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## China's Second Aircraft Carrier Is Almost Complete (And 4 More Could Be Coming)

Dave Majumdar  
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Should Washington and Tokyo be worried?

According to Chinese state media, Beijing's first domestically built carrier is nearing completion at Dalian.

The vessel—which is expected to become operational in 2020—will be launched soon.

Thereafter, the new carrier will spend roughly the next two years being outfitted with various systems such as sensors and other hardware.

Compared to the Liaoning—which was rebuilt from the decaying hulk of the Soviet Kuznetsov-class Baku—the Beijing's new Type-001A will be much improved. Particularly, the Chinese have improved the crew spaces—which have never been a priority onboard Russian vessels.

“Unlike the Liaoning (Type 001), China's first aircraft carrier, a refitted ship built by Ukraine (under the former Soviet Union), the 001A is China-built, and its design, combat capability and technologies will be much more advanced,” Song Zhongping, a Chinese military expert, told the Global Times. [3] “One key difference is the design will be more 'humanized,' which means all personnel on the carrier will enjoy a more comfortable and modern environment.”

After the ship is launched, workers at Dalian will still have to outfit the new carrier with all of its mission systems such as radars, communications gears and other hardware. That process could take up to two years, after which the new ship will have to undergo various sea trials to ensure all of its systems work correctly. “It will take about one to two years to carry out functional debugging of its devices, weapons and equipment,” Chinese naval expert Li Jie told the People's Daily [3]. “The new aircraft carrier can begin sea trials by early 2019.”

However, after Type-001A is completed, China will abandon the ski-jump equipped Kuznetsov-class design and develop a new carrier equipped with steam catapults. China has been developing an Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System similar to those found onboard the soon-to-be-commissioned USS Gerald Ford (CVN-78), but Beijing will likely stick to steam catapults until the electromagnetic catapult technology is more mature. “In other words, 002 is entirely different from the Liaoning (001) and 001A, and it will look like US aircraft carrier rather than a Russian one,” Li said.

Ultimately, Beijing will likely build at least a half-dozen carriers to meet its requirements.