

The Gathering Pacific Storm

“Frameworks for Examining Long-Term Strategic Competition Between Major Powers”



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- Strategy is about how to array limited resources in space and time to achieve your aims against a competitor.
 - In *short wars*, you fight with your existing military
 - In *protracted wars*, the material dimension becomes more important
 - In *long-term peacetime competitions*, the economic dimension is even more important

Competitive strategies follow the logic of strategy, but in peacetime:

- Competitive strategies seek limited aims. They are meant to change a competitor's decision-making calculus.
- Competitive strategies can, and often do, involve the use of military assets, but focus on the latent use of force to coerce or deter.
 - A key consideration is what to conceal and when vs. what to show and when.
- Competitive strategies contend with a greater degree of uncertainty than wartime strategy.
- Tolerance for risk is generally lower in peace than in war.
- It takes longer to determine the effects of strategy in peace than in war.

Families of Peacetime Strategy

- Denial
- Cost imposition
- Attacking the opponent's strategy
- Attacking the opponent's decision making

Considerations

- A Concrete and Sophisticated Opponent.
- Sufficient Understanding of the Competitor to Formulate, Implement Strategies.
- Recognition that Each Side's Choices are Constrained.
- Should Account for Time, and Make it a Virtue.
- Should Account for Interaction over Time.

Measures of Effectiveness

- **Options:**
 - Increased Set of U.S. Options
 - Constrained Set of Competitor Options
- **Cost Imposition:**
 - Averting Costs from Being Imposed on the U.S.
 - Imposing Costs on Competitors
- **Initiative:**
 - Who is Reacting to Whom?
 - Who Controls the Pace and Scope of the Competition?



THE GATHERING PACIFIC STORM

Emerging U.S.-China
Strategic Competition in
Defense Technological and
Industrial Development

edited by

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China's focus remains on near-seas, where U.S. has geographic advantage



