," which includes former President Donald Trump, who declared last week he had no problem letting Russia "take over" parts of Ukraine. DeSantis delivered his isolationist position in a statement Monday evening on conservative firebrand Tucker Carlson's TV show.

"While the U.S. has many vital national interests," which include "securing our borders, addressing the crisis of readiness with our military, achieving energy security and independence, and checking the economic, cultural, and military power of the Chinese Communist Party," the Harvard-trained former lawyer said "becoming further entangled in a territorial dispute between Ukraine and Russia is not one of them."

His anti-Ukraine position aligns him with Trump and the far-right GOP, which makes sense as DeSantis is widely expected to announce his presidential candidacy soon. Other top Republicans, like Mitch McConnell, Mike Pence, and Nikki Haley, e.g., are strong public supporters of Ukraine, its territorial integrity, and its democratic independence. Not so with DeSantis, who previously supported Ukraine's defense against Russia when it was more politically convenient— as a June 2015 interview with CNN shows.

Comment – Aside from the Idiot's Guide to Geopolitical Stupidity, one must wonder what influence the Putin government has with politicians the world over, those looking to protect his aggressive designs becoming all too conspicuous.

I understand nationalist politics and the modern glide in this direction, but there needs to be a blend, a realization if not a visualization of the global environ, the “Great Game,” and how a country fits into this wider scenario.

Does this governor not have any appreciation of the wider and extremely negative impact on our and the western way of life of a successful Russian campaign in eastern Europe and Central Asia, coupled with the adversarial Chinese goal of an alienated global world order.

As Liz Cheney said earlier today “Weakness is provocative.”

Does he not read, because if he did, he would see the latest move of China brokering a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran as precipitous, that the Middle Eastern nation is about to enter this new bi-polar Chinese/Russian-led global world order? Does he not appreciate the geopolitical impact of such a realignment by one of America's strategic allies?

What is it with a retired US general and an active French politician having dinner and consorting with Putin in Moscow and being either paid by him or receiving funds from him? Of an active American political consultant working against Ukraine in favor of pro-Putin Yanukovych? Of an active US politician whose first campaign was managed – gratis – by

the same openly pro-Russian manager assisting Yanukovich, coming out in favor of a Russian-favored ending to its illegal invasion of its smaller neighbor whilst ignoring the message of supportive condolence to an authoritarian international predator?

What is it about these folk that they support a Russian success? What do Putin and Xi know that we don't?

'Forcible transfer': Orphans from Ukraine 'taken' by Russia - Thousands of children have been transferred to Russia or occupied territories, says Human Rights Watch report.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had "devastating" consequences for children in residential institutions with thousands transferred to occupied territories or into Russia, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

In the report released yesterday, the watchdog also said the war highlighted the urgent need for reform in Ukraine, which had more than 105,000 children in institutions before the invasion, the largest number in Europe after Russia.

"This brutal war has starkly shown the need to end the perils faced by children who were institutionalized," said Bill Van Esveld, associate children's rights director at the New York-based organisation.

"Returning children who were illegally taken by Russian forces should be an international priority," he added.

Thousands of children have been transferred to Russia or occupied territories, according to the report.

"Human Rights Watch has documented Russia's forcible transfer of children from Ukrainian residential institutions. Inter-country adoption is prohibited during armed conflict; the forcible transfer of civilians from occupied territory is a war crime."

It added 100 institutions housing more than 32,000 children before 2022 are now in territory under Russian occupation.

Russian UN Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya rebuffed allegations, calling them "unfounded", and accused the West of trying to besmirch his country.

He said what was labelled "filtration" was simply registering people coming to Russia.

"As far as we can judge similar procedures are applied in Poland and other countries of the European Union against Ukrainian refugees," he told the Security Council in September.

He added more than 3.7 million Ukrainians, including 600,000 children, have gone to Russia or Russian-controlled separatist areas in eastern Ukraine, but they "aren't being kept in prisons".

Putin & Russia

Russia maintains that it can only achieve its goals in Ukraine by military means - Russian authorities have stressed that, for the time being, they can only achieve their objectives in Ukraine by military means, thus justifying once again the "special military operation" on Ukrainian territory, a euphemism with which Moscow refers to the invasion.

