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# General

## Support Provided

#### US has a general commitment of support

Frank Felber, 5-22, 22, The Mercury, https://themercury.com/opinion/felber-is-taiwan-the-next-ukraine/article\_b57bed5f-b2d4-5875-b02f-44afce26d652.html

With all of the focus on the war in Ukraine would this not be the best time for China to take Taiwan? One common trick in world politics is for a nation to take advantage of a focus on one issue in order to pursue controversial, usually aggressive actions elsewhere. The idea of China taking Taiwan while the rest of the world focuses on Ukraine is no different. On paper, China holds the advantage in a one-on-one fight. Looking at the active-duty personnel alone China possesses 2 million personnel compared to Taiwan’s 80,000. China also has a better legal standing than Russia does over Ukraine. Taiwan is not recognized as an independent state by the international community. Even the U.S. does not recognize it as an independent country. The Chinese government views Taiwan as a province in rebellion and nothing more. However, **simply invading Taiwan is not as easy as the above might make it sound. Congress passed a resolution during the 1950s that guaranteed Taiwan’s sovereignty against aggressive acts by Mainland** China.. **This** resolution has never been rescinded by Congress and **is binding to the presidency.** Another point of contention to consider is that **the U.S. Navy patrols the straits of Taiwan.** Any kind of action by the Chinese military has to contend with because the eality that if a U.S. ship is attacked it would be seen as an act of war against the United States. Neither nation would want such a war since it would threaten their substantial international trade, which now amounts to more than $660 billion. Another point to consider is the purchase of U.S. weapons by Taiwan. Since the Carter administration, **every U.S. President has sold arms to Taiwan in amounts ranging as high as $18.28 billion during the Trump administration. The Biden administration has continued this policy** with three sales thus far totaling $945 million. The weapons range from tanks to artillery to missile defense systems. There is a point of international economics that needs to be taken into account, and it could have the rest of the world demanding China’s leadership on a plate. At 90 percent of the total supply, Taiwan is the world’s largest producer of semiconductor chips, and those chips practically run all of the different kinds of military weapons to computers. If China were to invade, this supply would be cut — at least for the period between the onset of conflict and a Chinese takeover, if not longer. Such a disruption would create a shortage that no nation would stand for, at least not for long. This economic hold Taiwan has on the world might be its greatest defense since the international trade market essentially runs on the principles of the free-market philosophy. In essence, by having this hold Taiwan can dissuade China from invading. One final point concerns the geography of the island itself. W**hile the western half is mostly plains and not as defensible, the Eastern half is mountainous. Arguably even if the Chinese army can capture the cities on the western half of the island clearing out the Taiwanese military from the Eastern half might take decades. This is the same problem the U.S. faced in Afghanista**n since the mountains provided cover and a place to regroup. More to the point hasn’t Taiwan considered this very possibility for decades now? Would Taiwan allow itself to be deluded into the idea that a peaceful reunification is the only option? Would the Chinese government not take these factors into consideration before any invasion takes place? **The Communist party of China can be labeled a lot of things but reckless is not one of them, particularly if their control on power can be threatened. An invasion of Taiwan could do just that**

# POR

## US Support Causes China to Attack Taiwan

### Containment Risks War

#### No evidence China will attack Taiwan, only US containment would cause this

Michael Swaine, Quincy Institute, June 2, 2022, Threat Inflation and the Chinese Military, https://quincyinst.org/report/threat-inflation-and-the-chinese-military/

Another example of such poorly grounded, alarmist speculation about Chinese military intentions concerns supposed PLA plans to attack Taiwan. One American PLA analyst has asserted that Beijing will likely attack Taiwan once it achieves the military capability to do so to a high level of confidence, and speculates that this could occur anytime soon.119 And even a former commander of INDOPACOM has stated that China might use force against Taiwan by 2027.120

**No strong, much less conclusive, evidence supports such an assertion**. While **recent increased PLA activities** near Taiwan certainly raise serious concerns, it is **by no means clear that such activities signal an overall clear intent to attack the island**, much less to do so once Beijing believes it has the capacity to succeed in such an effort. To the contrary**, a close reading of the timing of such activities suggests that they are more logically understood as deterrence signals sent in response to specific actions taken by the U.S. or Taiwan, or more broadly as indications of efforts to strengthen China’s overall defense capabilities along its maritime periphery.**121

This kind of extreme rhetoric is also found in nonauthoritative assessments of what China would supposedly do after it were somehow able to militarily seize and hold Taiwan. Echoing the so-called domino theory of the Cold War, some analysts speculate that such a development would lead Beijing to “go global,” or at the very least “go regional,” involving the use of its military to seize areas beyond Taiwan or other disputed territories.122

Such a prospect has even led one senior U.S. Asia defense official to state publicly in congressional testimony, reportedly with White House approval, that Taiwan occupies a critical “strategic node” in a first island chain defense perimeter against China. The apparent assumption is that, if Beijing is allowed to control Taiwan, the rest of the region will be under a dire threat of military conquest by China.123

Although no one can predict with confidence what China’s ultimate strategic goals might be, **there is again no evidence of such a Chinese intention of regional (much less global) military conquest, and little evidence that Taiwan is necessarily a vital and logical jumping-off point for such an ambitious objective**.124 **The only factor that could cause Beijing to conclude that it would be worth taking the enormous risks involved in goose-stepping militarily across Asia (and possibly beyond) would be a clear U.S., Japanese, and larger Western commitment to contain, weaken, and eventually destroy the PRC regime and collapse China economically by controlling Asia and cutting off vital imports.** Some observers, such as Elbridge Colby, argue that China is likely to undertake such a Chinese drive for hegemony, and that the only way to counter it is to create an Asian–wide, anti–China coalition with the clear ability to militarily deter any such moves.125 But this is supposed to happen without causing the Chinese to fear that the coalition arrayed against it wishes to weaken China and overthrow the PRC regime.

### US Support Triggers Taiwan Aggression

#### Presence emboldens Taiwan to test redlines and causes China to miscalculate US commitments --- causes escalation

Eric Stephen **Gons 11**, former RAND-U.S. Air Force Academy Superintendent's Fellow, current consultant at the Boston Consulting Group, Access Challenges and Implications for Airpower in the Western Pacific, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/rgs\_dissertations/2011/RAND\_RGSD267.pdf

[edited for objectionable language]

Despite this impasse, it seems for now that both China and Taiwan realize that they have more to gain by cooperation than confrontation. **However, bumps** in this relationship **will occur**. Managing their differences requires open communication and a willingness to engage. Unfortunately, these attributes are largely absent in the relationship. China and Taiwan have limited formal communications channels, and thus **no formal mechanism to resolve crises**. This means that there is the **very real and ongoing potential** that a **small problem** could **quickly become a big problem.** In crises of the past, both governments have tended to use the **U**nited **S**tates as an intermediary, but **this method is far from perfect**. First, the **U**nited **S**tates is not up to the role of impartial mediator – it too has **much at stake** in any Taiwan-China crisis. Second, the United States has only limited sway with either side. Third, the PRC government tends to **close itself off** in the midst of crises. The communication problems are **very worrisome**, and hold the greatest potential that the PRC and Taiwan will be in conflict with each other.93 ¶ Bad decisions may result from **bad information**, **miscalculation of costs and benefits**, a **mis-estimation** of the likelihood of success, or just plain old irrationality. Unfortunately, there are **many opportunities for misperceptions** to **complicate** the **decision chain in a Taiwan crisis.** The **inherent** U.S. participation in any cross-strait dialog is both calming and concerning. It is calming because the United States can act as an unofficial communication channel between two parties who tend to communicate poorly, if at all. It is concerning because the existence of a crisis **triangle** compounds the opportunities for bad information – now each actor must not only understand ~~his~~ [their] own capabilities and likely reactions, he must know the capabilities and reactions of two other actors, and must know that they know the capabilities and reactions of the other two actors, and so forth.¶ Beyond the simple volume of information that each actor needs to process, we can identify some characteristics of the Taiwan situation that make perfect information hard to obtain. Some potential areas of misunderstanding include:¶ x Taiwan may **overestimate** the **probability** that the **U**nited **S**tates will intervene in a crisis, **skewing their decision calculus** towards **crossing a Chinese “red line,”**94 assuming China will be deterred by the prospect of U.S. intervention.¶ x China may not understand U.S. commitment or the conditions under which the **U**nited **S**tates will intervene. An estimate of Taiwan’s will to fight is also critical to China’s decision calculus.¶ x The United States may underestimate PLA capabilities or Taiwan’s will to fight.95¶ Decreased ambiguity would aid the decisionmaking of all parties. U.S. policy should encourage cross-strait dialog, including establishing permanent communications channels. Any intentional ambiguity in policy necessarily raises the risks involved in a crisis management chain. Most notably, the intentional American strategic ambiguity regarding its commitment to Taiwan carries with it serious risks should the Taiwan situation devolve into crisis. The U.S. position is intentionally ambiguous – intending to deter China from aggressive action while avoiding giving Taiwan free reign to declare independence.96 It thus serves a useful diplomatic purpose, carefully balancing competing commitments. However, the **U**nited **S**tates must be prepared to **clarify** its **strategic ambiguity** quickly should an emergency arise. Failure to do so would obfuscate the decisionmaking of China and Taiwan, and **increase** the **risk of** an **unintentional war** which the **U**nited **S**tates may be compelled to enter. Other measures may further increase information available to other actors – for example through increased military-military contacts, open communication channels, etc.¶ U.S. policymakers must be realistic about PLA capabilities, and the **prospects for victory** in a war over Taiwan. While it is evident that the **U**nited **S**tates possesses the most advanced military in the world, the PLA has advanced systems as well, many of which specifically **exploit U.S. weaknesses.** Given PLA strategic depth and the enormous access challenges the United States faces in the western Pacific, many typical U.S. advantages may be **nullified**. Further, pursuing a deterrent strategy like deploying large concentrations of aircraft to forward bases may actually have an effect the opposite of intended deterrence. A large concentration of USAF assets within easy range of PLA ballistic missiles may be too tempting a target to pass up. If Chinese decisionmakers feel the situation is deteriorating anyway, **preemptive action** may be their best option to achieving their goals. In this way, U.S. misunderstanding of PLA capabilities would be disastrous to crisis stability. This prospect should motivate U.S. policymakers to either take steps to address weaknesses, or **change** foreign **policy to accomplish the feasible.**

### Support undermines Diplomacy

#### Demilitarizing the region by removing the carrier is the only way to avoid escalation --- presence undermines diplomatic solutions

Vasilis **Trigkas 14**, visiting research fellow at the institute for Sino-EU relations at Tsinghua University & a non-resident WSD Handa fellow at Pacific Forum CSIS, “Aircraft Carriers in the Taiwan Strait,” Dec 29, http://thediplomat.com/2014/12/aircraft-carriers-in-the-taiwan-strait/