Anti-ship missiles



SAMs and SHORADs



Modern naval combatants



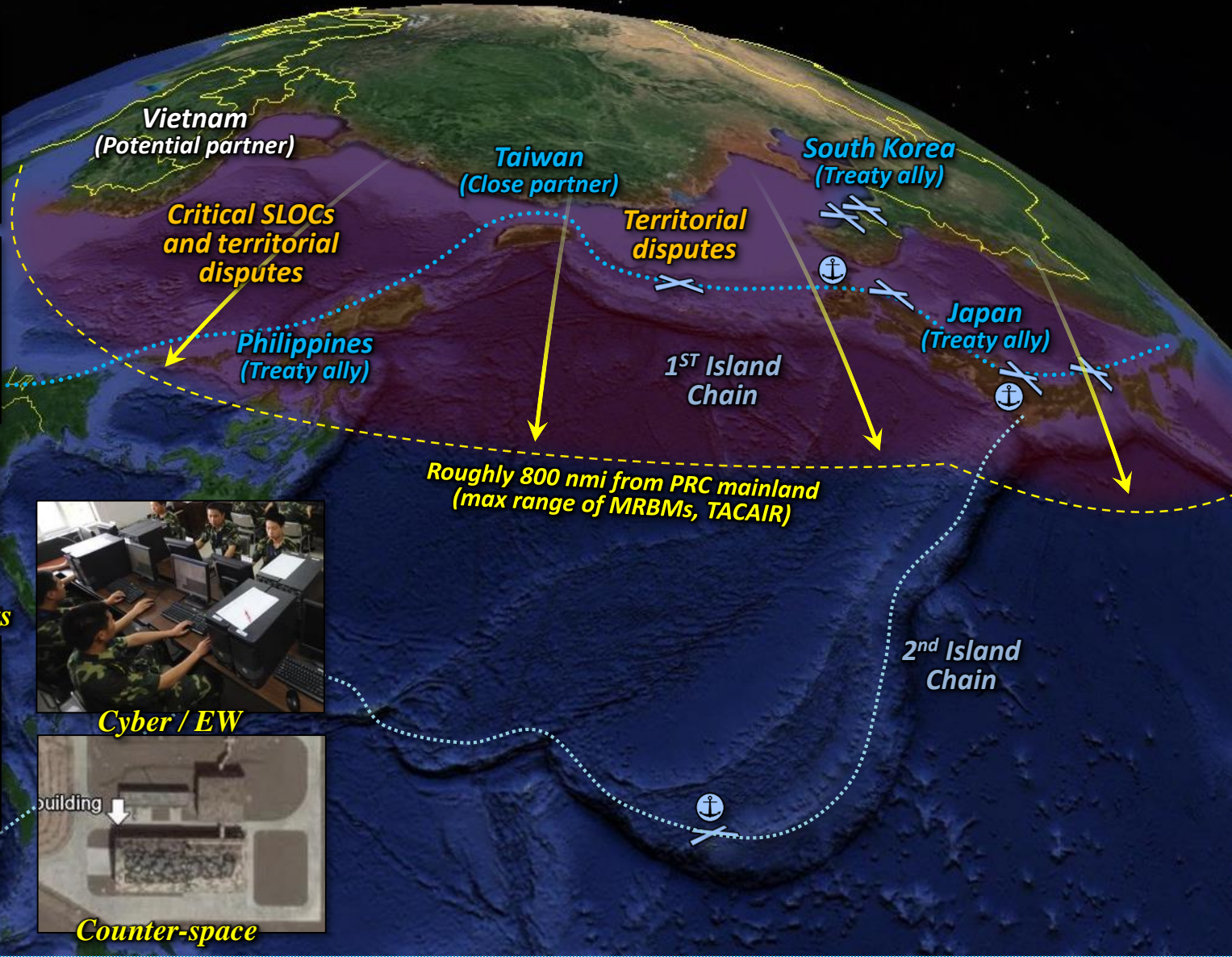
Attack submarines



Cyber / EW



Counter-space



Vietnam
(Potential partner)

Taiwan