"For us, the absolute priority remains and will always remain the achievement of the set goals. Now they can only be achieved by military means," Kremlin spokesman Peskov said Monday, according to the Russian news agency TASS.

In fact, Peskov warned that Moscow does not consider that in Ukraine there are "prerequisites" for the transition to a "peaceful course", ruling out for the moment the creation of a contact group to move towards peace.

Comment – Once again, one has to read between the lines. There is an increasing rate of rhetoric emanating from Moscow with all sorts of vitriol. Why the increase? – Is it because they are prepping for something they know will not go their way?. Preparing the ground for some eventuality or other they see looming ever-larger?.

"All able-bodied and taken away." Almost all the men from the Siberian village were sent to war - In the Trans-Baikal village of Elizavetino (45 kilometers from Chita), there are three cemeteries for 700 inhabitants: one at the entrance to the village, the second is called Tatarsky by locals (in the last century, settlers were buried there), and the third is Olengui (the Olengui river flows past the cemetery).

Here, in October last year, 24-year-old contract soldier Alexander Nepomnyashchikh, who died in Ukraine, was buried. Places for the next graves are already ready nearby - in the fall, according to the Elizabethans, almost all men of draft age were mobilized from the village.

A small private house on Central Street: Elena Nepomnyashchikh lives here with her husband, these are the parents of Alexander (Sasha) Nepomnyashchikh.

"The apple had nowhere to fall at parting," Elena recalls, "I remember how a representative of the military unit to which Sasha was assigned squeezed through all this crowd of people who came to say goodbye. He told how his son died. The fire took over when his comrades retreated. Wounded in the head, doctors could not save him.

Sasha signed a contract last spring and immediately sent to war. Prior to that, he worked in the rural fire department.

"I don't know why he went on a contract," Elena says, "He has a one-year-old child, his wife. The contract ended first, and he was shell-shocked then. He returned, and then signed a second time.

The Kremlin and its offices in these communities convey the message that soldiers are being recruited to fight the "Nazi's," cynically dredging up horrific memories of German Nazi extermination squads in WWII. These Russian communities suffered terribly at the hands of these execution squads and will never forget their forefathers' experiences.

Now Moscow is telling them that the "Nazi's" are back again. "Come and fight them or they will come here."

The Siberian village of Elizavetino was founded at the beginning of the century before last by decree of Emperor Paul I. In 1917, the first store appeared in the village, then a nursery and a first-aid post, in 1932 the Elizabethan commune "Forward Grain Grower" began to work, by the middle of the 20th century it turned into the largest state farm in the region "Olenguisky", where residents of all three villages worked: Elizavetina, Aleksandrovka and Verkh-Narym. Now there is almost no work in the village, every weekday the Elizabethans go to work to Chita, and even further.

Interested in mobilization? They took the guys from Elizavetin and from Verkh-Narym ... It's not far from us, we consider ourselves one settlement. Consider all able-bodied and taken away.

"There is really no work in the village, except perhaps in the forestry and in social institutions," says Olga, a school security guard. - Salaries are small, and prices in the village are higher than in the city. With medicine, the same problem: the only hospital was closed. Now cattle graze in its place. Young people from the village are leaving. And who was, almost all of them were taken away. Well, here you better ask the director, she will tell you more.

Comment – This article is gleaned from an independent Russian news outlet with Siberian-slanted origin and reporting.

When viewing the final paragraph, one can see why young men enlist, low salaries, limited number of employment opportunities and a poor people's environment with a broken-down hospital (pictured below), cattle grazing in city areas and literally hopeless. Joining the Russian military is a way out for young men to support their families and settlements.

The Kremlin knows this and exploits it to national advantage.

Returning bodies of fallen members of their societies are buried at their own cost, but buried nonetheless because of their strong religious and societal beliefs.

But the message is they are not happy, but that is as far as it goes. They do not have ready access to the Internet and do not have social media connections as do teenagers in the western world and in the more populated cities of the Russian Federation.

They do not have the means to collectively understand the disastrous social impact the Ukrainian invasion is having on far-flung Federation regions and communities in small-town Russia. They see everything in isolation, limited to what they are told by their government and what they hear from returnees from the front.



We talk about the Russian “Main Street” but this is the Russian “Back Alley.”

