

Homegrown aircraft carrier launched

PLA Navy's most advanced ship leaves dry dock for outfitting of equipment, systems and weaponry

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China has moved closer toward its goal of operating domestically made aircraft carriers as it officially launched the first on April 26 in Dalian, Liaoning province.

The ship is the largest and most sophisticated surface vessel China has ever built.

General Fan Changlong, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, took part in the launch ceremony at a shipyard in the northeastern coastal city. Fan's presence indicated the significance Chinese leaders attach to the colossal ship, because only the most important equipment for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would have top-level officers at the public debut ceremony.

The carrier was towed from its dry dock and then moored at an outfitting berth, according to a news release published by the military after the ceremony.

Currently, the PLA Navy operates a single aircraft carrier, *CNS Liaoning*, which originally was an incomplete Soviet-era vessel and received an extensive refit at the Dalian shipyard, where the new carrier is being constructed, before going into service in September 2012.

The new carrier was designed in China and construction began in November 2013. Work in the dry dock started in March 2015, and when launched its propulsion and power systems had already been installed, the military said.

In the next phase, the carrier will start the outfitting process and engineers will test and fine-tune equipment already mounted on the ship, the news release said. During the outfitting stage, engineers and workers will complete installation of the ship's interior equipment and systems, as well as its weaponry.

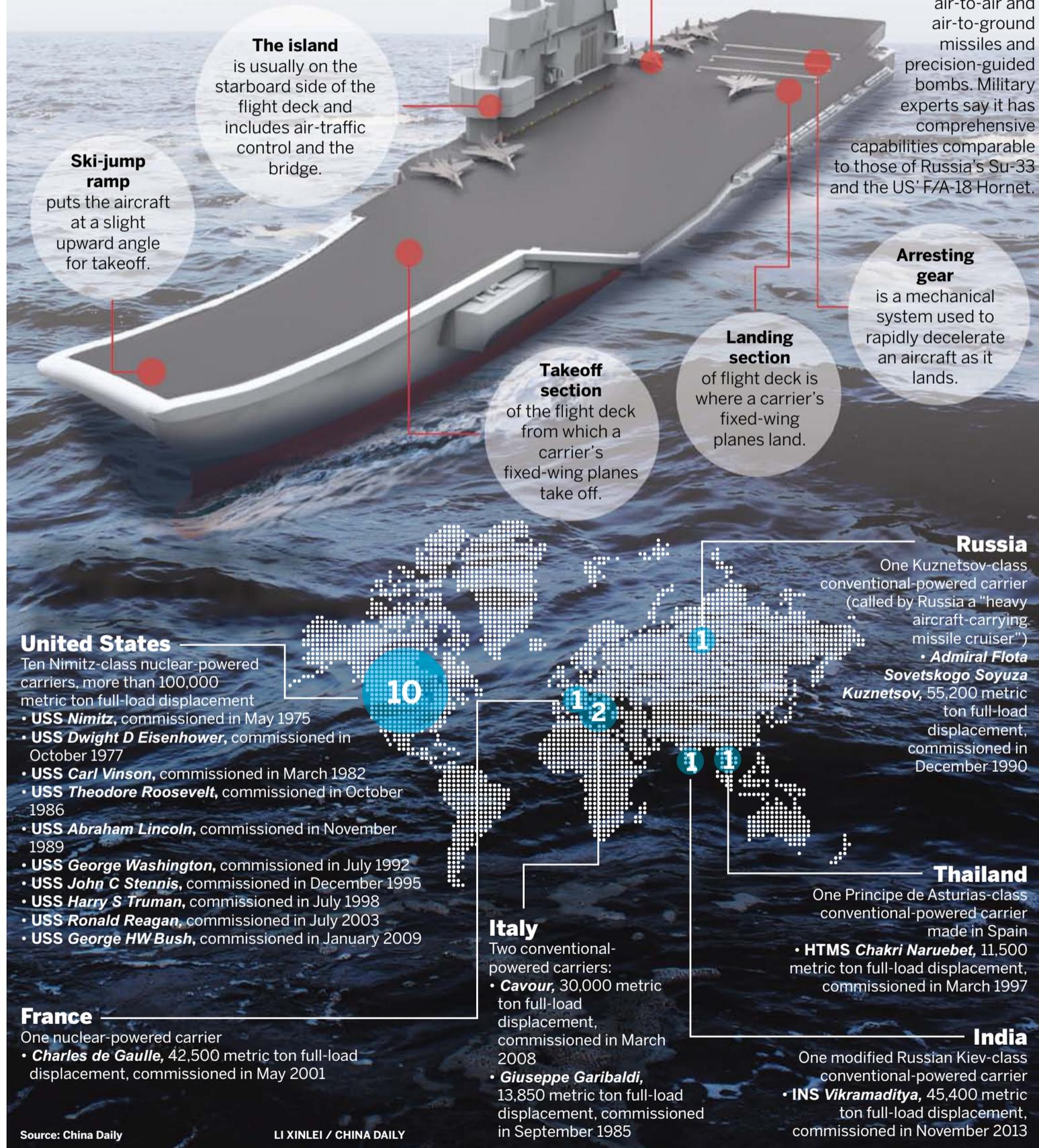
At the same time, the mooring trials will be conducted to verify the carrier's overall design and equipment.