(Close partner)

South Korea
(Treaty ally)

Critical SLOCs
and territorial
disputes

Territorial
disputes

Philippines
(Treaty ally)

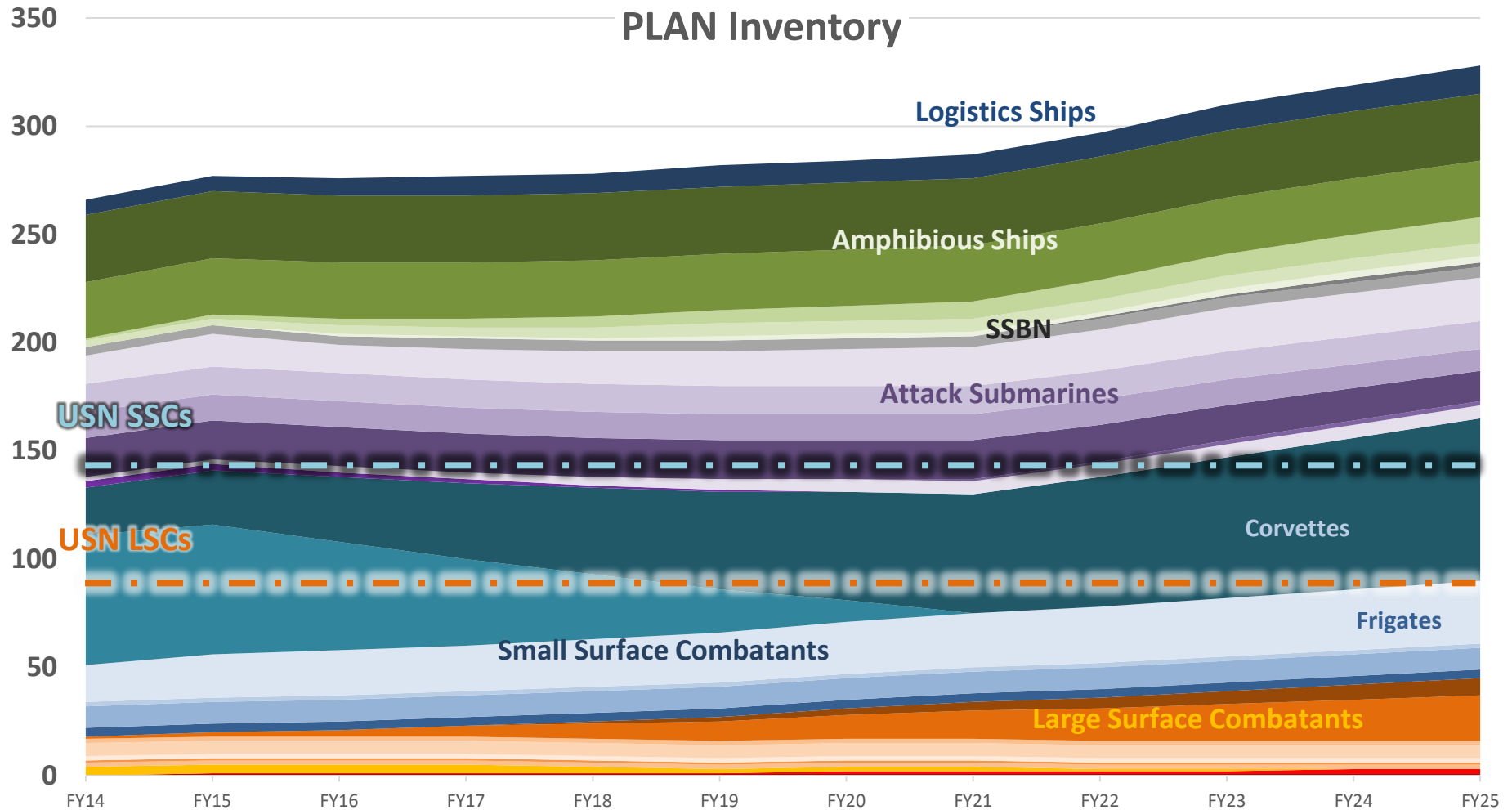
Japan
(Treaty ally)