Impacts such as Sasha’s death are happening all across distant Russian Federation provinces and oblasts, its just that no-one is, from local perspectives, cumulating the date and illuminating - spotlighting - the wider and disastrous effects it has on “Back Alley” towns and their wider communities.

This is the Russia that nobody ever sees.

This is the Russia that the Kremlin exploits because they know they can control all negative fallout from locals dying in their Ukrainian invasion.

This is the Russia Putin will continue to exploit because he is afraid of transferring the high and fatal impact of his mobilization from “Back Alley” to “Main Street” Russia.

Because there – in Main Street Russia – he will meet far more resistance.

From authoritarianism to totalitarianism: How the war has changed Russia - When Putin invaded Ukraine, he expected a quick victory. His failure transformed the Kremlin’s main task from managing his re-election in 2024 to mobilizing Russia’s human and material resources to win a major war of aggression. This fundamental policy shift has breached long-standing Kremlin agreements with both Russian society and Russia’s elites. It is also straining the resources needed to fight the war and maintain domestic control.

Before the war, the regime struck a clear authoritarian bargain with the population: stay out of politics and the state will leave you alone. Despite a decade-long decline in real incomes, this remained a compelling proposition for most Russians, especially as repression grew more severe.

The war has led to even greater repression. Opposition politics and independent media are effectively outlawed. Laws criminalize even the mention of “war” with up to 15 years in prison.

Online censorship and surveillance, including the use of software to identify those who post anonymously, have intensified.

But the biggest change is one not of degree but of kind: the regime now seeks not to demobilize the population from politics but to mobilize it behind the war.

This demand for active support, not merely acquiescence, marks a fundamental shift from authoritarianism to totalitarianism. State media and the Orthodox Church now serve up a vitriolic and hysterical diet of wartime propaganda, while educational facilities inculcate such messaging in the nation's youth. The militarization of Russian society is underway.

Despite public (sometimes shrilly) expressions of support, there are few signs of genuine mass enthusiasm for the war. Escalating repression suggests the Kremlin lacks confidence the war is - or will remain - popular.

The fact that the regime began the September 2022 "partial mobilization" of over 300,000 conscripts so late and kept it so short shows the state's sensitivity to public anxiety. Even in this repressive environment, the Kremlin's internal polling suggests that a majority of the population now favors peace talks.

Elite opinion matters more than public opinion in Russia. The regime needs elites to fulfill essential functions, and the elites, in turn, are better placed to protect their interests than ordinary citizens. Their pre-war bargain was obedience in return for relative wealth and security, including the ability to travel and send their money and families to the West.

By decisively subordinating stability and prosperity to geopolitical obsession, the war has broken this agreement too.

State control over the economy is growing as it moves toward a war footing and businesses come under pressure to produce materiel for the war effort. Sanctions are harming economic growth, disrupting supply chains, and have cut off Russia's elites from the West. The domestic business environment is becoming more unpredictable and violent. Armed crime has risen by 30%.

Some elites, notably the siloviki, have internalized Putin's justification for the invasion. Politicians express public support by visiting the front lines in order to advance their careers, but a large part of the elite has been unhappy with the war from the start despite continuing to work for the system that launched it.

More informed and less susceptible to propaganda than the general public, but also subjected to growing surveillance, Russia's elites continue to work for the regime out of fear and, in some cases, a conviction that they are serving the people rather than the regime.

The war strains Russia's resources. Real incomes are falling; Russia has just recorded its second-highest budget deficit since the break-up of the Soviet Union; and nearly a million citizens, many highly educated, have fled the country.

At the same time, war-fuelled federal spending rose by 58.7% over the past year. Nearly one-third of the federal budget now goes on defense and domestic security. Reflecting these difficulties, much economic data has been classified.

As the regime is more concerned about defeat in Ukraine than domestic instability, it will continue fighting the war by demanding even more of its people while offering them steadily less. But to avoid provoking a dangerous adverse reaction it will, where possible, calibrate resource mobilization — habituating the population to the war and preparing the ground for further escalation.

The war has made Russia more repressive, intrusive, secretive, and isolated from the West, as well as poorer. In all these ways, it increasingly resembles the Soviet Union. But three differences suggest that Russia will find it harder to manage the stresses that war imposes.

