



# SANCTIONING TO DETER

A NEW APPROACH IS NEEDED IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

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# OVERVIEW

THE PROBLEM

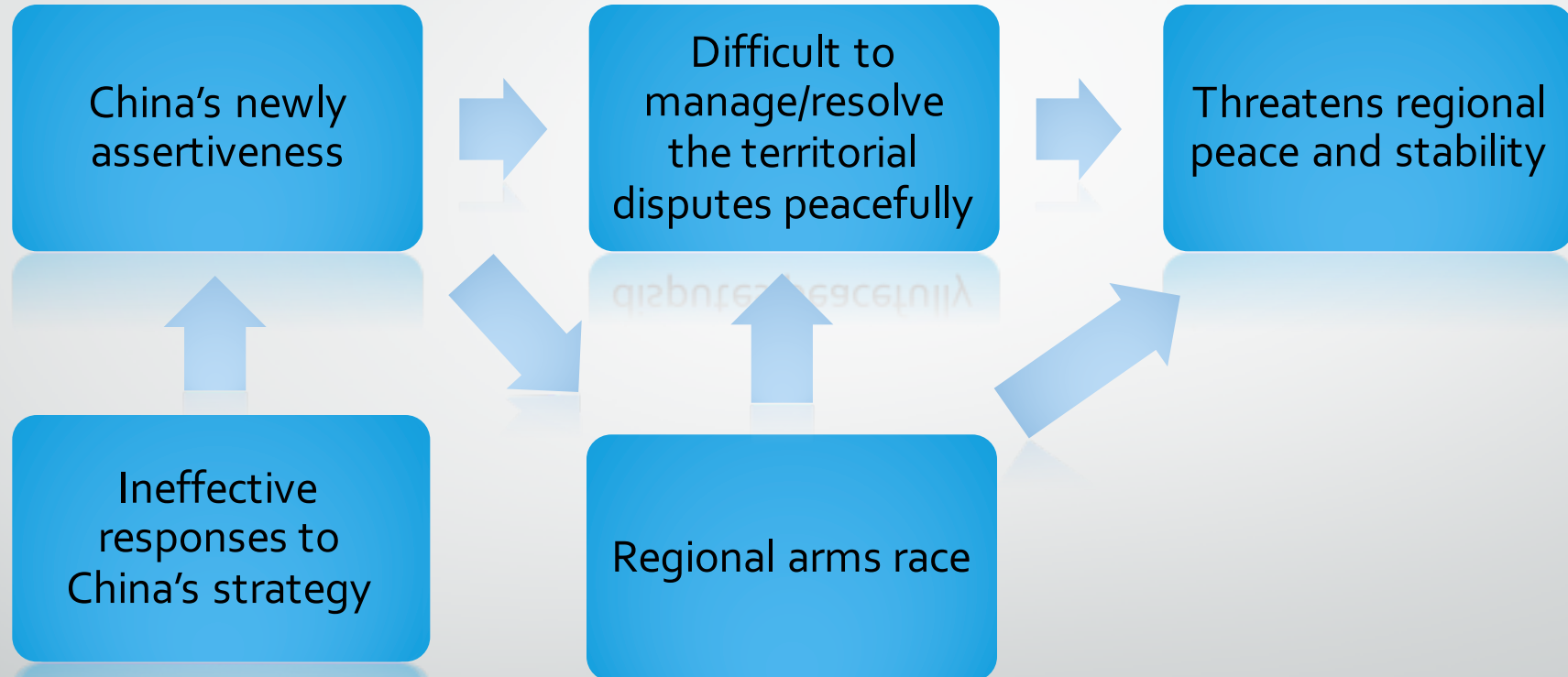
NATURE OF THE CHINESE STRATEGY IN THE SCS

WHY THE CURRENT APPROACH HAS FAILED

SANCTIONING TO DETER: FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

CONCLUSION

# THE PROBLEM



## NATURE OF THE CHINESE STRATEGY

Change territorial status quo gradually

Full-spectrum diplomacy

Low intensity provocations

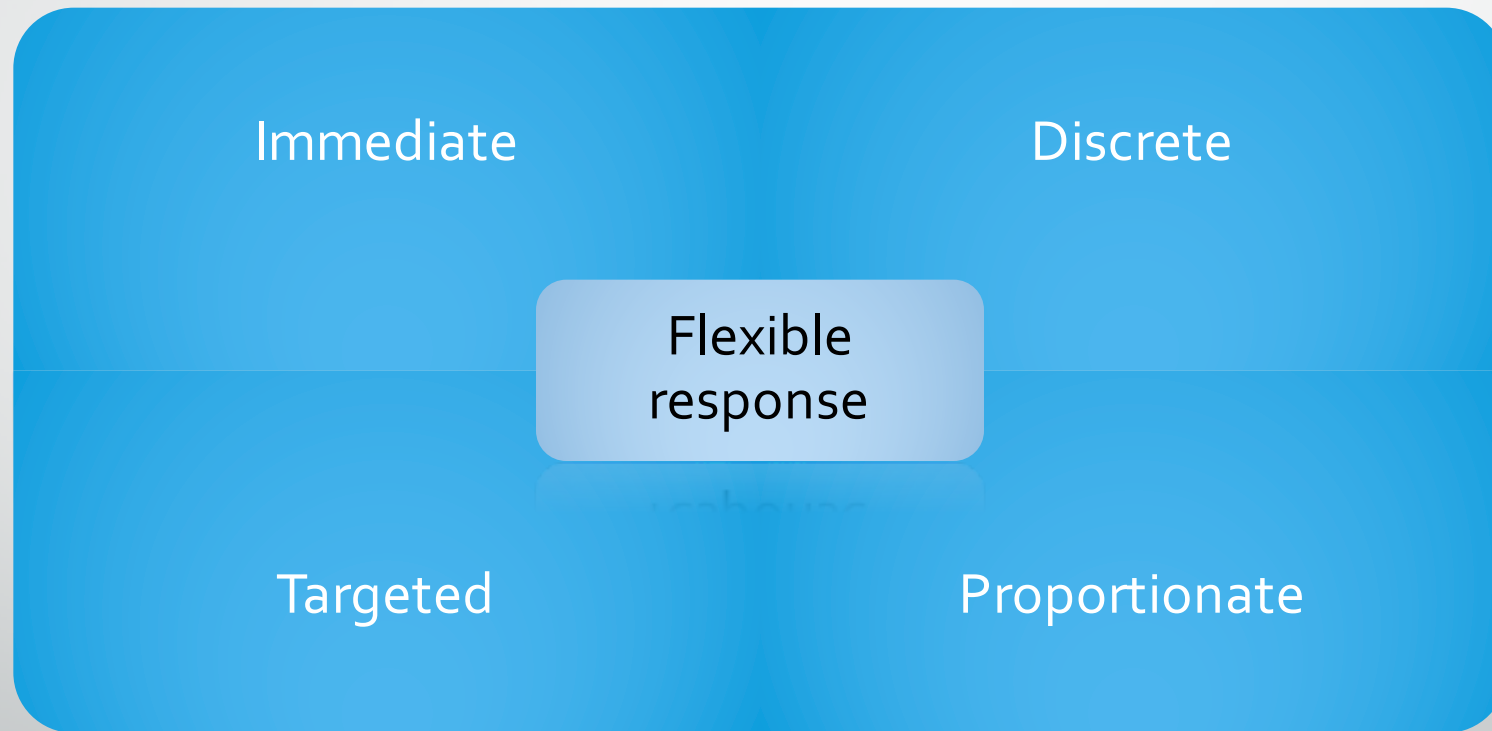
Insist on bilateral nature of the dispute

Non-lethal use of force

# WHY THE CURRENT APPROACH HAS FAILED

- China has neither slowed down its land reclamation activities, nor showed flexibility in resolving the territorial disputes
- In fact, China has been militarizing the South China Sea dispute to an extent not seen before
- There is a “mismatch” between our strategy and China’s strategy
- Traditional deterrence cannot work against “salami-slicing”

# SANCTIONING TO DETER: FLEXIBLE RESPONSE



# WHY FLEXIBLE RESPONSE MIGHT WORK

- It imposes **immediate (tit-for-tat) costs** on China's escalatory actions
- It sends **firm and unambiguous signals** to Beijing
- It builds **legitimacy** for tougher responses vis-à-vis China
- Yet it **limits the risk** of escalatory spiral

# CONCLUSION

- We are facing a serious problem in the South China Sea as China is behaving evermore assertively
  - ⇒ Hinders prospects for peaceful resolution of the territorial disputes
  - ⇒ Undermines regional trust, peace and stability
- This shows that our current approach has clearly failed
- Our best hope is a new approach: Flexible Response strategy
- Flexible Response can be implemented unilaterally or multilaterally
- Flexible Response works by sending clear signals to China and imposing costs for each and every Chinese escalatory action





**THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!**