The new carrier's name and hull code remain unknown, as the Navy usually makes public such information when a ship is commissioned.

It will have a displacement of about 50,000 metric tons and a conventional propulsion system. It will carry domestically developed J-15

FIRST MADE IN CHINA VESSEL FOR PLA NAVY

The unnamed ship now must be completed at sea, which will take several years



United States

Ten Nimitz-class nuclear-powered carriers, more than 100,000 metric ton full-load displacement

- **USS Nimitz**, commissioned in May 1975
- **USS Dwight D Eisenhower**, commissioned in October 1977
- **USS Carl Vinson**, commissioned in March 1982
- **USS Theodore Roosevelt**, commissioned in October 1986
- **USS Abraham Lincoln**, commissioned in November 1989
- **USS George Washington**, commissioned in July 1992
- **USS John C Stennis**, commissioned in December 1995
- **USS Harry S Truman**, commissioned in July 1998
- **USS Ronald Reagan**, commissioned in July 2003
- **USS George HW Bush**, commissioned in January 2009

France

One nuclear-powered carrier

- **Charles de Gaulle**, 42,500 metric ton full-load displacement, commissioned in May 2001

Italy

Two conventional-powered carriers:

- **Cavour**, 30,000 metric ton full-load displacement, commissioned in March 2008
- **Giuseppe Garibaldi**, 13,850 metric ton full-load displacement, commissioned in September 1985

Russia

One Kuznetsov-class conventional-powered carrier (called by Russia a "heavy aircraft-carrying missile cruiser")

- **Admiral Flota Sovetskogo Soyuza Kuznetsov**, 55,200 metric ton full-load displacement, commissioned in December 1990

Thailand

One Principe de Asturias-class conventional-powered carrier made in Spain

- **HTMS Chakri Naruebet**, 11,500 metric ton full-load displacement, commissioned in March 1997

India

- **INS Vikramaditya**, 45,400 metric ton full-load displacement, commissioned in November 2013

fighter jets and other ship-borne aircraft, Defense Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun has previously said. He noted that the ship will use ski jump style takeoffs for fixed-wing aircraft, the same as the *Liaoning*.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said on April 26, in response to questions on the carrier's launch, that China's military is being developed as a defensive posture and the nation pursues peace.

"We develop military forces, including the Navy, to safeguard the country's sovereign security and development interests and to maintain world peace," he said in a regular news briefing.

Major General Chen Zhou, a senior strategy researcher at the PLA Academy of Military Science, said in March that the second carrier is not the end of China's aircraft carrier program, as the nation will build more.

Source: China Daily

LI XINLEI / CHINA DAILY

What's the J-15?

The twin-engine J-15 fighter jet was developed by the Shenyang Aircraft Corp, a subsidiary of Aviation Industry Corp of China. It is able to carry anti-ship, air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles and precision-guided bombs. Military experts say it has comprehensive capabilities comparable to those of Russia's Su-33 and the US' F/A-18 Hornet.

Arresting gear

is a mechanical system used to rapidly decelerate an aircraft as it lands.