Firstly, for all its repression, the state is still less controlling than in Soviet times. There is no ruling party to penetrate and monitor every institution (though the Federal Security Service is a functional equivalent) and no coherent ideology to legitimate the regime. And while the state's role has deepened, private ownership remains the basis of the economy.

Secondly, for all its isolation, Russia is still more open to the outside world than the Soviet Union ever was. Russians can access the internet — including, with a VPN, blocked websites — and can for the most part leave the country without difficulty. Curtailing these freedoms would be the obvious next step. The war has also stoked unprecedented public infighting, albeit within limits defined by Putin, among siloviki structures. Even state television propaganda shows occasionally air views critical of the war.

Thirdly, Russia is much weaker in relation to the West than the Soviet Union was during the Cold War. As former finance minister Mikhail Zadornov recently noted, the West's resources are "incomparable." If the West grants Ukraine the means to win the war, the contest will be very unequal.

In short, Russia's capacity to mobilize and indoctrinate its citizens is weaker, and the resources it needs are greater than those of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Against this background, Putin has launched the country's most costly aggression since the 1939–40 Winter War against Finland. There are no signs yet that the Kremlin's breaking of key social contracts is bringing the system close to crisis. But the strains it faces will deepen.

Article by Nigel Gould-Davies in the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

China

China to raise retirement age to deal with aging population - China is planning to raise its retirement age gradually and in phases to cope with the country's rapidly aging population, the state-backed Global Times said on Tuesday, citing a senior expert from China's Ministry of Human Resources.

Jin Weigang, president of the Chinese Academy of Labor and Social Security Sciences, said China was eyeing a "progressive, flexible and differentiated path to raising the retirement age," meaning that it would be delayed initially by a few months, which would be subsequently increased.

"People nearing retirement age will only have to delay retirement for several months," the Global Times said, citing Jin. Young people may have to work a few years longer but will have a long adaptation and transition period, he said.

"The most important feature of the reform is allowing people to choose when to retire according to their circumstances and conditions."

As China's 1.4 billion population declines and ages, in part because of a policy that limited couples to one child from 1980 to 2015, pressure on pension budgets is escalating, creating more urgency for policymakers to address the situation.

China's alternate navy – China long ago realized it cannot compete with the US and its allies in any direct naval confrontation. It has neither the necessary technology nor the ability, size-wise, to effectively conduct a sea war.

America's First Island Chain policy has constrained Beijing to having a "Green Water" naval ability, which has seen China striving to conclude agreements with foreign countries in order to access their ocean ports. Thus they approach states under the guise of their BRI program, reach agreement for port cooperation, including building or accessing port facilities.

This has seen China agree a 99-year lease from Sri Lanka to operate its Hambantota International Port on the northern tip of the island nation.

It has similarly agreed an operating lease in Djibouti's main port, strategically located and with tremendous importance as a military and naval location. Both the US and China have military bases in Djibouti (China's first military base overseas, to note), among other countries with naval presence there.

Recent developments indicate that the US naval presence is decreasing in Djibouti at a time when China seems to be ever more active, commercially, and more critically, militarily.

A port is made strategic not only by the markets that it can have access to but also by the sea lanes that can be reached, of both commercial and naval importance.

Although there have been reports of occasional hiccups with certain ports, such as at Gwadar in Pakistan recently, China – as per established patient approach, keeps chipping away at the target by investing, progressing, and slowly setting new milestones.

One can take for example the Port of Piraeus in Greece, where notorious Greek bureaucracy seems to move a tad faster when the Chinese are involved, with the port reporting increasing throughput volumes, and rumored plans for expansion of the port to include cruise ships and ship services like drydocking and repairs.

China is pursuing port options in areas it considers strategically important and in countries it can entice with investment opportunities via the BRI program.

But, having written all that, there remains the challenge for Beijing as to how it can confront and defeat a US navy of such higher quality, size and efficiency, particularly in its back yard – the South China and East China Seas.

This is where Beijing has deviated from convention, opting for a different naval approach. It has claimed a number of islands, atolls and regions across both Seas and continues with its program of building islands in this region.