In the 1996 crisis, the U.S. “carrier monopoly” neutralized the Chinese tactical advantage over Taiwan by highlighting the U.S. strategic dominance. China’s leadership saw the potential destruction that an attack against U.S. carriers would unleash. **However,** in a renewed Taiwanese crisis today, China could **pass the ball to the U.S.** side. Its single carrier has delivered strategic risk parity in the straits. As the Chinese carrier would face-off against the U.S. carriers, a **war of nerves would begin**. The longer the confrontation and the maneuvering, the **greater the possibility for a mistake** that would lead to **a strike on a carrier** with perhaps **irreversible consequences** for the relationship between the two superpowers and for **world stability**. As China would enjoy the advantage of playing on its own doorstep with **Chinese public opinion fiercely opposing any retreat**, and is it would be willing to dance with the U.S. **closer to the edge**, the U.S. would have to **deescalate** and take the conflict to the UN or risk a **nuclear confrontation**. Thus the “predictable unpredictability” of escalation and Mutually Assured Destruction ensures, according to experts, that a U.S.-China aircraft carrier face-off would not be a prolonged confrontation and, most importantly, that it would end peacefully as both sides’ rational strategy would follow the norms of nuclear deterrence.¶ However, as Donald Kagan – one of Yale’s most distinguished professors – once put it, **miscalculations** and irrational decisions have been the norm in **history**, as old hatreds and wounded honor inspire dangerous and irrational actions. Even though experts and war simulation models confirm that a potential aircraft carrier face-off would end peacefully, Kagan’s observation stands as a **clear reminder that preempting a clash** by dialogue and **demilitarizing a conflict zone** is the safest and perhaps the **sole path for sustained peace**. After all, even a U.S. strategic retreat in case of a cross-strait crisis would leave an irreversible mark on the China-U.S. relationship, increase U.S. embitterment against China, encouraging militarization and an ever accelerating arms race.¶ In their post-1991 engagement, China and the United States have shown that their commitment to a peaceful resolution of disputes remains at the forefront of their strategic relationship. From the 1996 strait crisis to the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 to the 2001 U.S. spy plane collision, the U.S. and China have been optimistic about each other’s intentions and mutually de-escalated dangerous confrontations. A DPP government in Taiwan, with an **assertive** political **agenda** promoting a distinct Taiwanese identity and de jure independence, **would unquestionably test Sino-U.S. relations.** Beijing and Washington should **preempt** any **possible cross-strait military buildup** and engage in a sincere dialogue about Taiwan’s democratic future. A **clash of carriers would be a risk that the world cannot afford to take**.¶ As Stephen Hadley, a former U.S. national security advisor, once noted, in the most pivotal relationship for peace in our time – the US-China Relationship – seeing the glass half full instead of half empty is an important forma mentis in crisis management. The U.S. and China have shown in their communiqués that the glass over the question of Taiwan is half full and thus the solution should be **political** and **not military.** Managing renewed cross-strait tensions peacefully will be another significant brick in constructing a “new major powers” relationship and promoting long-term global prosperity.

## China Won’t Attack Taiwan

#### Logistics block a China invasion of Taiwan

Erik Davis, 8-27, 24, Fl loating piers and sinking hopes: China’s logistics challenge in invading Taiwan, https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/floating-piers-and-sinking-hopes-chinas-logistics-challenge-in-invading-taiwan/

No doubt the Chinese military was paying attention. **Last month the U**nited **S**tates **disassembled and removed the floating pier it had assembled at a Gaza beach to take aid deliveries. Heavy seas beat it.** Such a pier supposedly can be assembled in hours, but this one took almost a month. **When it was operational, waves damaged it, and it repeatedly had to be pulled away from the beach to prevent its destruction**. Once it had to be towed to a port for repairs. Waves drove ashore boats that serviced it. **And all that was nothing compared with the challenges that China’s armed forces would face in trying to deliver a mountain of personnel, equipment and supplies in an invasion of Taiwan**. The pier’s lesson for China is that invading the island would be a doomed endeavour. **The weather of the Taiwan Strait makes the eastern Mediterranean look like a bathtub.** Defenders would attack China’s piers. **Almost every beach where China might want to build floating piers is overlooked by terrain that would turn the unloading zones into kill zones**. **Even before those problems arise, building and installing a floating pier is a huge exercise. The US Department of Defense budgeted $230 million** for the one at Gaza, called the Trident Pier**. It was operational for 20 day**s—less than half of the time after it was positioned—and handled only about 9000 tonnes of supplies. Logistics is almost always harder than planned, but joint logistics over the shore (JLOTS)— moving people and things from ships to land without a port—is subject to innumerable kinds of friction. **Any Chinese invasion of Taiwan would require improvised piers in many locations simultaneously**. They’d be part of a logistical effort that would be enormously larger than anything the Chinese navy has attempted. Even optimistic estimates of just 300,000 personnel for an invasion force would be double the international forces fighting in Afghanistan at the height of the global war on terror. **Higher estimates suggest an invasion of Taiwan could need as many as 2 million soldiers. Few of them, and very little of their equipment and supplies, could go by air. Almost everything would have to cross the strait in ships. Taiwan’s seven major ports would almost certainly be contested, guarded by sea drones and subject to sabotage.** The island has 14 beaches usable for military landings. All but one are surrounded by cliffs and urban jungles, perfect places for the Taiwanese army to hide forces that would attack anything coming ashore and anything used in bringing it ashore, including the piers themselves Mother Nature would be doing her bit, too. Indeed, her efforts may be enough to prevent using the beaches in the first place. Also called the Black Ditch, the strait is known for ‘… strong winds, wave swells, and fog…’ half the year. The storms, heavy rain and squally winds of monsoon seasons sweep it and the coasts on either side. An average of six typhoons hit the strait each year. As Ian Easton details in his book The Chinese Invasion Threat, the weather of the strait shrinks the windows available for an invasion to just two months of ‘good suitability’: April and October. That is a narrow time constraint that worsens a vast logistics challenge. **Apart from soldiers and their equipment, the Chinese navy would need to ferry food, fuel and ammunition to them. The landing alone could require 30 million tonnes going ashore**, which far outstrips the capacity of the Chinese navy’s amphibious transport fleet. Recognising this, the navy is incorporating civilian roll-on, roll-off ferries (roros) as reinforcements. While China has fewer than 50 roros today, it could have two or three times as many by 2032. That still leaves the problem of getting over the beach. China should view the story of the Trident Pier as a cautionary tale. JLOTS operations are technically complex, costly and risky**. The security threat to the improvised pier at Gaza was hardly comparable to the one that Taiwan and its friends would present to a Chinese cross-strait amphibious operation. Nor were the weather challenges comparable, though the sea state off Gaza was still bad enough to ensure the US pier was usually not functional.** The money that the US spent on the pier also paid to show China just how hard JLOTS can be. If that lesson deters war, it was a cheap price to pay.

#### Natural geographic factors prevent China from invading

#### Invasion is impossible---geography, capabilities, AND time deter attempts.

**Sacks ’24** [David; January 10; fellow for Asia studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, M.A. in International Relations and International Economics, with honors, from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies; “Why China Would Struggle to Invade Taiwan,” <https://www.cfr.org/article/why-china-would-struggle-invade-taiwan>]

To **invade** Taiwan, China would have to conduct an **extraordinarily complex** military operation, **synchronizing air**, **land**, and **sea** power as well as **electronic** and **cyber**warfare.

The Taiwan Strait, over ninety miles wide, is **incredibly choppy**, and due to two **monsoon** seasons and other **extreme weather** events, a seaborne invasion is **only** viable a **few** months out of the year.

Transporting hundreds of thousands of soldiers across the Taiwan Strait would take **weeks** and require **thousands** of ships. Each crossing would take **hours**, allowing Taiwan to **target** the ships, **mass troops** on potential landing sites, and erect **barriers**.

China would need to **shift** military assets to its eastern coast and undertake other visible preparations for an invasion, which **Taiwan** and the **U**nited **S**tates would likely be able to **detect**.

Some questions remains about whether China has the naval vessels it would need to invade Taiwan successfully. China’s amphibious fleet is relatively **small**, and although Beijing will likely turn to **civilian** ships to sustain and supplement an invading force, those take **longer** to unload and would be **more vulnerable** to Taiwanese missiles.

Even if Chinese troops successfully cross the strait, **few** deep-water ports and beaches in Taiwan could **accommodate** a large landing force.

Beijing would also have to assume Taiwan could **destroy** its major ports at a conflict’s outset to **prevent** an invader from **using** them.

Taiwan’s **west coast** has **shallow** waters extending from most of its beaches, meaning they are **not ideal** for an invading force.

Taiwan’s **east coast** is lined by **cliffs** that are **too steep** for an invading force to scale. Moving to Taiwan’s major population centers is only possible via a few narrow passes and tunnels, which Taiwan can destroy or defend.

The **D-Day** operation in **W**orld **W**ar **II** was the **largest** amphibious invasion in military history, involving seven thousand ships and almost two hundred thousand troops who crossed the nearly one-hundred-mile English Channel. Over a period of **three-plus weeks**, 850,000 troops landed on the beaches of Normandy to liberate France. A Chinese amphibious **invasion** of Taiwan would likely have to dwarf **D-Day** in **scale**.

Due to the **shallow** water, China would have to anchor ships **far** from Taiwan’s coast and move equipment to the shores slowly, making the ships **vulnerable** to Taiwanese missiles and artillery.

Taiwan has also invested in defenses, from **mines** to **anti-landing spikes**, and mobile **missile launchers**.

Despite China’s rapid military modernization and its focus on preparing for military scenarios in the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan has **inherent** defensive **advantages** that China will find **difficult** to overcome.

Even if China’s military successfully established a beachhead on Taiwan, it would **struggle** to navigate the **mountainous terrain** to secure the island.

Taiwan’s military, by contrast, has the advantage of **knowing the land** and terrain and how to defend it.

Taiwan has mountain peaks reaching over **twelve thousand feet**. Taiwanese troops could hide in those mountains and wage a **guerrilla warfare** campaign.

Traversing those mountains to move inland would be **challenging**, rendering Taiwan’s east coast far less useful and forcing invaders to focus on attacking the island’s west coast. In addition, although Taiwan has major ports located in the south, moving to the north is also hard because there are few major roadways and many river crossings. As a result, a Chinese invasion would likely have to focus squarely on the ports and beaches located near Taipei.

Strategic Chokepoints

With few viable beaches and ports to choose from and the difficulty of moving forces across the island, China’s concentration would turn to **Taiwan’s capital** region, home to over one-fourth of its population. China’s military would seek to seize **control** of **Taipei** and depose Taiwan’s government.

Driven by the political objective of establishing full control over Taiwan, China would need to seize control of Taiwan’s capital of Taipei.

However, gaining control of Taipei to establish full control over Taiwan would be **enormously difficult**. **Few routes** lead into the city, which sits in a bowl, ringed by mountains that defenders can utilize to target an invading force.

To prevent China’s military from seizing the capital, Taiwan can choose to **destroy** the city’s **major port** and the **tunnels** and **highways** leading into the city.

Even if China’s military entered Taipei, it would have to consider conducting **urban warfare**.

Costly Urban Warfare

Given the island’s terrain, most of Taiwan’s twenty-three million people live in a handful of cities, with seven million residing in Taipei.

To conquer Taiwan, China would therefore be forced into **urban combat**, fighting street by street.

That approach would mean a **slow**, **costly invasion**.

Taiwan has inherent advantages that will make an invasion **difficult**, **expensive**, and **uncertain**. Still, the Taiwanese people’s will to fight and resist will likely prove more decisive than mountains, ports, roads, or the ocean. If China conducts the operation with little opposition, it can probably navigate and overcome those obstacles. However, if confronted with millions of people determined to repel an invasion, China will face a much tougher task.

