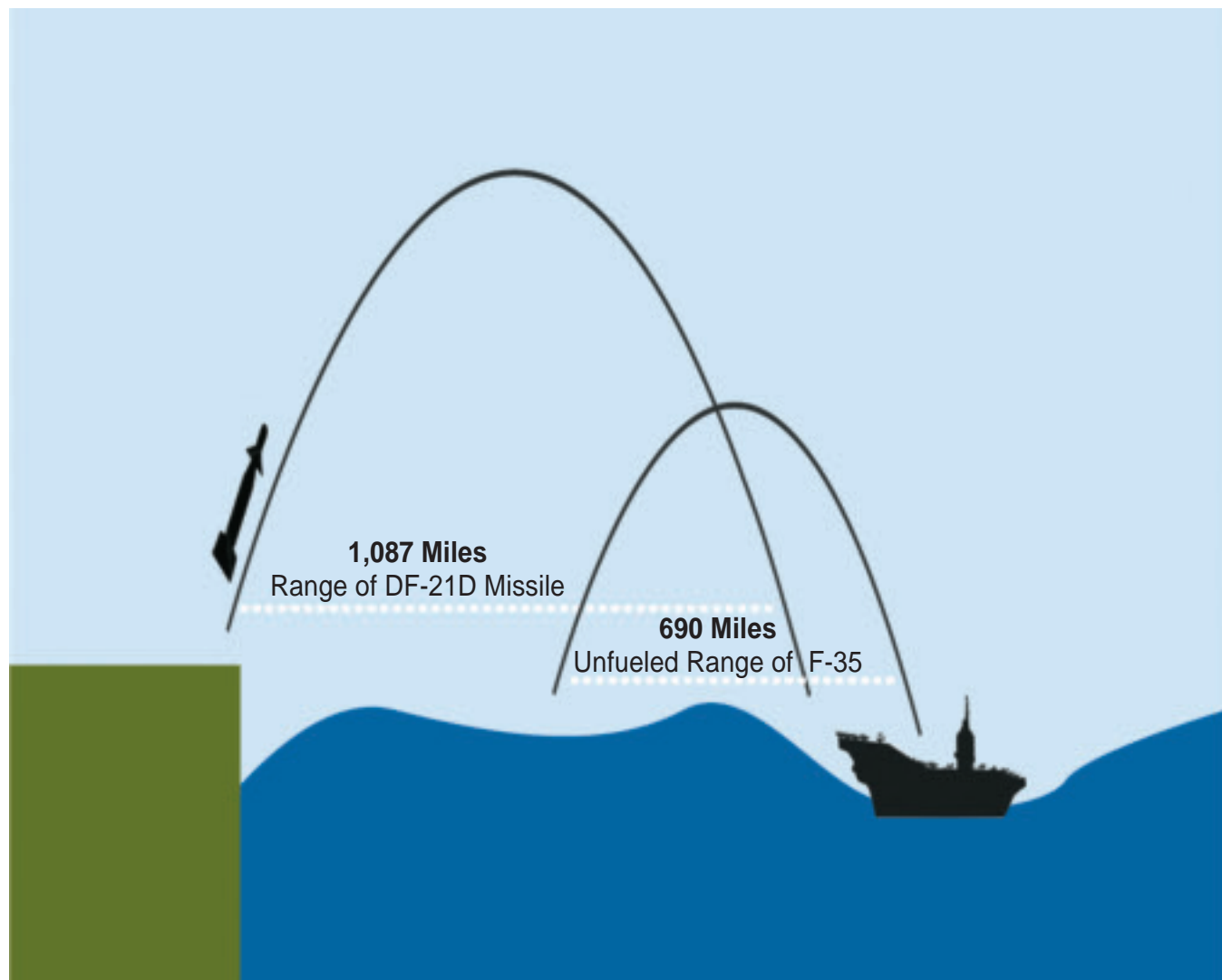


The Carrier Tale of the Tape

In boxing, “reach” is important; a fighter whose arms are longer than his foe’s—all else being equal—can land a punch before his opponent can do so. Does “reach deficiency” threaten the power of US aircraft carriers? Yes, warns a paper by Navy Capt. Henry J. Hendrix, a naval flight officer. As seen here, China’s declared carrier killer, the DF-21D missile, outranges the combat radius of the carrier-based F-35 by nearly 400 miles. (The paper did not address extending the F-35’s range

through aerial refueling.) Such imbalances could force carriers to operate at distances ever farther from targets. Hendrix notes: “Carriers themselves may not be able to move close enough to targets to operate effectively or survive in an era of satellite imagery and long-range precision strike missiles.” He suggests that the Navy de-emphasize manned-aircraft carriers in favor of unmanned aircraft and long-range precision missiles.

China’s DF-21D Missile Vs. US Navy’s F-35 Fighter



Source: “At What Cost a Carrier?” by Capt. Henry J. Hendrix, US Navy. Published by Center for a New American Security, Washington, D.C., March 2013. Reprinted with permission.