

China Prepares Launch of Most Advanced Aircraft Carrier on 'Dragon Boat Festival'

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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China is preparing to launch the country’s third aircraft carrier, called the Type 003, amid increasing fears of conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

Last week, the Maritime Safety Administration announced a notice requesting that berths at the Jiangnan Shipyard on Changxing Island, where Type 003 has been under construction since 2017, be cleared, according to [South China Morning Post](#) (SCMP).

SCMP spoke with Lu Li-shih, a former instructor at the Taiwanese Naval Academy, who said the launch would end dry dock work and then begin tests and equipment installations for sea trials.

A military insider suggested the launch of the new aircraft carrier could be seen as soon as this Friday, coinciding with Dragon Boat Festival

“The aircraft carrier needs to go into sea trials as soon as possible – it may take several years to achieve initial operational capability,” said the insider.

Beijing-based naval expert Li Jie explained that “time is precious” for Type 003, adding, “the installation of all of the weapon systems and the activation of its propulsion system will only start after the hull is proven to have no leaks once it goes into the water.”

Type 003 was supposed to be launched last month to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the Chinese Navy, but the event was postponed due to the widespread outbreak of COVID in Shanghai.

At 320 meters long, the new carrier will be outfitted with a high-tech electromagnetic

catapult system, launching China's stealth fighters with heavier weapon loads and more fuel. Here's how the new aircraft carrier compares with others:

HOW TYPE 003 SHIP COMPARES

POSSIBLE AIRCRAFT



FC-31 Stealth multi-role fighter
(Artist's impression
Still in development)

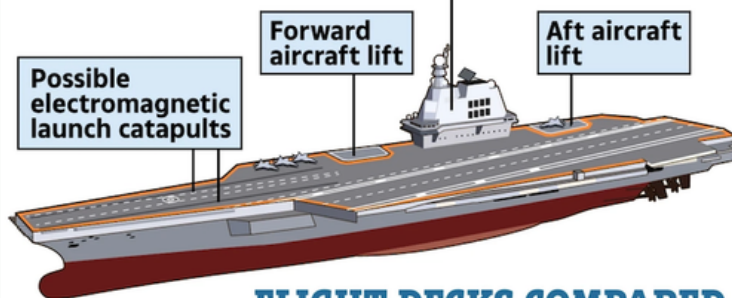


J-15 Carrier based multi-role fighter




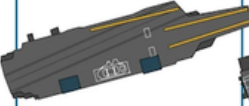
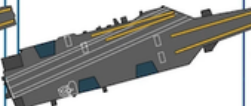



KJ-600
Airborne early warning system

Houses command centre for flight operations and advanced radar and communications equipment



FLIGHT DECKS COMPARED

 Type 003	 Gerald R Ford class	 Queen Elizabeth class
		
Lifts: 2 Catapults: 3 Propulsion: Conventional	Lifts: 3 Catapults: 4 Propulsion: Nuclear	Lifts: 2 Catapults: 0 Propulsion: Conventional

HEAD TO HEAD



Type 003



Length: 320m
Cost: Undisclosed
Displacement: 85,000t
Speed: Unknown
Aircraft: Unknown



Gerald R Ford class



Length: 333m
Cost: \$13bn
Displacement: 100,000t
Speed: 30kts
Aircraft: 75



Queen Elizabeth class



Length: 280m
Cost: \$3.1bn
Displacement: 65,000t
Speed: 25kts
Aircraft: 36 F-35B fighter jets & 4 helicopters



Izumo-class Helicopter Destroyer



Length: 248m
Cost: \$1.2bn
Displacement: 19,500t
Speed: 30kts
Aircraft: 14 helicopters

Sea trials and installation of equipment could take at least two years. The Pentagon doesn't expect the carrier to become operational until 2024.

China is modernizing and expanding its maritime capabilities for dominance in the Indo-Pacific region and, more specifically, in the Taiwan Strait.

News of Type 003 about to launch comes as Beijing sent a [massive group of fighters](#) into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone on Monday.

Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Command recently denounced "collusion" between Taiwan and the US after President Biden pledged the West would defend Taiwan if under attack by Chinese forces; however, the White House was quick to follow by saying there's been no change in the One China policy or its approach of "strategic ambiguity."

And now, there will be three Chinese aircraft carriers the West and allies have to worry about. There are plans for a fourth carrier that could be nuclear-powered. This is an attempt by Beijing to project power and dominate the Indo-Pacific region as [Thucydides Trap](#) between China and the US inches closer.

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