#### Leadership fears losing

#### Cost of losing deters.

**Klare 23** – The Nation’s defense correspondent, professor emeritus of peace and world-security studies at Hampshire College and senior visiting fellow at the Arms Control Association.

Michael Klare, March 17 2023, “Are We Manufacturing a Taiwan Crisis Over Nothing?” The Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/taiwan-crisis-china-invasion/

Exercises like these certainly indicate that Chinese leaders are building the capacity to undertake an invasion, should they deem it necessary. But issuing threats and acquiring military capabilities **do not** necessarily **signify intent** to **take action**. The CCP’s top leaders are survivors of **ruthless intraparty struggles** and know how to calculate risks and benefits. **However strongly they may feel** about Taiwan, they are **not inclined to order an invasion that could result in China’s defeat and their own** disgrace, **imprisonment, or death.**

#### Land and lack of resources prevents an invasion by China

Pietrucca, May 18, 2022, Mike “Starbaby” Pietrucha retired from the Air Force as a colonel. He was an instructor electronic warfare officer in the F-4G Wild Weasel and the F-15E Strike Eagle, amassing 156 combat missions over 10 combat deployments. As an irregular warfare operations officer, he has two additional combat deployments in the company of U.S. Army infantry, combat engineer, and military police units in Iraq and Afghanistan, MATEUR HOUR PART I: THE CHINESE INVASION OF TAIWAN, https://warontherocks.com/2022/05/amateur-hour-part-i-the-chinese-invasion-of-taiwan/

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine set off a flurry of handwringing over Taiwan. Russia, in this interpretation, “broke the ice” by attacking Ukraine, emboldening China versus Taiwan. But **any** such **action by China would likely run into a similar buzzsaw of resistance, while lacking Russian advantages such as access to overland transit. Ukraine is not Taiw**an, and regardless of what Chinese leadership thinks they are learning about the benefits of naked aggression, **the People’s Liberation Army lacks the necessary power projection and sustainment capability and capacity to execute an opposed occupation of a densely urbanized island packed with citizens who have no interest in living under Communist rule**. Since 1949, when the defeated Kuomintang retreated to Formosa, the Chinese Communist Party has maintained the fictional goal of “reunifying” Taiwan by force. That’s never been possible. Even after a victory on the mainland, China has never had the capability to take Taiwan, particularly in the face of US opposition in three successive Taiwan Strait crises. While the Chinese military has strengthened, re-organized, and reequipped with new technology, it’s still not possible. Yet despite publicly releasing data that shows how inadequate Chinese amphibious capabilities are, the Pentagon has dreaded the Taiwan scenario for over 20 years. The conventional wisdom remains that improvements in technology and capacity will somehow allow China to invade the island, notably highlighted in 2021 when Commander of the Indo-Pacific Command, Adm. Phil **Davidson, postulated** a Chinese attack against Taiwan by 2027. Adm. Charles Richard doubled down in early May, stating that China is “watching the war in Ukraine closely and will likely use nuclear coercion to their advantage in the future. **Their intent is to achieve the military capability to reunify Taiwan by 2027 if not sooner.” It’s not clear what analysis backs up these assertions, as long-running studies of the Naval War College’s China Maritime Studies Institute regularly conclude the opposite: China lacks the capability and the capacity to handle a full-scale invasion against a defended island coun**try. Instead of viewing the Russian invasion of Ukraine as encouragement of authoritarian neighbors, China and the United States should look at it as a cautionary tale about what happens when amateurs go to war. One key fact about the People’s Liberation Army (**PL**A) is that it is a party army first and a professional army second. It **has not engaged in any major ground combat action since** 1979, when the Chinese military invaded Vietnam, which ended in disaster for the aggressors. Vietnam was able to successfully resist, causing such a high casualty count that China was forced to withdraw due simply to attrition and the inability of the PLA to supply their own forces for combat operations. Looking further back we find that C**hina’s navy has never fought a combat action of any significant size, intensity, or duration. China’s air force last participated in combat operations in the 1955** Yijiangshan Campaign, when they were used as aerial bombardment assets, targeting fixed positions. **China’s military still struggles with joint operations. It has not had to plan a logistical campaign or deal with evacuation efforts for large numbers of casualties. All of these issues together would seem to spell doom for a complex, amphibious campaign.**

#### China doesn’t have the amphibious resources

Pietrucca, May 18, 2022, Mike “Starbaby” Pietrucha retired from the Air Force as a colonel. He was an instructor electronic warfare officer in the F-4G Wild Weasel and the F-15E Strike Eagle, amassing 156 combat missions over 10 combat deployments. As an irregular warfare operations officer, he has two additional combat deployments in the company of U.S. Army infantry, combat engineer, and military police units in Iraq and Afghanistan, MATEUR HOUR PART I: THE CHINESE INVASION OF TAIWAN, https://warontherocks.com/2022/05/amateur-hour-part-i-the-chinese-invasion-of-taiwan/

Equipment comparisons aside**, it is not entirely clear that China has the logistical capabilities to move a large force ashore and support it. In an amphibious operation**, **getting all of the pieces and parts together in the proper sequence is a major challenge, and there is simply no substitute for combat experienc**e. While two of the three landing zones in the American Zone were assaulted by green troops, the logisticians who planned and executed the assault were experienced and had the benefit of previous direct experience, to say nothing of lessons trickling in from the Pacific theater. Attempting an assault where every member of the planning staff and execution team is inexperienced is a recipe for confusion, if not outright catastrophe. The challenges faced from a logistical standpoint are greater than they were in 1943. Vehicles are heavier, fuel and ammunition consumption is higher, and captured gasoline is not terribly useful for the powerful diesel engines used by most fighting vehicles. The electronic systems of modern AFVs require them to be running most of the time, so that even standing still has a fuel penalty — a point illustrated well in Ukraine.

**If a Chinese force is to effectively sustain itself in combat operations, it needs to bring up support forces, none of which can swim aboard by themselves and only a small fraction of which can fit in the LSTs. That means that ports are not optional,** but the difference in ship designs between the 1930s and today has effects that reduce the ability to lift vehicles rather than increase it. Today’s container ships are not particularly useful for transporting vehicles and are largely dependent on intact port facilities for offload. Container ships with onboard cranes, called “geared” ships, do exist but compose less than 10% of the global container ship fleet. Thus, in order to transport containerized cargo, the Chinese military will need to gain control of a port.

The obvious method of movement of large numbers of vehicles is to use vehicle carriers, ranging from the big, dedicated roll-on/roll-off ships to seagoing ferries. Some of these ships are configured to carry passengers, while others are pure car and truck carriers. Extreme caution must be used when transporting heavy vehicles, as the high-clearance vehicle decks tend to be higher in the ship, threatening the ship’s stability when heavily laden. Many ships of this type were designed to carry empty vehicles from the factory to the market; vehicle ferries are more often required to carry loaded vehicles (plus drivers and passengers). The ability to carry 36-ton AFVs was generally not a design consideration when these classes of ships were designed.

**Therefore it is necessary to capture a port relatively intact, but even then, the landing forces are vulnerable. The war in Ukraine illustrated this point when an unexplained explosion occurred on the Alligator-class Assault Transport BDK-65 Saratov, pier side in the captured Ukrainian port of Berdyansk. Surveillance video of the port showed a single small explosion, followed by a large secondary explosion 21 seconds later that started a fire aboard the ship and led to further explosions. Two neighboring Ropucha-class transports, Tsesar Kunikov and Novocherkassk, were showered with flaming debris and suffered casualties**, but managed to move off and extinguish their deck fires.

#### China’s Miliitary is Not Prepared for a war with Taiwan

International New York Times, May 26, 2022, US speeds up reshaping of Taiwan’s defence to deter China, <https://www.deccanherald.com/international/us-speeds-up-reshaping-of-taiwan-s-defence-to-deter-china-1112509.html>, US speeds up reshaping of Taiwan’s defence to deter China

**Chinese leaders face a complicated calculus in weighing whether their military can seize Taiwan without incurring an overwhelming cost.** A Pentagon report released last year said China’s military modernization eff ort continued to widen thecapability gap between the country’s forces and the Taiwanese military. But **the Chinese military has not fought a war since 1979, when it attacked Vietnam in an offensive that ended in a loss or stalematefor China.** To take Taiwan, **the Chinese navy would need to cross more than 100 miles of water and make anamphibious assault, an operation that is much more complex than anything Putin has tried inUkraine**. And in any case, **perceived capabilities on paper might not translate to performance in the field.** “As we have learned in Ukraine, no one really knows how hard a military will fight until a war actuallystarts,” said James G. **Stavridis, a retired four-star admiral and former dean of the Fletcher School ofLaw and Diplomacy at Tuft s University. “China is probably not ready to take a risk of an invasion with current force levels and capabilities in terms of attacking Taiwan**.”

#### Xi knows a war would imperial his leadership

Denny **Roy, PhD, 24**, 4-17-2024, Denny Roy is a Senior Fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu specializing in Asia-Pacific strategic and security issues. He holds a PhD in political science from the University of Chicago and is the author of four books and many journal and op-ed articles, "Why China remains unlikely to invade Taiwan," *Lowy Institute*, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-china-remains-unlikely-invade-taiwan // QUEERAMID

[Edited for Grammar]

Even with China’s massive arsenal of modern warships, combat aircraft and missiles, Beijing is nowhere near the level of superiority that would guarantee a successful invasion given the probability of US and Japanese military resistance. Xi would need to worry about more than **ferrying enough forces** and their supplies across the Strait through the gauntlet of Taiwanese, US and Japanese **ships, missiles, submarines, mines and drones**. A cross-Strait war would **disrupt regional economic activity**, threatening the livelihoods of **millions of Chinese**. The resulting social turmoil could **endanger Xi’s rule**. A Chinese blockade of Taiwan’s ports would be less risky, but would have disadvantages. Taiwan’s government may choose to resist. Beijing’s action would stimulate **increased anti-China cooperation** around the world; China could expect to suffer **sanctions** over a long period. And the United States would have ample time to **surge forces into the region** to assist Taiwan. Xi reached the pinnacle of the Party hierarchy through a career of careful positioning and quiet ruthlessness, not by taking grand gambles. Beijing’s attempts to intimidate the US government into abandoning support for Taiwan have failed. Helping Taiwan to defend itself remains bipartisan US policy, even supported by Republican Party politicians who want to stop arming Ukraine. Despite the longstanding US policy of “strategic ambiguity”, President Joe Biden has publicly stated four times that US forces would intervene in Taiwan’s defense. Xi doesn’t necessarily need to solve the Taiwan problem during his tenure to **earn a legacy** in Chinese history. Xi has three huge domestic projects. The first is restoring the **primacy and authority** of the Communist Party, which prior to Xi’s tenure as general secretary had suffered a decline in prestige due to rampant corruption, decentralized governance and the empowerment of civil society. The second is what Xi sees as **ideological purification**, including cleansing China of “Western” ideas and values. Third, Xi must oversee the transition of China’s economy from reliance on exports and investment in infrastructure to a **new model that can maintain robust growth** and advance China from a middle-income to a high-income country. Success in these projects would be enough to secure glory for Xi, who already enjoys a section in the Party’s constitution honoring “Xi Jinping Thought.” A struggling economy does not make Beijing more likely to launch a war. China’s economic malaise appears to have **dampened the Chinese public’s enthusiasm** for a Taiwan campaign. The natural reaction to a lack of strength at home is to be **more cautious** in foreign affairs, not more aggressive. Thus, the appearance of serious issues in China’s economy in 2023 led to Xi trying to lower tensions with the United States, and a direct appeal to the business community to **invest more in China during Xi’s visit to California** last year. Several US commentators and politicians raised alarm about Xi purportedly “warning” Biden during the California summit that China plans to forcibly seize Taiwan. A more accurate summary of Xi’s remarks would be that he restated the decades-old mantra that unification will happen. He gave no timeline, he said he hoped it would occur by peaceful means, and he denied that his government has a plan to attack Taiwan. Like any People’s Republic paramount leader, Xi must **repeat the promise** of eventual unification, build up a military machine that deters independence, insist that the international community adheres to the “one China” principle, and maintain pressure on Taipei to enter negotiations with Beijing. There is no indication that Xi’s position in China is in jeopardy due to a perception he is not tough enough toward Taiwan. Xi needs merely **to avoid Taiwan declaring formal independence**. If Taiwan did do so, Xi would probably opt for war. But even Taiwanese governments controlled by the Democratic Progressive Party, which rejects the idea of Taiwan being part of China, have shown that **they will not cross this line**.

