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<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/13/us-china-military-idUSKBN0NY0SV20150513>

China developing key aircraft to build amphibious capabilities

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Chinese researchers are getting closer to developing a military aircraft seen as key to building the country's amphibious capabilities, despite technical obstacles, state media reported on Wednesday.

The official China Daily, citing experts, said progress was being made in research on components for short take-off and vertical landing jets, which they said could be deployed on China's lone aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, and other ships to complement its fighter jets.

So-called STOVL planes are fixed-wing jets that can take off from a short runway and land vertically.

State-controlled Aviation Industry Corp of China (AVIC), the country's top aircraft maker, said via its website in March that two of its subsidiaries had signed a deal to develop the engine of a STOVL aircraft.

Naval and industry experts told the paper that China was focused on building its capabilities for amphibious operations.

"The navy can deploy helicopters and STOVL aircraft on the amphibious assault ship, designating helicopters to conduct anti-submarine tasks and using STOVL planes to perform mid- to long-range air defense as well as air-to-surface strikes," Senior Captain Zhang Junshe, a researcher at the PLA Naval Military Studies Research Institute, told China Daily.

Asian countries including the Philippines, Japan and Vietnam, have reacted with growing nervousness to Beijing's military build-up. China says it has the right to develop its armed forces.