

China's Nuclear Buildup and Potential for Conflict

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China's nuclear buildup

- **Three large silo fields discovered 2021-2022 (Yumen, Hami, Ordos)**
- **Approx 300 silos when finished**
- **Pentagon says 400 warheads in 2022, 1000 in 2030, 1500 in 2035**
 - **Not entirely sure of these estimates**
- **Why?**
 - **Decrease vulnerability, prestige, fuel, separate storage**
- **Fissile materials?**



Federation of American Scientists

- **PLA modernization: Combat readiness 2017 -> 2027, structural modernization by 2035, “world-class force by 2049**
- **20th Party Congress: “New phase” of military modernization**
 - **Appearance of focus on deterrence**
- **PLARF shake-up**

US deterrence in Japan

- **If Japan is drawn into US-China conflict, will nuclear weapons be involved?**
- Nixon's secret agreement in 1972
- 2009: Akiba comments
- Japan slowly pushing for redeployment?
- Nat Sec advisor Akiba: Japan wants NATO-like arrangement
- Kanehara: US subs in Japan

- **What will Japan's role be in a potential China conflict?**
 - Military bases
 - Does the public know? Not widespread support
 - Takehara: "if they go they must use bases"

- **If you build China up enough as a threat, it eventually becomes common sense that you must allow certain things that would previously have been non-starters**