# CON

## Advantage Answers

### Answers to: China Will Negotiate

#### There is no incentive for China to negotiate – what they are arguing for is a unilateral concession to China

#### China won’t negotiate

#### Harpley 7/19 (Unshin Lee Harpley, July 19, 2024 “China Halts Nuclear Arms Control Talks with US: Why and What’s Next” https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/19/china-nuclear-weapons-policy-deterrence-no-first-use/)

“It provides them just more flexibility in the way that they approach their military modernization,” Rice said. “In terms of nuclear buildup, China wants to have its own autonomy in decision making. Having a formal agreement, if it ever reached that point, would fundamentally limit Beijing’s options by essentially handcuffing itself to an international, or at least a bilateral agreement on those matters.”China’s rapid advancements in nuclear power has been a significant concern for the U.S. and its allies. The Pentagon estimates China could possess more than 1,000 operational nuclear warheads by 2030, many of which will be deployed at readiness levels. Last week at the NATO summit, the alliance warned of Beijing’s expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal, pointing to “more warheads and a larger number of sophisticated delivery systems” and urging China to engage in strategic risk reduction talks. The current weapons count isn’t a major concern for U.S. defense leaders, as Washington holds about 3,700 nuclear warheads, compared to Beijing’s estimated 400 warheads. But with their substantial investment in nuclear weapons, the Chinese aspire to achieve “a greater level of parity with Washington and Moscow, so that it could also make decisions and engage on these issues from a position of greater strength and somewhat equality,” said Hart. Now, with both China and Russia refusing to negotiate measures to constrain the nuclear arms race, experts are concerned. On top of that, tensions remain high across the Taiwan Strait, as China eyes to bolster its arsenal so that it has a “greater leverage in the event of a Taiwan scenario,” according to Hart. This underscores the critical modernization of Washington’s nuclear triad. “The way we counter these threats is through deterrence, and it must be backed up with a credible force,”

### Answers to: Support Emboldens Taiwan

#### Emboldenment theory is backwards—commitment means the U.S. can push restraint

**Cohen ‘18** [PhD, George Mason University’s Schar School of Policy and Government, Jordan Cohen, “Alliances Are a Net Gain, Not a Loss, for America,” National Interest. June 28, 2018. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/alliances-are-net-gain-not-loss-america-24562>]

The second **myth** that Trump’s statements feed is that United States’ alliances provide **minimal benefits**. Individuals who agree with this argue that Washington’s commitments to its friends both limit America’s ability to establish its supremacy and **entrap it** into conflict because of contractual obligations. Consequently, by retrenching from formal defense pacts, the United States could elongate its unipolar status.

**Inverting this logic**, however, **shows the reality** of the situation. First, allies limiting American primacy is a net benefit. Frankly, reducing the **amount of war** and conflict is **inherently advantageous**, and can preserve U.S. economic and military strength. In his 2015 article, “[The Myth of Entangling Alliances](https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/IS3904_pp007-048.pdf),” Michael Beckley argues that U.S. defense pacts reduce the risks of conflict. This is because, by having **many allies across the world**, America faces **conflicting** commitments and **needs to restrain itself militarily** so that it can satisfy these varying agreements. The **offsetting obligations** allow Washington to avoid unnecessary conflict. Thus, **similar to investment portfolios**, America’s significant **number** of **alliances reduce the risk of future war**.

Furthermore, because of Washington’s **dominant** position in its **alliance hierarchies**, it can effectively **restrain** its allies from great conflicts. Smaller countries that do not want to increase their security risk will not engage in wars that their stronger allies wish to avoid. These **small countries see a security benefit** from great power alliances, and the former is **subservient** to the latter. For example, in Asia after World War II, **Washington restrained South Korea** from attacking North Korea and **Taiwan** from fighting China via threats to reduce American military and economic support. Moreover, the United States threatened to **end its arms sales to Iran**, thus forcing Tehran to avoid joining the 1973 oil embargo. Accordingly, **America’s alliances provide** it **leverage** that increases its immediate security and decrease global conflict.

Overall, Trump and other critics fundamentally misunderstand the benefit to the U.S. alliance network. NATO and other allies serve to maintain the current rules-based international order, reduce Washington’s risk of war, and decrease levels of global conflict. Therefore, **abandoning U.S. allies** under the guise of “America first” **would harm American security,** and just mean “America alone.”

#### Biden has already backed down from conflict with China and won’t escalate, non-uniques their scenarios

**Lederer Sep 28** (Edith M. Lederer received a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and Master of Arts in communications from Stanford University. “China hopes Biden turns statement on no Cold War into action”, Associated Press, September 28, 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/china-hopes-biden-turns-statement-cold-war-action-80291419> )B$

UNITED NATIONS -- China’s U.N. ambassador expressed hope Tuesday that President Joe Biden will translate his statement that the United States has no intention of starting a “new Cold War” with China into actions, saying he should avoid “a confrontational approach” and “provocative attacks against China." “We sincerely hope the U.S. will walk the walk by truly abandoning the Cold War mentality,” Zhang Jun said in a virtual press conference following the annual meeting of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly, which ended Monday. "I believe that if both sides walked towards each other, they will be able to see a healthy and stable China-U.S. relationship,” he said. “Otherwise, the concerns will remain there.” U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned just ahead of the week-long meeting that the world could be plunged into a new and more dangerous Cold War if China and the United States didn’t repair their “completely dysfunctional” relationship. In his speech delivered to leaders in the vast assembly hall a week ago, Biden decried military conflict, insisted the U.S. is not seeking a new version of the Cold War, and stressed the urgency of working together. Hours later, in a recorded speech, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated his nation’s longtime policy of multilateralism. “One country’s success does not have to mean another country’s failure,” Xi said. “The world is big enough to accommodate common development and progress of all countries.” The Cold War between the Soviet Union and its East bloc allies and the United States and its Western allies began after World War II and ended with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was a clash of two nuclear-armed superpowers with rival ideologies — communism and authoritarianism on one side, capitalism and democracy on the other. Zhang called the China-U.S. relationship “extremely important:” China is the largest developing country and the U.S. is the largest developed country, and they are the world’s largest economies and permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. The world benefits from a good China-U.S. relationship, and it “will also suffer from a confrontation between China and the United States,” he said. Zhang said Beijing has always called for relations between the two countries to be based on “no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation” as well as equality.

## US Deterrence Key

### US Deters China Attack on Taiwan

#### US supported deterrence checks an invasion of Taiwan by China

**Henley 24** – Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Taught at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, MA in Chinese Language from Oxford University on a Rhodes Schoalrship.  
Lonnie Henley, “Deterrence and Dissuasion in the Taiwan Strait”, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 12/12/23, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/12/deterrence-and-dissuasion-in-the-taiwan-strait/>

**Deterrence Is Working**

Many commentators advocate **measures to convince China that a military attack on Taiwan cannot succeed**, strengthening deterrence by denial. Recommendations include stronger and more explicit expressions of US resolve to defend Taiwan; increased military preparedness, with emphasis on defeating a Chinese amphibious landing; and helping Taiwan improve its own defenses and societal resilience. Some have even recommended stationing tactical nuclear weapons in Taiwan to ensure that any conflict would quickly escalate.

Other prescriptions center on deterrence by punishment, raising the anticipated cost of a military conflict in the mind of Chinese decision-makers. Discussion of “cost-imposition strategies” peaked in the second Obama Administration, then evolved in recent years to broader “all-of-government” strategies against China.

These discussions have two **unstated assumptions**: that our **ability to deter attack** on Taiwan is waning as China’s military and economic power grows, but that deterrence is **sufficient** to avoid conflict if we employ the **right combination of denial and punishment**. I take issue with both those premises. **Deterrence is working** in the Taiwan Strait, as it has for seventy years. Clearly, Chinese forces would have **seized Taiwan long ago if it were easy and cheap**. But it is not, and **nothing on the horizon will change that**.

Today’s People’s Liberation Army (**PLA**) is vastly more capable than even a decade ago, and it will continue improving. But invading Taiwan in the face of **US military opposition** remains among the most daunting military operations any country has considered. The **risk of failure** will remain high even with the **next gen**eration of PLA hardware, **and the one after that**. (I have argued elsewhere that China can win despite a failed invasion, but at a very high cost to all involved.)

Even more important, however, is the recognition by Chinese leaders that **war** over Taiwan would have a **devastating impact** on all China’s **other strategic priorities**, whether they win or lose militarily. China’s economy and international status would suffer enormously, both from the conflict itself and from the **enduring hostility** between the United States and China thereafter. The regime’s **2049 goals** for the centennial of the People’s Republic would be delayed for decades or more. The Communist Party’s hold on power would be at severe risk, particularly if it could not spin the military outcome as a strategic victory. Even if deterrence by denial is undermined by ongoing PLA modernization, **deterrence by punishment** will remain extremely strong for the foreseeable future.

#### A shift in the military balance of power triggers Taiwan invasion.

**USES 21** --- US – China Economic Security and Review Commission. USES, 2021, “A Dangerous Period for Cross-Strait Deterrence: Chinese Military Capabilities and Decision-Making for a War over Taiwan,” https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/Chapter\_4--Dangerous\_Period\_for\_Cross-Strait\_Deterrence.pdf

China must believe the United States has both the **capability** and the will to credibly carry out its threats if it is to be successfully deterred from invading Taiwan.161 The **PLA’s progress** toward capabilities for **invasion and sea denial** over the last 20 years could **lead Chinese leaders to view the U.S. threat as less credible** than before. Chinese leaders could decide to invade Taiwan if they arrive at the conclusion that the U.S. threat to intervene militarily has lost credibility altogether. That in turn could occur if Chinese leaders judge the U.S. military is **too weak** to mount an **effective intervention**, or if they believe U.S. leaders are unwilling to intervene for fear of the costs associated with imposing punishment.