1ST Island
Chain

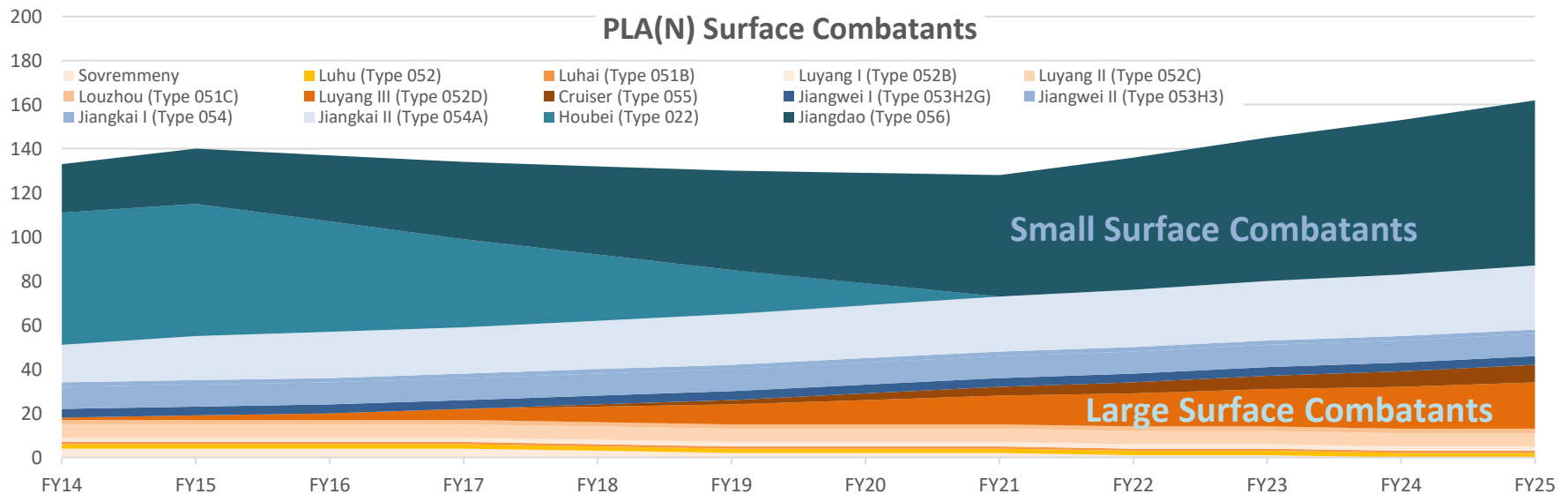
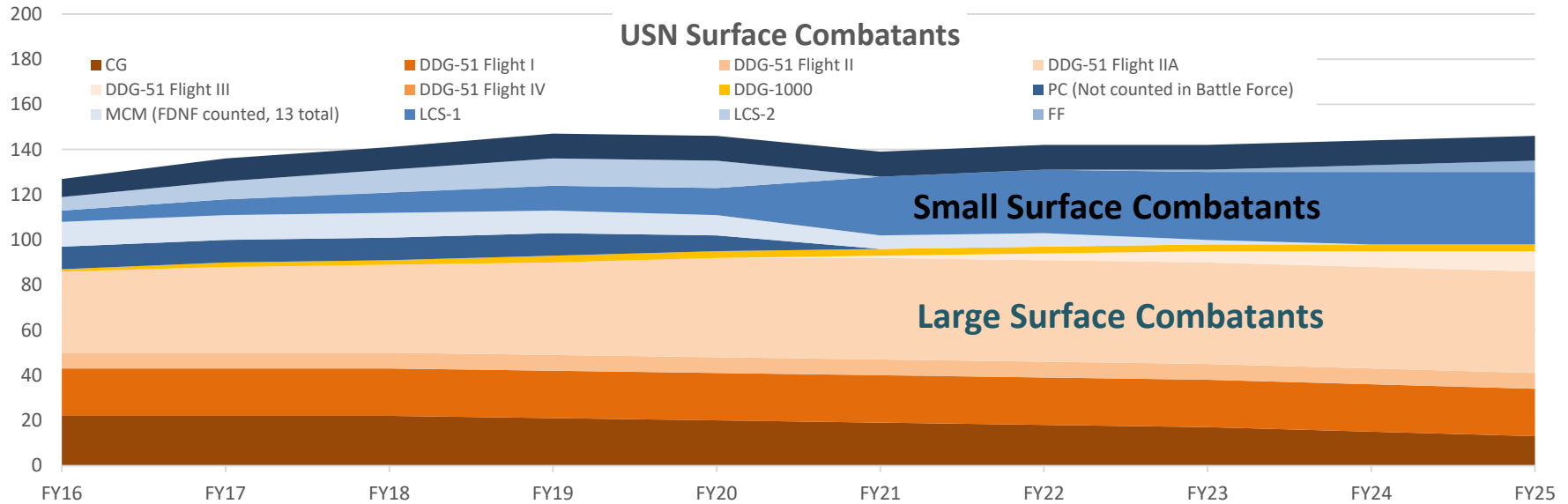
Roughly 800 nmi from PRC mainland
(max range of MRBMs, TACAIR)

