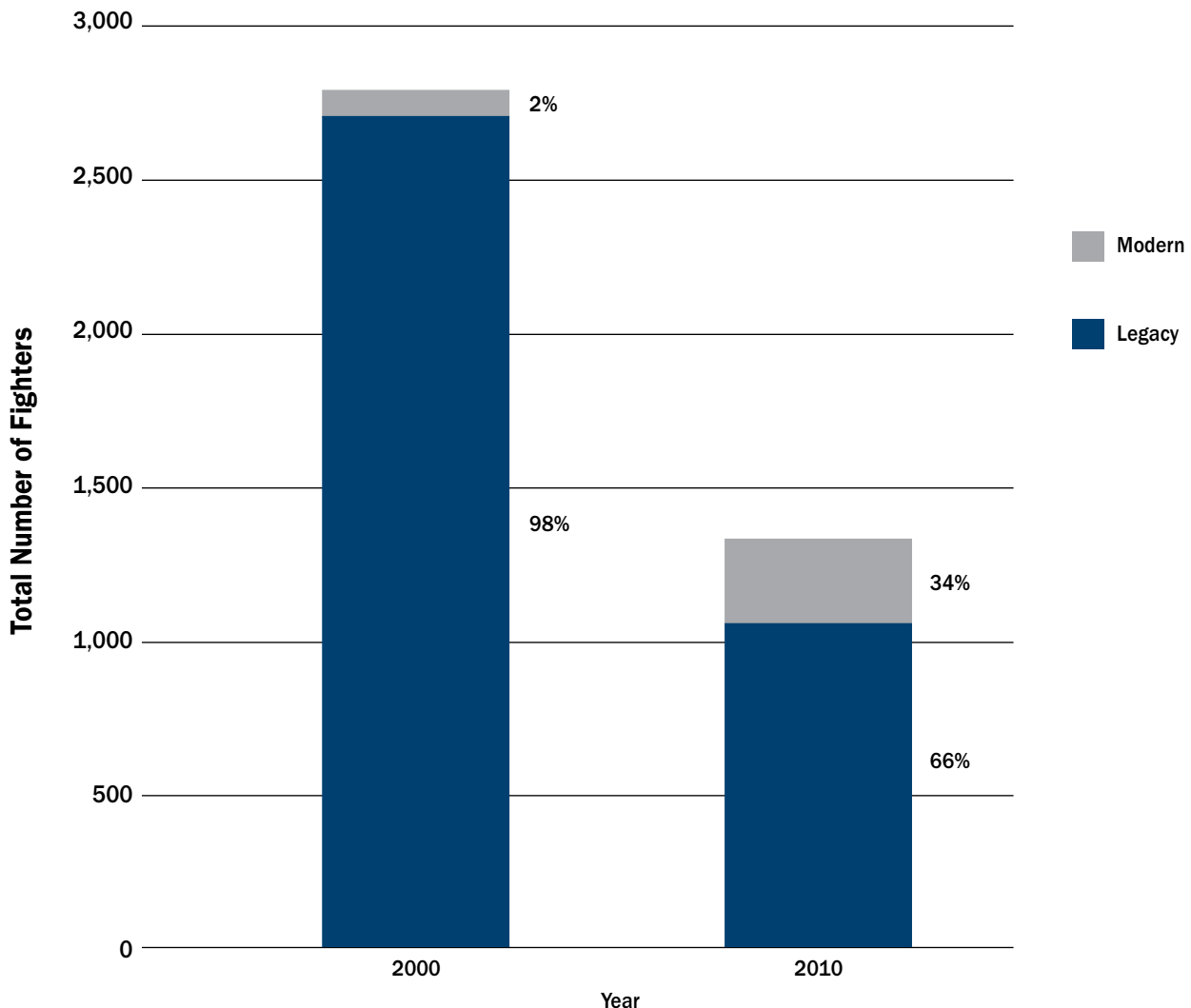


China's Fighter Force—Smaller, Better

China's People's Liberation Army Air Force is in the throes of a far-reaching fighter makeover. Since 2000, the PLA Air Force has cut by half the size of its fighter force—mostly by phasing out decrepit 1950s-era designs. At the same time, it has acquired many more modern fighters. As a result, China's fighter force, which was two percent modern in 2000, is today

34 percent modern. ("Modern" fighters are fourth generation types such as the Su-27, Su-30, J-10, and J-11, as well as third gen fighters outfitted with advanced radar or avionics.) The pursuit of quality over quantity in fighters is part of Beijing's broader push to field a military capable of fighting and winning a modern, technology-intensive war on its periphery.

Comparison of Modern and Legacy Chinese Fighters



Source: "Report to Congress, 2010," US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Washington, D.C., November 2010. Extrapolated from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance: 2010* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 404; and IISS, *The Military Balance: 2000-2001* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 197.