**CCP leaders** could **judge the U.S. military is incapable of denying** the PLA its **objectives** when they believe their initial **invasion capability has matured** or when they have achieved a **highly favorable local balance of forces**. They could assess that the local balance of forces is highly favorable to China if U.S. forces within the first and second island chains are either so minimal or so vulnerable to the PLA’s anti-access and area denial capabilities that they are unlikely to create risks of escalation or **prevent a fait accompli**.\* 162 If Beijing judges the United States is “distracted” by another military conflict, or U.S. allies signal that they will not allow the U.S. military to use their bases or forces for operations in a Taiwan conflict, Beijing could also conclude the United States is incapable of carrying out the threat to intervene.

CCP leaders today believe an **asymmetry of stakes exists** between China and the United States, failing to appreciate the **importance the United States places on** Taiwan’s democracy and **its own reputation** in the eyes of allies.163 They could interpret future U.S. foreign policy developments, debate among U.S. policymakers about whether defending Taiwan is “worth it,” or calls by segments of the U.S. public to avoid conflict with China as evidence the U.S. government lacks the will to intervene. For example, the Chinese state tabloid Global Times argued in several August 2021 editorials that the United States’ withdrawal from Afghanistan shows it cannot not be trusted to come to Taiwan’s defense during a war.16

#### US provides critical forces to deter.

**Wang ’23** [Cindy; November 13; Reporter; Bloomberg, “Taiwan Doubts China’s Xi Will Have the Ability to Invade by 2027,” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-14/taiwan-doubts-china-s-xi-will-have-the-ability-to-invade-by-2027>]

(Bloomberg) -- Chinese President **Xi** Jinping is **unlikely** to have the capability to conduct a **successful** invasion of **Taiwan** by **2027**, according to a top **Taiwanese security** official, casting **doubts** on the progress of Beijing’s military modernization plans.

**Taiwan** will continue to delay the **P**eople’s **L**iberation **A**rmy’s invasion timetable by **strengthening** its defense capabilities, Wellington Koo, the head of the island’s National Security Council, said Monday at a briefing in Taipei.

“I **don’t** think it will **happen** in the near future or at least within one to two years,” Koo said of a Chinese invasion. “If China needs to carry out amphibious landing operations to take Taiwan, I **don’t** think it will have such **capabilities** by **2027**.”

Koo declined to pinpoint when an attack could happen, saying only that the island that China claims as its own doesn’t see Beijing making invasion preparations. Beijing is already facing **uncertainty** next year from its own **economic downturn**, while the world must also deal with the **US election**, and wars in **Europe** and the **Middle East**, he added.

Xi is seeking to build a “world-class force” by 2027, a deadline that coincides with the 100th anniversary of the PLA. Mark **Milley**, then chairman of the **J**oint **C**hiefs of **S**taff, said last year Beijing’s military **won’t** be ready to invade **Taiwan** for “some time.” His successor, Charles Q. Brown Jr., said last week he **doubts** Beijing plans to try to take Taiwan **militarily**.

Taiwan is separated from China by more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) of ocean, and its rugged **coastline** would make an amphibious invasion **challenging**. While China has the world’s largest navy by number of warships, its forces are **largely untested**.

Koo said Taiwan would use mobile weapons such as **anti-ship** missiles, Himars rocket systems, drones and Javelin anti-tank systems to make China’s landing operations more **difficult** in the event of an invasion. T**he US will bring forward a Himars shipment by one year to 2026.**

#### Reduction in US support means China will test its invasion capabilities

**Fanell and Thayer 24** (James E. Fanell, career naval intelligence officer whose positions included the senior intelligence officer for China at the Office of Naval Intelligence and the chief of intelligence for CTF-70 and Bradley A. Thayer, associate professor of political science at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, *“War is coming over Taiwan”, article for Washington Times, May 29, 2024 https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/may/29/war-is-coming-over-taiwan/*)

**China’s preparatory efforts to invade Taiwan are accelerating**. The exercise for attacks on Taiwan, termed Joint Sword 2024A, is significant for the following reasons. First, the naming convention suggests there will be follow-on exercises such as Joint Sword 2024 B and C, which corresponds to the three elements of the Chinese military’s doctrine for an invasion of Taiwan, the Joint Fire Strike Campaign, or JFSC, Joint Anti-Air Raid Campaign, or JAARC, and the Joint Island Landing Campaign, known as JILC. The idea of follow-on exercises was also suggested by a Global Times commentator on May 23 to include a fourth, part D. This means that the pace of exercises is quickening in order to mask Beijing’s intentions and preparations for war. Second, unlike the previous Joint Sword in April 2023, which was four days in duration, 2024A is just two days, an indicator that the Central Military Commission and People’s Liberation Army are honing their skills and sharpening their command and control to bring all their power to bear in a shorter, more concentrated time frame. **In essence, fulfilling this iteration of exercises will fulfill their stated goal of being able to conduct a “short, sharp war**.” That matters, because if **China believes it can win quickly and decisively**, then the ability of Taiwan and partners like the United States to deter such an attack is weakened. In addition, the naming of specific training objectives and elements such as “joint sea-air combat-readiness patrol, joint seizure of comprehensive battlefield control, and joint precision strikes on key targets” adds credence to the thesis of the “short, sharp war” objective for the Chinese Communist Party and Central Military Commission. Third, and most obvious, the closure areas are much closer to Taiwan than they were in Joint Sword 2023 or even the August 2022 missile firing exercise. This time the Joint Sword 2024A closure areas are within Taiwan’s contiguous zones — 24 nautical miles. In addition, the Chinese coast guard was noted on May 23 sailing within the territorial waters of Taiwan’s offshore islands of Wuqui and Dongyin — as close as 2.8 nautical miles. By doing this, **China is testing to see just how close to Taiwan it will be able to operate before generating a kinetic response** from Taiwan, Japan or the U.S. This is invaluable information to obtain and will provide Beijing a great advantage if and when they decide to conduct an invasion. Fourth, the joint nature of these operations is notable. With the reports of Chinese Strategic Rocket Force missile batteries being out of garrison and conducting “mock fire strike” launches, the main emphasis of this two-day Joint Force-2024A is on “joint precision strikes on key targets,’’ again, what the Chinese military doctrinally calls the Joint Fire Strike Campaign. This was occurring while the other services (army, navy and air force) were engaged in “joint sea-air combat readiness patrols” and “joint seizure of comprehensive battlefield control.”

#### China won’t attack now because of US force strength in support of Taiwan

**Saunders 22** – Director of the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs. Distinguished Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies.

Phillip C. Saunders and Joel Wuthnow, 2022, “Crossing the Strait: PLA Modernization and Taiwan,” National Defense University, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/crossing-the-strait/crossing-the-strait.pdf

Other scholars question various aspects of this assessment. In a rejoinder published in the next issue of Foreign Affairs, Rachel Esplin Odell and Eric Heginbotham argue that the PLA’s chances of succeeding in a cross-strait invasion **are poor today** and **will remain so for** at least **a decade**.45 They cite limitations in PLA lift and logistics capability and argue that “the PLA still **lacks the naval and air assets necessary to pull off a successfu**l cross-strait **attack**. Just as important, it suffers from **weaknesses in training**, in the **willingness** or ability of junior officers to take initiative, and in the **ability to coordinate** ground, sea, and air forces in large, complex operations.” Odell and Heginbotham also question whether CCP leaders are eager to resolve the situation with force, noting that “although some of these options are more realistic than others, all would **carry immense risk**. . . . Beijing is unlikely to attempt **any of them** unless it feels backed into a corner.” Similarly, Bonny Lin and David Sacks agree that “it is **far from clear that China could defeat Taiwan’s military**, subdue its population, and occupy and control its territory. Nor is it clear that the PLA **could hold off any U.S. forces** that came to Taiwan’s aid or that Beijing would be willing to undertake a campaign that could spark a larger and far more costly war with the United States.”46 They cite the likely **costs of using force**, arguing that “a Chinese invasion would invite significant **international** political, **economic**, and **diplomatic backlash** that could undermine China’s political, social, and economic development goals. **It would** also **spur the formation** of powerful anti-China coalitions, bringing to fruition **Beijing’s long-standing fear of “strategic encirclement”** by powers aligned against it.” Thus, despite the PLA’s considerable modernization gains over the last 20 years, experts continue to debate whether and when it will be able to invade at a cost and risk acceptable to CCP leaders.

#### Due to US military support China doesn’t have the military capabilities to attack Taiwan

Michael Swaine, Quincy Institute, June 2, 2022, Threat Inflation and the Chinese Military, https://quincyinst.org/report/threat-inflation-and-the-chinese-military/

Nonetheless**, despite such likely future long-term Chinese military improvements, it will on balance remain far from clear that China will amass a sufficient level of overall military capability and leverage to overcome the hugely negative military, political, and economic consequences of any all-out attack on Taiwan**, especially if, as expected, the U.S. continues to improve its own overall military capabilities in the Indo–Pacific. **As the above table suggests, the PLA is not projected to have an overwhelming level of Taiwan-related weapons platforms vis-à-vis the United States over at least the next two decades** (and possibly beyond, given the likely enduring limits on military effectiveness noted above). **And this is especially true if Japan is also involved in any confrontation.140** Moreover, in addition to improvements in weapons platforms, the U.S. is acquiring large numbers of long-range, anti-ship cruise missiles that can be launched from the air or sea outside of Chinese air defense ranges. These could prove decisive in a conflict over Taiwan.141

For a host of reasons, and despite fears to the contrary by some observers, **Washington almost certainly would not permit China to prosecute a direct attack on Taiwan in the foreseeable future. Indeed, many China specialists strongly believe that the Chinese leadership assumes that Washington will intervene militarily in a Taiwan conflict**.142

#### US support means China doesn’t have the military equipment to attack

Brad Lendon and Ivan Watson, CNN, 6-1, 22, China has the power to take Taiwan, but it would cost an extremely bloody price, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/31/asia/china-taiwan-invasion-scenarios-analysis-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>