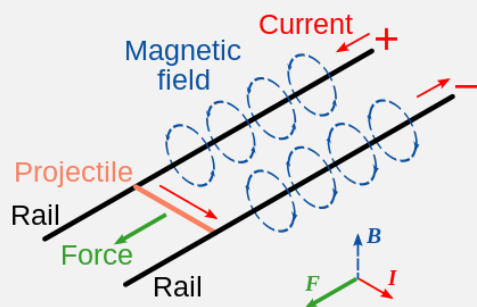
It has instituted two main thrusts of alternate naval capacity.

Firstly it has created a fleet of “Trojan Horse” fishing vessels, lurking around both the South China and East China Seas.

These vessels reportedly carry rail guns and once “activated,” will spring into action.

A railgun is a linear motor device using electromagnetic force to launch high velocity projectiles, which normally do not contain explosives, instead relying on exceptionally high speed, mass, and kinetic energy to inflict damage.

It uses a pair of parallel conductors (rails), along which a sliding armature is accelerated by the electromagnetic effects of a current that flows down one rail, into the armature and then back along the other rail. It is based on principles similar to those of the homopolar motor (see right).



Railguns can readily exceed 3 km/s (Mach 8.8) and range exceeds that of conventional guns. The destructive force of a projectile depends upon its kinetic energy (the projectile's mass multiplied by its velocity squared, divided by 2) at the point of impact.

For potential military applications, railguns are usually of interest because they can achieve much greater muzzle velocities than guns powered by conventional chemical propellants.

Increased muzzle velocities with better aerodynamically streamlined projectiles convey the benefits of increased firing ranges while, in terms of target effects, increased terminal velocities allow use of kinetic energy rounds incorporating hit-to-kill guidance, as replacements for explosive shells. (Wikipedia).

Typical military railgun designs have muzzle velocities in the range of 2,000–3,500 m/s (4,500–7,800 mph; 7,200–12,600 km/h) with muzzle energies of 5–50 megajoules (MJ).

For comparison, 50 MJ is equivalent to the kinetic energy of a school bus weighing 5 metric tons, traveling at 509 km/h (316 mph; 141 m/s).

Railgun – a 21st-century weapon

In the opinion of the U.S. military, electromagnetic weapons have the potential to replace conventional artillery in the near future

! The most powerful railgun in the world was designed at the U.S. naval research laboratory in Dahlgren, Virginia. The energy of its rounds is 33 megajoules. Projectile velocity is five times the speed of sound and its firing range can reach 370 km

Railgun device

Source of electromagnetic pulse
Power generator
Armature
Projectile
Round
Charge
Conductive rails

Interaction of magnetic fields

Current I
Magnetic field B
Magnetic field of the armature
Negatively charged rail
Positively charged rail
The current flowing through the armature
Force F

The principle behind Lorentz force

Magnetic field B
Current I
The current flowing through the armature
Armature
Rail
Force F

The railgun uses electromagnetic force (Lorentz force) to propel an electrically conductive projectile that is initially part of a chain. Current I , flowing through the rails, generates magnetic field B in the rails and armature. As a result, under the action of force F , the armature is pushed out of the magnetic field of the rails and the projectile accelerates

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It is reported that China has mounted railguns on these “Trojan” fishing vessels and has them across sea zones they consider potential areas of future conflict.

The logic being that they can afford to activate a vessel, launch a railgun projectile at a US aircraft carrier, sink it, and then write off their fishing ship. In a conversation I recently had, a Chinese colleague said “It is a great bargain to lose a \$5 million dollar Chinese fishing vessel in exchange for the US losing at \$10 billion aircraft carrier, a great bargain and one Beijing will take any day.”

