

Anti-Access Area Denial Capabilities: Implications for Strategic Stability

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Abstract

Recent advances in military technology have revolutionized warfare. Technology has broadened the scope and impact of these fundamental war-fighting concepts. Anti-Access/Area Denial tactics and strategies are not a new phenomenon in their intended roles, but advancements in missile technologies have evolved these predominantly defensive doctrines into offensive ones. This research paper intends to broaden the scope in which these technologies are commonly assessed and argues that A2/AD capabilities may not necessarily be employed only in defensive measures, rather they also offer potent weapons to carry out offensive operations against potential adversaries. This paper aims to study the trends both technological and strategic in Chinese, Russian, and Indian strategic postures and how different strategic aims and capabilities are likely to shape up future conflicts. New technological developments by states such as

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China and Russia are reshaping the military equation vis-à-vis the US military dominance in order to deter the latter from entering into their perceived areas of interest. India, being the other case, is pursuing the weapon systems that constitute A2/AD capabilities as an additional offensive element in its evolving strategic posture. Additionally, apart from the competition of big states, the proliferation of these technologies to allied and partner states would also create new security dynamics in other regions of the world. This study attempts to explain different possible uses of A2/AD capabilities and argues that their use depends on overall strategic thinking of the possessing state. If used in offensive missions, development and acquisition of A2/AD capabilities can be precursive to crisis instability by raising the risks of conflict escalation.

Keywords: Anti Access/Area Denial, Technology and Warfare, Crisis Instability, Strategic Stability, China, Russia, India.

Introduction

Traditionally, the A2/AD technologies refer to the capabilities of a state which are generally used as defensive measures against an aggressive state that attempts to intervene in the former's area of influence. This perspective has limited the scope of discussion to measures taken by China and Russia in their attempt to limit the US' ability to project power in their perceived areas of interest. This research paper intends to broaden the scope in which these technologies are commonly assessed and argues that A2/AD capabilities may not necessarily be employed only in defensive