On his first trip to Asia as United States President last week, Joe Biden gave his strongest warning yet to Beijing that Washington was committed to defending Taiwan militarily in the event of an attack from China. Biden's comments, which compared a potential Chinese attack on Taiwan to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, appeared to deviate from Washington's decades-old policy of "strategic ambiguity" on the issue and seemingly raised the possibility of a military clash between US and Chinese forces. It's the third time Biden has made similar remarks since taking office and, just as on the other two occasions, they were quickly walked back by the White House -- which insists its policy has not changed. However, it inevitably raises the question: if China tries to take Taiwan, are the United States and its allies able to stop it? And the alarming answer is: Quite possibly not. Analysts say China has more troops, more missiles and more ships than Taiwan or its possible supporters, like the US or Japan, could bring to a fight. That means that if China is absolutely determined to take the island it probably can. But there's a caveat; while China could likely prevail, any victory would come at an extremely bloody price for both Beijing and its adversaries. Many analysts say an invasion of Taiwan would be more dangerous and complex than the Allied D-Day landings in France in World War II. US government documents put the number of killed, injured and missing from both sides during the almost three-month-long Normandy campaign at almost half a million troops. And the civilian carnage could be far, far worse. Taiwan's population of 24 million people is packed into dense urban areas like the capital Taipei, with an average of 9,575 people per square kilometer. Compare that to Mariupol, Ukraine -- devastated in the war with Russia -- and with an average of 2,690 people per square kilometer. Despite its numerical advantages in sea-, air- and land-based forces in the region, China has Achilles heels in each arena of war that would force Beijing to think long and hard about whether an invasion is worth the overwhelming human cost. Here are some scenarios of how a Chinese invasion might play out: The naval war China has the world's largest navy, with around 360 combat vessels -- bigger than the US' fleet of just under 300 ships. Beijing also has the world's most-advanced merchant fleet, a large coast guard and, experts say, a maritime militia -- fishing boats unofficially aligned with the military -- giving it access to hundreds of additional vessels that could be used to transport the hundreds of thousands of troops that analysts say China would need for an amphibious invasion. And those troops would need massive amounts of supplies. "For Beijing to have reasonable prospects of victory, the PLA (People's Liberation Army) would have to move thousands of tanks, artillery guns, armored personnel vehicles, and rocket launchers across with the troops. Mountains of equipment and lakes of fuel would have to cross with them," Ian Easton, a senior director at the Project 2049 Institute, wrote in The Diplomat last year. Getting a force of that size across the 110 miles (177 kilometers) of the Taiwan Strait would be a long, dangerous mission during which those vessels carrying the troops and equipment would be sitting ducks. "The thought about China invading Taiwan, that's a massacre for the Chinese navy," said Phillips O'Brien, professor of strategic studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. That's because Taiwan has been stocking up on cheap and effective land-based anti-ship missiles, similar to the Neptunes Ukraine used to sink the Russian cruiser Moskva in the Black Sea in April. "Taiwan is mass-producing these things. And they're small, it's not like (China) can take them all out," O'Brien said. "What's cheap is a surface-to-ship missile, what's expensive is a ship." Still, China could -- given its numerical advantage -- simply decide the losses were worth it, pointed out Thomas Shugart, a former US Navy submarine captain and now an analyst at the Center for a New American Security. "There's gonna be hundreds if not thousands of (Chinese) vessels there to soak up those (Taiwanese) missiles," Shugart said. Missiles aside, China would face massive logistical hurdles in landing enough soldiers. Conventional military wisdom holds that an attacking force should outnumber defenders 3 to 1. "With a potential defending force of 450,000 Taiwanese today ... China would need over 1.2 million soldiers (out of a total active force of more than 2 million) that would have to be transported in many thousands of ships," Howard Ullman, a former US Navy officer and professor at the US Naval War College, wrote in a February essay for the Atlantic Council. *He estimated such an operation would take weeks and that despite China's maritime strength, it "simply lacks the military capability and capacity to launch a full-scale amphibious invasion of Taiwan for the foreseeable future."* Aircraft carrier killers Some of the problems that would face China's navy in Taiwan would also face any US naval force sent to defend the island. Ballistic missile can hit moving ships, China says Ballistic missile can hit moving ships, China says The US Navy sees its aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships, bristling with F-35 and F/A-18 jets, as its spear in the Pacific and would have a numerical advantage in this area. The US has 11 carriers in total, compared to China's two. However, only about half are combat ready at any one time and even these might be vulnerable. O'Brien and others point out that the People's Liberation Army has more than 2,000 conventionally armed missiles, many of which it has developed with the US Navy's prized aircraft carriers in mind. Of particular concern would be China's DF-26 and DF-21D -- touted by Beijing's state-run Global Times tabloid in 2020 as "aircraft carrier killers" and the "world's first ballistic missiles capable of targeting large and medium-sized vessels." As O'Brien puts it, "The US better be careful thinking about, in any kind of war environment, sending carrier battle groups close to China ... If you're fighting a state-to-state war, you're going to stay far away from shore." Others are more confident in the US carriers. Rear Adm. Jeffery Anderson, the commander of the US Navy's Carrier Strike Group Three centered on the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, recently told CNN his ships are more than ready to deal with the kind of missiles that sank the Moskva. "One thing I do know about our US ships is they're extremely survivable. Not only are they lethal, but they are extremely survivable," he said. A Chinese air force fighter jet takes off during training exercises in 2017. A Chinese air force fighter jet takes off during training exercises in 2017. The air war China is likely to seek air superiority early into any conflict, analysts say, and may feel it has an advantage in the skies. Flight Global's 2022 directory of the world's air forces shows the PLA with almost 1,600 combat aircraft, compared to Taiwan's fewer than 300. The directory shows the US with more than 2,700 combat aircraft, but those cover the world while China's are all in the region. Taiwan holds ceremony for advanced F-16V fighter jets (Nov. 2021) 02:11 In the air war, China also will have learned from Russia's failures in Ukraine -- where Moscow took months assembling its ground forces yet failed to soften up the terrain for them with a bombing campaign -- and is more likely to emulate the "shock and awe" bombardments that preceded the US' invasions of Iraq. "I'm sure the PLA is learning from what they're seeing," Shugart said. "You can read open-source translations of their strategic documents. They learned very carefully from what we did in Desert Storm and Kosovo." But even in the air China would face significant difficulties. A guided-missile-armed J-20 stealth fighter jet of the Chinese People&#39;s Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force performs at Airshow China 2018. A guided-missile-armed J-20 stealth fighter jet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force performs at Airshow China 2018. Russia's failure to quickly seize control of the skies in Ukraine initially dumbfounded many analysts. Some put the failure down to the cheap antiaircraft missiles Western militaries have supplied to Kyiv. Taiwan has deals with the United States to supply it with Stinger antiaircraft missiles and Patriot missile defense batteries. And it also has been investing heavily in its own missile production facilities over the past three years in a project, when completed this summer, will see its missile production capabilities triple, according to a Janes report in March. On the other hand, China would have an advantage over the US due to its closeness to Taiwan. A recent war game run by the Center for a New American Security concluded that an aerial conflict between the US and China would likely end in stalemate. Commenting on the result to Air Force Magazine, Lt. Gen. S. Clinton Hinote, US Air Force deputy chief of staff for strategy, integration and requirements, said that while the US was used to dominating the skies some factors weren't in its favor. China is sending its most advanced fighter jet to patrol disputed seas China is sending its most advanced fighter jet to patrol disputed seas China had "invested in modern aircraft and weapons to fight us," he noted, and US forces would also face the "tyranny of distance" -- most of the US air power used in the war game operated out of the Philippines, about 500 miles (800 kilometers) away. The war game simulated Chinese forces beginning their campaign by trying to take out the nearest US bases in places like Guam and Japan. Hinote likened that move to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, saying China would be motivated by "many of the same reasons." "The attack is designed to give Chinese forces the time they need to invade and present the world with a fait accompli," he told the magazine. China has a growing arsenal of short-, medium- and intermediate range ballistic missiles that can reach these far-flung targets. As of 2020, the PLA had at least 425 missile launchers capable of hitting those US bases, according to the China Power project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. A Chinese People&#39;s Liberation Army (PLA) soldier fires an anti-tank rocket during a live-fire military exercise in Wuzhong, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China in 2019. A Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldier fires an anti-tank rocket during a live-fire military exercise in Wuzhong, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China in 2019. The ground war Even in a scenario where China was willing to take these risks and managed to get a significant amount of troops ashore, its forces would then face another uphill battle. Taiwan has about 150,000 troops and 2.5 million reservists -- and its entire national defense strategy is based on countering a Chinese invasion. Like their counterparts in Ukraine the Taiwanese would have the advantage of home turf, knowing the ground and being highly motivated to defend it. First, the PLA would need to find a decent landing spot -- ideally close to both the mainland and a strategic city such as Taipei with nearby port and airport facilities. Experts have identified just 14 beaches that would fit the bill and Taiwan is well aware of which ones those are. Its engineers have spent decades digging tunnels and bunkers to protect them. Taiwan's troops would also be relatively fresh compared to their Chinese counterparts, who would be drained from the journey over and would still need to push through the island's western mud flats and mountains, with only narrow roads to assist them, toward Taipei. Chinese troops could be dropped in from the air, but a lack of paratroopers in the PLA makes it unlikely. Another problem for Chinese troops would be their lack of battlefield experience. The last time the PLA was in active combat was in 1979, when China fought a brief border war with Vietnam. . In that effort, China "really got a bloody nose, it was not very successful operation," said Bonnie Glaser, director of the Asia program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. "So China's military today is not battle tested, and it could suffer great losses, if it indeed attacked Taiwan," Glaser said. Others pointed out that even battle-tested troops could struggle against a well-motivated defensive force -- noting that the Russian military was bogged down in Ukraine despite its recent fighting experience in Syria and Georgia. Still, as with the other scenarios, it is not only Chinese forces that might be handicapped by a lack of experience. Taiwan's troops have also not been tested, and depending on the scenario, there are holes in even the US' experience. As Shugart put it: "There is not a single US naval officer who has sunk another ship in combat." What are the chances China attacks? Glaser, the German Marshall Fund analyst, thinks a Chinese invasion of Taiwan is unlikely. Here&#39;s how Taiwan has made the US-China relationship more complicated Here's how Taiwan has made the US-China relationship more complicated 02:54 "I think that the PLA lacks full confidence that it can seize and control Taiwan. The PLA itself talks about some of the deficiencies in its capability," she said. "And obviously, the war in Ukraine highlights some of the challenges that China could face; it is certainly much harder to launch a war 100 miles across a body of water than it is across land borders, (such as those) between Russia and Ukraine," she said. She noted that the strong Ukrainian resistance may be giving Taiwan's people reason to fight for their land. "Given how Ukraine has really demonstrated a very high morale and willingness to defend its freedoms ... I think that this is likely to change the calculus of not only military leaders in China, but hopefully also of (Chinese leader) Xi Jinping personally," she said. O'Brien, the University of St. Andrews professor, wrote in The Spectator this year that any war over Taiwan would lead to devastating losses on all sides, something that should make their leaders tread carefully before committing troops. Any other option? Of course, the PLA has options other than a full-blown invasion. These include taking outlying Taiwanese islands or imposing a quarantine on the main island, Robert Blackwill and Philip Zelikow wrote last year in a report for the Council on Foreign Relations.