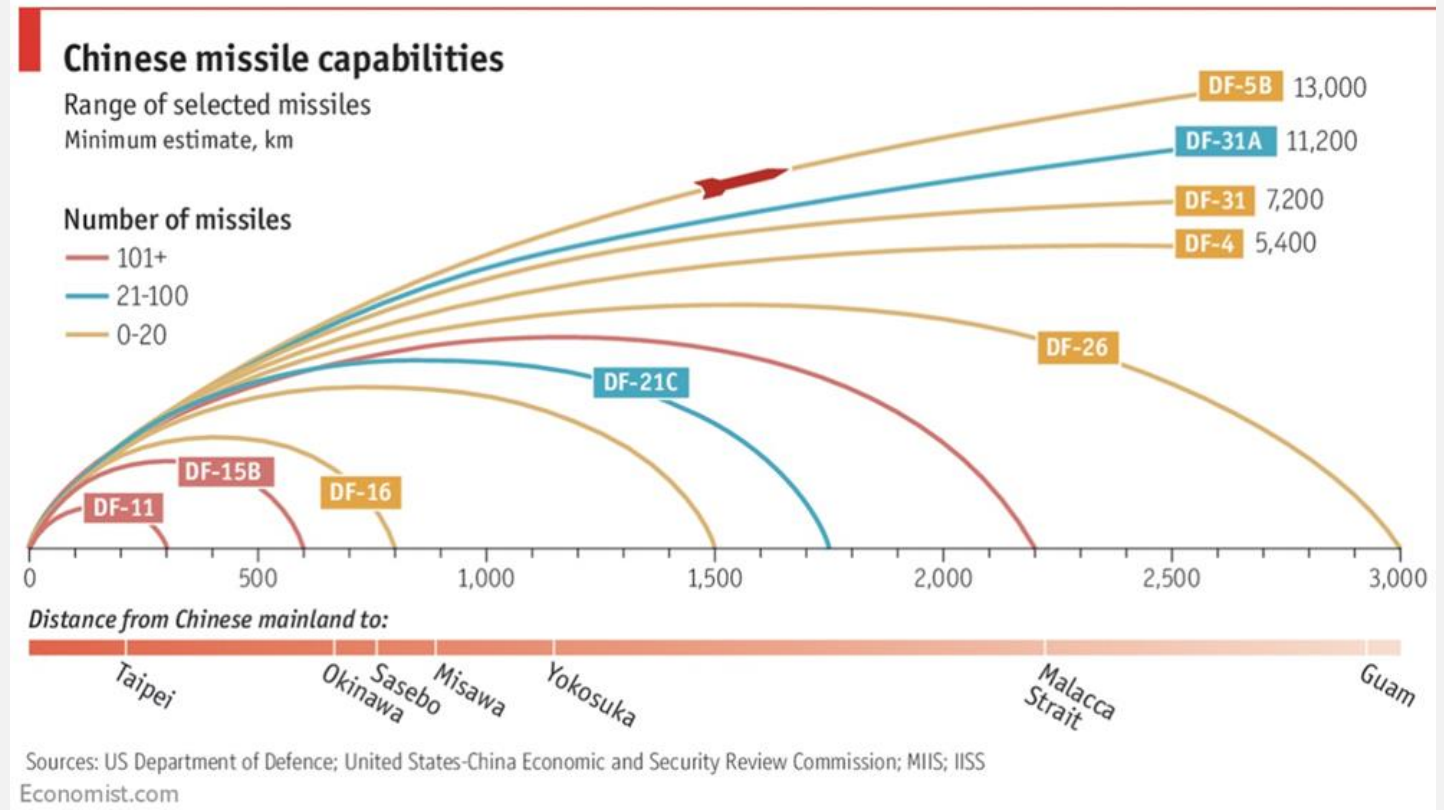
China’s other alternate naval policy is arming islands, existing and newly-constructed, across its two backyard Seas.

Beijing has not only unilaterally claimed ownership of vast tracts of these two Seas with islands and atolls spread across the width and length of each, it is also constructing “new” islands via advanced technology in locating and reinforcing coral reefs capable of supporting these structures.

Aside from constructing runways, detection stations and military staging posts for ground troops and supply chains, they are also installing advanced military missile launching pads capable of striking targets across great distances.

Chinese military strategists believe having strategic hypersonic missiles capable of striking Asian Capitals, or even the mere threat of having such offensive capabilities, will suffice in scaring off the US and its allies.

It is installing Dongfeng missiles, generally referred to as DF missiles, on some of these islands. DF missiles are a series of ballistic missiles with the capability to engage targets at short, medium, intermediate, and even intercontinental ranges and are operated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF).



As seen from the chart above, these missiles will reach all Asian Capitals which, in Chinese strategic thought, is sufficient to deter the US and its allies.

Of further import is their development of missiles with enhanced ranges.