2nd Island
Chain

PLAN designed to support sea control rather than power projection

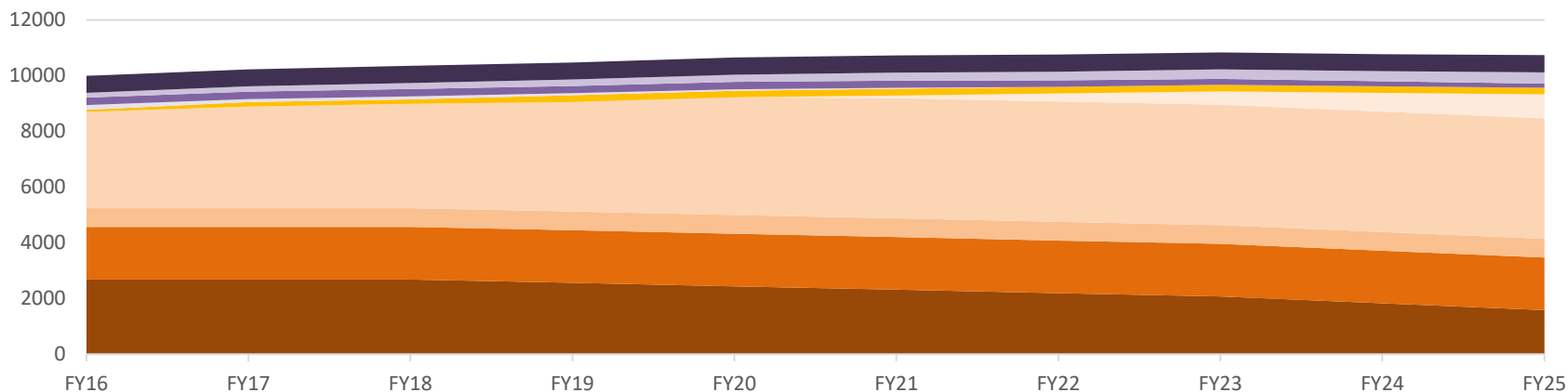


PLAN surface fleet focused on defensive missions

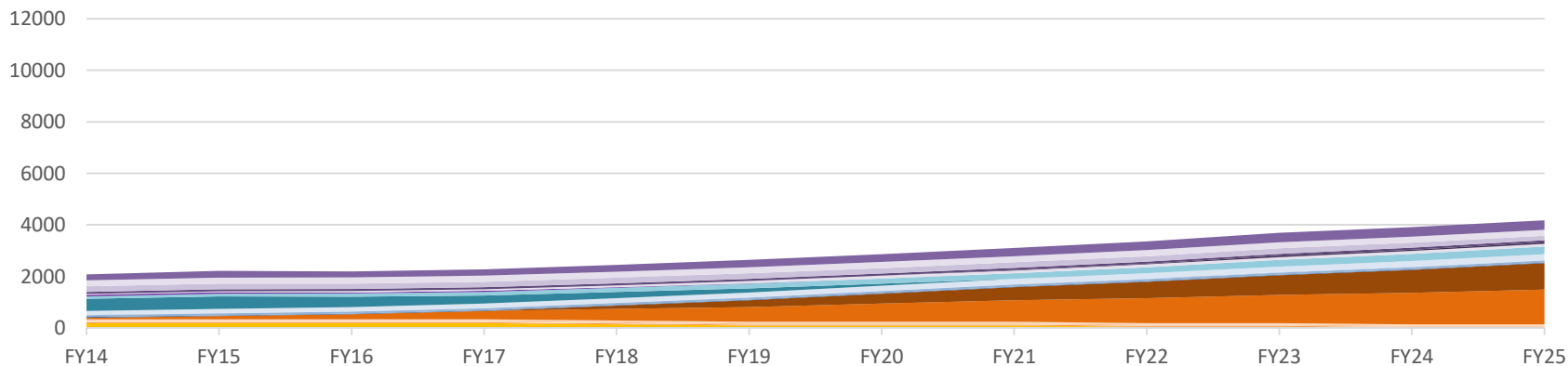


Significant asymmetry in VLS capacity reflects Chinese strategy

USN Surface-to-Surface Missile Capacity

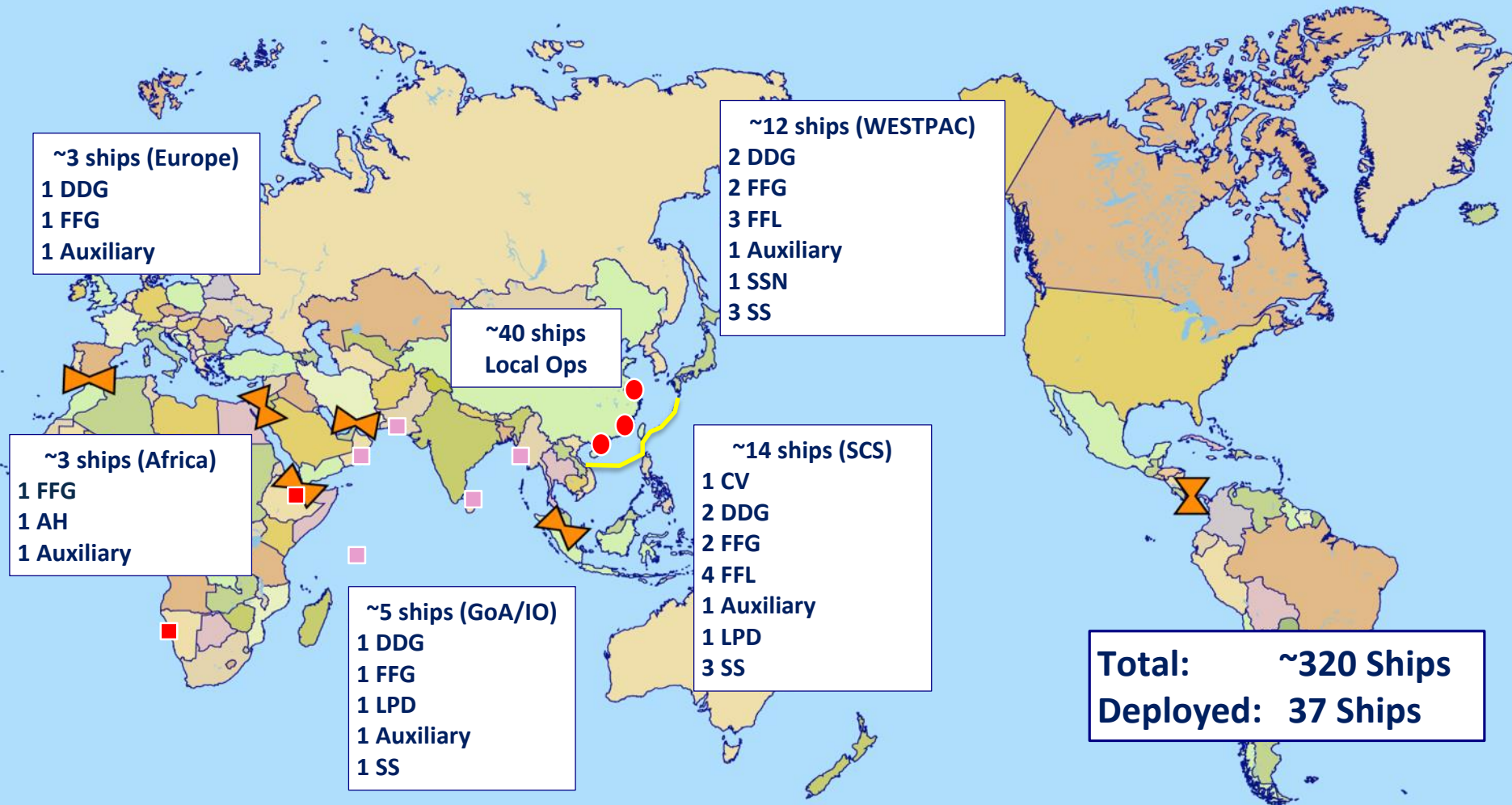


PLAN Surface-to-Surface Missile Capacity



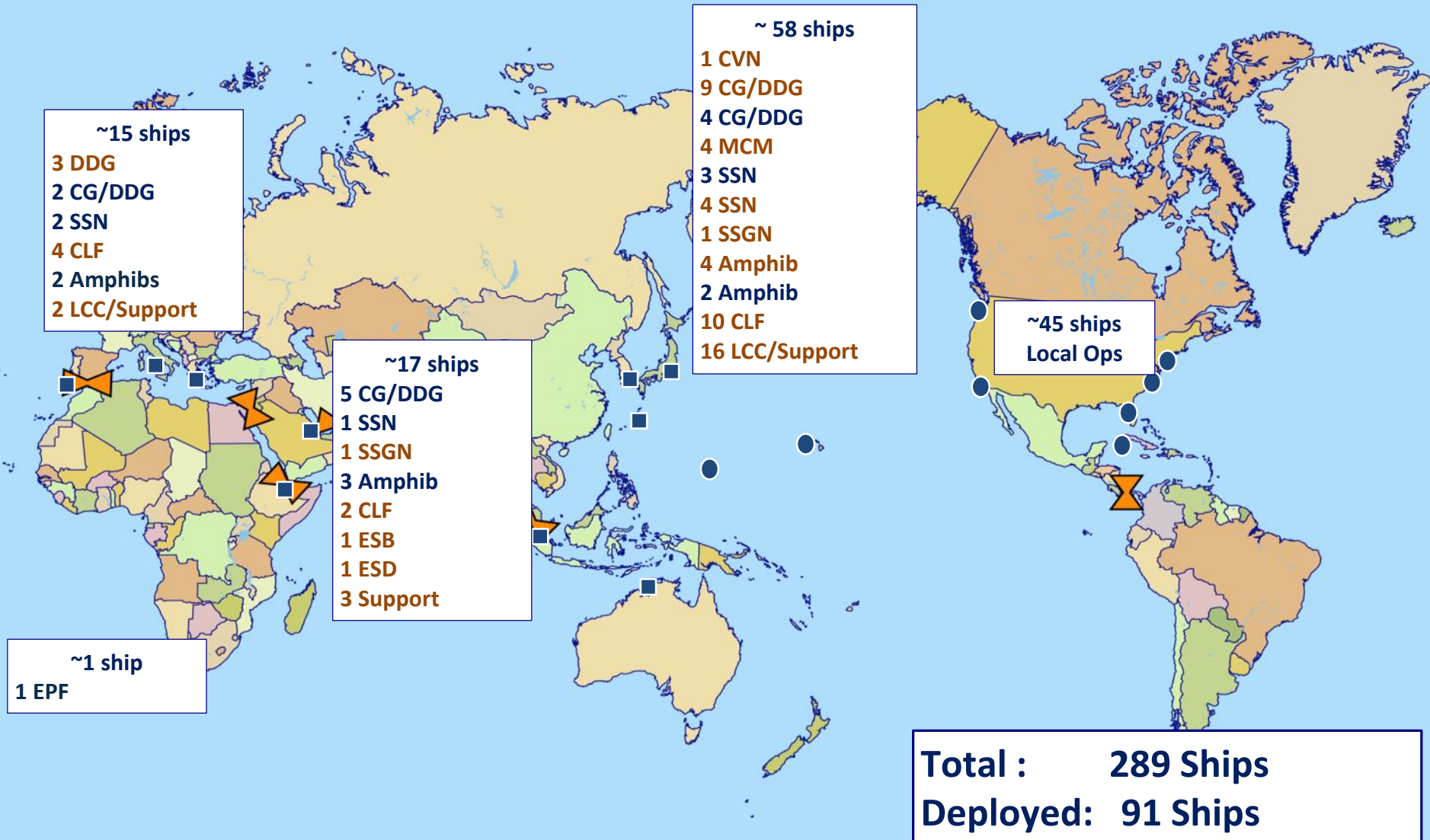
PLAN can only devote VLS cells to offensive weapons by relying on land-based defenses in near-seas

PLAN deployed presence (2018)



PLAN expanding overseas presence, but remains focused on WESTPAC

U.S. Navy Deployed Presence (2018)



U.S. should stress near-seas, while exploiting advantages in far seas

- **Observations**

- Enduring Chinese disadvantages likely to be geopolitical rather than technical in nature
- China's focus is still largely on near seas and asymmetric capabilities to blunt U.S. force projection
- The U.S. cannot cede near seas to Chinese control without risking alliances
- U.S. already has a significant capability to contest far seas, which China is not developing a force to effectively counter.

- **Implications**

- Implies that whole-of government U.S. strategies are crucial; strictly technical policies may not fully exploit China's areas of weakness
- U.S. strategies to sustain access in contested areas should seek to defeat Chinese long-range missiles and sensors – compelling China to pursue more symmetric approaches

- **In a long-term competition, China might double down on asymmetric, near seas investments**



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