#### US treaty with Taiwan deters attack

Stacey, May 18, 2022, Dr. Jeffrey A. Stacey is a former official in the Obama Administration and author of Integrating Europe. His forthcoming book is entitled, Full Spectrum Warfare: Donald Trump, Joe Biden, and the Fight for Global Democracy, Has Western Aid for Ukraine Deterred China in Asia?, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/has-western-aid-ukraine-deterred-china-asia-202462

**B**y responding **to** Russian president **Vladimir Putin’s gamble with unexpected unity and strength, equally unintentionally, the Western allies** have not only weakened Russia but appear to **have deterred China from attacking Taiwan.** Russia has stymied its ally China, unintentionally but perhaps definitively. China had every intention of following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine this spring with a takeover of Taiwan. However, by responding to Russian president Vladimir Putin’s gamble with unexpected unity and strength, equally unintentionally, the Western allies have not only weakened Russia but appear to have deterred China from attacking Taiwan. President **Xi** Jinping endorsed Russia’s plan when Putin visited Xi during the Winter Olympics, hatching up an understanding that each in succession would try to take advantage of their mutual misperception of the West’s weakness. To China’s considerable dismay, however, it **watched the United States lead a vaunted global coalition against Russia in defense of a country it was not formally obligated by treaty to defend. By contrast, China is well aware that the United States has a formal defense treaty with Taiwan.** Chinese academics often provide an early tell as to what Xi and his coterie are planning in private. According to these tea leaves, China has been thwarted and its elites are distraught. In private chat rooms, **Chinese generals are bemoaning their forces’ lack of battlefield experience, along with their perceived inability to win a war of information with the West**. China has backed away from its full-throated public support of Russia’s war on Ukraine, for with a mercantilist export-dominated economy it simply cannot afford to be cut off from Western markets. **China knows it has suffered for its support of Russia, particularly in diplomatic terms. Recently, several key countries have openly opposed Beijing, starting with Lithuania but more recently including harsh rhetoric from Georgia, Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Finland, and especially the Czech Republic as Sweden announced it is upgrading its office in Taipei while Britain finalized a new security agreement with Japan**. Moreover, prior to the populists adding insult to injury by losing in France and Slovenia, China conducted a summit with the EU that was a failure across the board (followed by the EU reporting China to the World Trade Organization for coercive actions against Lithuania, which is working with Taiwan on joint semiconductor production). **China went directly into damage control mode in Central Europe, hoping to keep alive what it refers to as the “16 + 1” framework**—what it has imagined as a proto alliance with a sizable swath of democratic Europe. **But the Czech foreign minister inter alia poured scorn all over China for its support of Russia and declared the death of “16 + 1.**” This has only further deterred China from attacking Taiwan, as it then feebly attempted to revive the defunct EU-China investment deal of 2020 by rather ironically ratifying two International Labor Organization conventions on forced labor. China may have just signed a defense pact with the tiny Solomon Islands, but aside from North Korea’s Kim Jong-un, China has few true allies to speak of. On the contrary, it is rapidly headed in the opposite direction having watched its reputation suffer even further when it announced an alliance with Russia “with no boundaries,” along with being the only powerful country not to denounce Russia over its war on democratic Ukraine. China was planning to wait to attack Taiwan, which it considers Chinese territory, until later this year after a series of major Communist Party meetings related to Xi’s quest to become the longest-serving president of China. Xi already engineered Party elevation of him to Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping’s level of official veneration and planned to cap off last week’s Party Congress with the subjugation of Taiwan in late summer to follow on from its successful stamping out of democracy in Hong Kong. However, **China has made a series of additional stumbles that have contributed to its global demise, and further deterred it from attacking Taiwan. Recently, it supplied Russia-dominated Serbia with a cluster of ballistic missiles, pilloried Western democracies with Russian propaganda, failed to rein in North Korea, and bequeathed a deadly pandemic to the entirety of the world. At least China can credibly claim that its reputation is not suffering as badly as Russia’s, but it is not far behind**. Even the lowly Solomon Islands told the West that it will not be hosting Chinese military installations. And of course, the Quad grouping of the United States, Australia, Japan, and India is rounding on China, along with the succession of Western naval armadas that recently sailed through the Taiwanese Strait (from the UK, France, and Germany) as yet another U.S. Navy destroyer just did. China has a lot to be held accountable for, but unlikely to go on this list is its erstwhile plan to take over Taiwan. The West and its allies need to maintain their vigilance with regard to China’s aggressive grand strategy. Xi may not get another chance, for China’s ability to project power abroad is already starting to suffer from its rapidly shrinking population at home.

#### Strong US support needed to prevent attack by China

**Washington Institute for Defense and Security 5/13** [Washington Institute for Defense and Security, WIDS is a policy think tank whose mission is to promote critical thinking on security and defense affairs; 13 May 2024; “Improving America’s Defense-Industrial Base: Key to Protecting Taiwan’s Security”; Washington Institute for Defence & Security; [www.washingtonids.org/2024/05/13/improving-americas-defense-industrial-base-key-to-protecting-taiwans-security/](http://www.washingtonids.org/2024/05/13/improving-americas-defense-industrial-base-key-to-protecting-taiwans-security/) ]//InTr‌

In the age of increasing conflicts between Ukraine and the Middle East and different attempts made by US and European countries to solve these crises show a worrying reality. China might see a chance to **take Taiwan by force** closing quickly. The winning party of Taiwan’s recent presidential election was the **Democratic People’s Party**. They won by 2 candidates that China might have preferred to win, despite China’s efforts to meddle in the election. This is the indicator to the nation China that **peaceful reunification** with Taiwan is becoming **less likely**. Furthermore, China is a nation that is in great trouble with economic and population-related complications. Due to all of these, China is not in the condition to use force against Taiwan. Furthermore, this nation soon faces strong opposition from the US. The United States is the nation that emphasizes competing with China, and European countries, which are becoming more cautious about their business relationships with China. The government of China has a big advantage due to the current situation of the world. As the US along with its allies are busy dealing with other parts of the world. Europe is focused on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Furthermore, the US is also caught up in the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. At the same time, troublemakers in the Middle East like Yemen’s Houthi rebels and various Shia militias are challenging America’s ability to keep things under control. So China might think that it’s a good time to take action against Taiwan. The United States is totally in favor of Taiwan and they want to keep them safe for many reasons. Taiwan is a key player in the region because it’s a democracy and shows what a free China could be like. It has also stayed true to democratic values since it held its first elections in 1996, even though China has tried to undermine them. Taiwan is also crucial for technology. Its big tech company, TSMC, makes 90%of the world’s advanced semiconductors. These tiny chips are important for all sorts of things, from AI to military technology. If China took control of Taiwan and blocked the U.S. from accessing these semiconductors, it would be a big problem for national security. If the United States doesn’t make it clear that it will stand up to Chinese aggression against Taiwan, or doesn’t take strong action if China does become aggressive, it could make other allies in the Indo-Pacific region, like Japan and South Korea, doubt whether America would help them in similar situations. They might start wondering if the U.S. would back them up if China started causing trouble in their countries. This is why defending Taiwan is so important for the U.S. Experts have been thinking about the best way to do this, like giving Taiwan a lot of weapons to make it hard for China to invade, or even creating a formal military partnership between the U.S. and Taiwan. However, one thing that needs to happen first is that the U.S. must strengthen its own defense industry. It needs to be able to produce and deliver more military equipment to support Taiwan and others. This means that the United State should increase its factories and infrastructure to make more military gear. It is also less complicated to sell the weapons to Taiwan. Right now, about $19 billion worth of military deliveries to Taiwan are stuck in delays, which could make China think it has the upper hand. Lastly, the U.S. should focus on what works best, not just what costs the most. For example, drones that are less expensive can sometimes be more useful on the battlefield than larger, pricier weapons. This should be kept in mind when planning how to defend Taiwan. Congress knows very well that it is not easy getting weapons to Taiwan from the United States. In the last few years, they’ve tried to fix it with new laws, the Taiwan Policy Act of 2022 and the Taiwan International Solidarity Act of 2023. However, these attempts have hit a roadblock because of political disagreements in Congress. At the same time there are other laws, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal years 2023 and 2024. It talks about how to assist Taiwan with military training and cybersecurity. This makes Taiwan a big issue for the upcoming elections. Both President Biden and his Republican rival, Donald Trump, agree that it’s important to compete with China, but neither has said much about boosting the U.S. defense industry to support Taiwan. They should focus on it because no matter who wins the election, Taiwan will still be a crucial point in China’s plans for expansion. Good morning, and thank you very much for that kind introduction.

#### That war goes nuclear---Multiple scenarios for escalation.

#### US needs to *strengthen* Taiwan to deter China

Glaser & Lin, 7-2, 24, BONNIE S. GLASER is Managing Director of the Indo-Pacific Program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. BONNY LIN is Senior Fellow for Asian Security and Director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, The Looming Crisis in the Taiwan Strait, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/taiwan/looming-crisis-taiwan-strait

Since 1996, all of Taiwan’s elected presidents have at some point during their time in office declared that theirs is a sovereign, independent state. The new president of Taiwan, Lai Ching-te, who was elected in January and inaugurated in May, is the first to make that declaration at the beginning of his term. The chair of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and a self-described pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence, Lai delivered an inaugural speech that made clear that Taiwan is a de facto sovereign and independent country that is neither a part of nor subordinate to China. At the same time, however, Lai pledged not to provoke China or change the cross-strait status quo. **Lai’s preference for clarity over ambiguity is rooted in his belief that China’s growing military, political, and economic pressure on** [**Taiwan**](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/regions/taiwan)**—as well as the people of Taiwan’s increasingly negative views of China—requires a firmer approach**. His predecessor, former President Tsai Ing-wen, worked to strengthen Taiwan’s defenses while adopting conciliatory measures and providing assurances to Beijing. But this approach was not reciprocated by Beijing. Instead, China tore up all prior tacit restrictions on the operation of People’s Liberation Army forces around Taiwan**. Beijing now conducts military exercises close to Taiwan and on the east side of the island and claims that the strait is its internal waters. This frustrates Lai and likely encouraged him to take a firmer and bolder stance.** Lai’s speech, Beijing believed, required a harsh response. Chinese state media lashed out at him, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi condemned him as a “traitor.” **The Chinese military launched a large-scale two-day exercise that U.S. Indo-Pacific Commander Samuel Paparo said resembled a rehearsal for an invasion**. Since then, B**eijing has made plain its growing disdain for Lai, and the prospect of establishing a quiet backchannel between Lai and Beijing has dimmed along with the possibility of increasing cross-strait tourism and student and academic exchanges. This lack of communication and dwindling interactions between the two sides increases the risk of misunderstanding and the hardening of positions. It also makes more difficult the United States’ task of managing relations between Beijing and Taip**ei. ***To reduce tensions, the*** [***United States***](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/regions/united-states) ***must encourage Taiwan to strengthen its ability to deter an invasio***n and, at the same time, to increase its diplomatic contacts with Beijing. Stay informed. In-depth analysis delivered weekly. Sign Up STRAIT TALKING The Chinese Communist Party studies the inaugural speeches of Taiwan’s presidents to assess how they view the relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The only acceptable position, as far as Beijing is concerned, is that Taiwan and [China](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/regions/china) are part of the same country. But such a position is unlikely to be advanced by any future DPP president, and possibly not by candidates from Taiwan’s opposition parties. This is because of the state of public opinion in Taiwan, which is increasingly negative toward China and strongly opposes Beijing’s pressure campaign to isolate the island and its people. For its part, China has taken an uncompromising approach, unwilling to find a modus vivendi with successive presidents of Taiwan. Despite Tsai’s efforts to use conciliatory language in her 2016 inaugural address, Beijing dismissed her speech as an “incomplete exam paper,” because it was ambiguous on the question of Taiwan’s status and did not explicitly affirm that the two sides of the strait belong to the same country. Eight years later, Lai rejected his predecessor’s mollifying language in his inaugural speech. First, he avoided using the words “mainland” and “Beijing authorities,” opting instead for “China” and the “People’s Republic of China,” terminology that indicates that the two sides of the strait are separate entities. Lai also did not cite the 1992 Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area as an essential part of his approach to handling cross-strait affairs. The act recognizes that the “Taiwan Area” and the “Mainland Area” are both part of Taiwan and regulates how the two sides should conduct exchanges “before national unification.” That there was no mention of the act—which was featured in Tsai’s inaugural speeches in 2016 and 2020—underscored Lai’s message that China and Taiwan are two different countries. Tsai also made references to the Constitution of the Republic of China—Taiwan’s official title—in her inaugural speeches, which were intended to reassure Beijing that she would not seek to make changes to Taiwan’s territory. Lai’s mention of the constitution, however, was interpreted in Beijing as intended to underscore that Taiwan and China are separate, each with their own sovereignty. Lai also stated that he would uphold Tsai’s “Four Commitments,” which she issued in her National Day speech in October 2021. These are to maintain a free and democratic constitutional system, to cultivate a relationship between Taiwan and Beijing in which neither is subordinate to the other, to resist annexation or encroachment on Taiwan’s sovereignty, and to see Taiwan’s future decided in accordance with the will of the people of Taiwan. The second commitment, that China and Taiwan should not be subordinate to each other, particularly irked Beijing. At the time, China’s Taiwan Affairs Office labeled this commitment a “new two states theory.” Tsai, the TAO continued, had gone even further than Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui, who, in 1999, openly defined relations between Taiwan and China as “special state-to-state relations”—a notion that Beijing believed was an attempt to pursue independence. Then Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian warned that the military was ready to “smash any attempts to separate the country.” There was much else that Beijing viewed as inflammatory. Lai listed various names used to describe his people’s “land,” including the Republic of China, the Republic of China Taiwan, and Taiwan, although he made clear that he personally prefers Taiwan. A spokesperson in Beijing criticized Lai’s use of these names for implying that Taiwan is a separate country rather than a part of China. Lai also marked the 400th anniversary of the Dutch invasion of Tainan, a city in southern Taiwan, as a positive moment that “marked Taiwan’s links to globalization.” This description was interpreted by Chinese scholars as an attempt to distinguish Taiwan’s history from China’s and emphasize the difference between the two. Lack of communication and dwindling interactions between Taiwan and Beijing increases the risk of misunderstanding. Beijing used strong language to condemn Lai and his vision for Taiwan. One well-connected Chinese scholar privately stated that Lai had torn up “the exam paper, flipped over the desk, and disrupted order in the exam room.” Chinese officials and scholars were already deeply skeptical of Lai’s promises during the campaign, which he repeated in his inaugural speech, that he will maintain the cross-strait status quo and not provoke Beijing. Accordingly, Lai’s offers to restart tourism between the two sides on a reciprocal basis and enroll Chinese degree students in Taiwan’s universities were viewed by Beijing as being made in bad faith. Three days after Lai’s inauguration, Beijing launched a large-scale military exercise along with coordinated Chinese coast guard operations against Taiwan. A Chinese military spokesperson declared that these actions were intended to “punish” Taiwan for “separatist acts of ‘Taiwan independence’” and to provide a “stern warning against the interference and provocation of external forces.” Over two days, Chinese forces engaged in air and maritime operations encircling Taiwan and some of its outlying islands. This drill allowed the Chinese military and coast guard to experiment and rehearse coordinated operations. Chinese media showed computer-generated footage of Chinese missile strikes against Taiwan, and the Chinese coast guard using water cannons and inspecting a vessel headed to Taiwan. Beijing’s leaders undoubtedly prepared a variety of options in the run-up to Lai’s inaugural speech, including military demonstrations of varying scale. The exercise that they conducted was likely on the more escalatory end of the spectrum and was meant to signal China’s strong displeasure with Lai’s remarks. **China’s military activities are likely to be only the beginning of a military, diplomatic, and economic pressure campaign against Lai and his administration**. Beijing has warned that more military exercises will follow “each time ‘Taiwan independence’ separatists make waves.” China has also brought its economic might to bear to deny the entry into its markets of shipments of macadamia nuts and coffee from Guatemala, which is one of Taiwan’s 12 remaining diplomatic partners. Then, at the end of May, China announced the reinstatement of tariffs on 134 Taiwanese items that were formerly exempt under the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, which both sides signed in 2010 to reduce barriers and promote trade. In late June, Beijing released new guidelines that specified that the death penalty could be considered for the most severe crimes committed by the ringleaders of pro-Taiwanese independence activities. Beijing is also working to build stronger ties to the Kuomintang and the Taiwan People’s Party, which are the main opposition parties and would control a majority of seats within the parliament should they choose to work together. All these efforts demonstrate China’s intention to intervene in Taiwan’s domestic politics and undermine Lai’s ability to govern. Lai’s administration has responded by toughening its position. In mid-June, in a speech to military cadets, Lai called out China for “destroying the status quo across the Taiwan Strait and viewing the annexation of Taiwan and elimination of the Republic of China as its national cause.” China’s Ministry of National Defense, unsurprisingly, condemned Lai and vowed new “countermeasures” to push back against such “pro-independence, anti-secessionist provocations.” At the end of the month, Taipei raised its travel warning for China to orange, the second highest alert, advising Taiwan citizens to avoid unnecessary travel to China. **STUCK IN THE MIDDLE Beijing’s escalation after Lai’s speech has complicated the United States’ ability to preserve peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait**. China believes that Lai has raised the stakes, and unless Washington signals that it understands Beijing’s concerns, China’s suspicions that the United States in fact supports and is emboldening Taiwanese independence will deepen. Accordingly, **Beijing is pressing Washington to curb its military and diplomatic support for Taipei’s new government and restrain Lai from taking destabilizing actions. Yet at the same time, China is increasing its paramilitary and military pressure against Taiwan, expanding Chinese coast guard patrols around the Kinmen and Matsu Islands, which are under Taiwan’s contr**ol. The combination of Chinese aggression and strong bipartisan support in the United States for Taiwan mean the [Biden administration](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/topics/biden-administration) is unlikely to curb its support for Taiwan. Taiwan wants the United States to step up its efforts to counter Chinese aggression and coercion, including Beijing’s attempts to normalize large-scale and intrusive military and coast guard activities against it. But the Biden administration has not done so and remains largely focused on preventing an invasion of Taiwan. This is partly because **the United States cannot take responsibility for dealing with the daily provocations that any U.S. ally or partner faces from C**hina. **If it assumed that role for Taiwan, then Japan and the Philippines, which face regular Chinese intrusions into disputed areas of the East China and South China Seas, might expect the same.** If cross-strait tensions continue to worsen, Beijing could decide that it needs to adopt a more aggressive approach toward both Taipei and Washington. This could include China becoming more coercive across the board to restrain Lai because it cannot count on the United States to do so. Beijing may also take steps to inflict greater pain on Washington for what it views as increasingly strong and overt U.S. support for “Taiwan independence.” This could involve suspending U.S.-Chinese military-to-military exchanges and other dialogues with U.S. officials on subjects of importance to Washington, such as stemming the flow of fentanyl into the United States. Deteriorating cross-strait dynamics could encourage Beijing to bolster support for Russia. Signs of this were seen in May, when Beijing imposed sanctions on U.S. defense firms. In doing so, it cited U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, as well as U.S. sanctions against Chinese firms supplying Russia, as justifications. China will need to weigh the costs and benefits of such escalation with its desire to focus on addressing its substantial domestic problems. Lashing out at Taiwan or engaging in more destabilizing behavior could invite global pushback and further increase anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States during a critical election year. So far, Beijing appears to be signaling that it does not want a confrontation in the Taiwan Strait. How long that posture will last, however, is uncertain. The United States will have to pay close attention to cross-strait dynamics and manage them proactively to prevent rising tensions that could lead to a crisis or conflict. **A DANGEROUS GAME** The Biden administration congratulated Lai on his inauguration but did not comment on his speech. U.S. officials, however, denounced China’s military exercise. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin called it “provocative” and urged China not to use Taiwan’s “normal, routine, democratic process” as an excuse for coercion against the island. At a meeting with Chinese Executive Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ma Zhaoxu in June, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell voiced concern over China’s “destabilizing actions” around Taiwan. That same month, in bilateral meetings with Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun in Singapore, U.S. allies including Australia echoed concerns about Beijing’s military activities. In June, the Biden administration signaled its support for Taiwan by notifying Congress of two arms sale packages: one with $300 million worth of parts and equipment to support Taiwan’s F-16s and another worth $360 million that includes over a thousand small armed drones. In an interview with *Time* magazine, U.S. President Joe Biden warned Beijing that “if China unilaterally tried to change the status [quo],” the United States might defend Taiwan. This statement was, however, more careful than the president’s prior unequivocal assertions that the United States would come to Taiwan’s defense if it were attacked by China. Biden reiterated in the *Time* interview that the United States is “not seeking independence for Taiwan.” **The United States must go further and take more proactive measures to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. Militarily, this will require continuing efforts to build Taiwan’s capabilities to fend off an invasion or blockade**. **But the United States should also help Taiwan establish a robust civil defense program and create strategic reserves of food and energy to bolster deterrence and, if China invades, enable Taiwan to hold out until U.S. forces arrive.** Washington should also warn Beijing against making incursions with military aircraft, drones, navy ships, or coast guard vessels in the airspace and sea space in the 24-nautical-mile contiguous zone around Taiwan, and against operating the coast guard in the restricted and prohibited waters around Taiwan’s outlying islands. These warnings need to be accompanied by efforts to impose costs on China should Beijing decide to disregard them. **The United States cannot take responsibility for dealing with the daily provocations that any U.S. ally or partner faces from China.** Deterrence necessitates more than military steps and warnings. It also requires active diplomacy. In private conversations with Chinese officials, the Biden administration should acknowledge that the tone and content of Lai’s inaugural speech was a departure from those of his predecessors. Administration officials should emphasize, however, that this rhetoric must be distinguished from actions and that there is no evidence that Lai plans to implement destabilizing measures. In return, China must recognize that its efforts to shore up its own redlines—through escalating military, diplomatic, and economic pressure on Taiwan—have contributed to the spike in cross-strait tensions. If Beijing continues to increase the pressure, it could create a downward spiral in cross-strait relations and raise the risk of an accidental confrontation or conflict. Washington should make clear to Beijing that increased Chinese escalation against Taiwan is likely to bring about an increased U.S. commitment and resolve to defend the island—precisely the outcome that China does not want to see. **Washington should encourage Lai to prioritize the strengthening of Taiwan’s defense and resilience above all else**. The United States should also caution Taipei against engaging in activities that China could use as a pretext to escalate aggression against the island. Beijing creates and is looking for pretexts, and Taipei must take care to ensure that it does not take actions that will divide international opinion against it. U.S. officials should support Lai in strengthening Taiwan’s relations with other democratic countries, making clear to Taipei that sustaining and expanding global support for Taiwan will be possible only if Lai follows a cross-strait policy that is viewed as pragmatic by the international community. The United States must also more actively encourage the resumption of dialogue between Beijing and Taipei, highlighting to officials in both capitals the risks that come from a lack of direct communication. In particular, Washington should urge the establishment of reliable backchannel communications between Beijing and Taipei, which are essential to clarifying intentions and preventing miscalculation. Washington should also encourage those on both sides of the strait to allow their scholars to meet in neutral places. This will, at a minimum, help both sides understand the other’s threat perceptions. Deterrence, dialogue, and avoiding unilateral changes to the status quo are key to managing the situation in the Taiwan Strait. The United States must encourage efforts to achieve them, to ensure that conflict does not break out.

### Containment Good

#### US Support of Taiwan part of its China containment strategy

**Brands ’20 – Professor of Global Affairs** [Hal; Hal Brands is the Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He is also a columnist for Bloomberg Opinion. He is the author or editor of several books regarding foreign policy and grand strategy; 10-1-21; "The End of China’s Rise”; https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-10-01/end-chinas-rise; Foreign Affairs; accessed 6-23-2022; AH]

RING OF FIRE Eurasia has often been a deathtrap for aspiring hegemons: there are too many nearby enemies that can make common cause with offshore superpowers. For almost 40 years, a rising China avoided strategic encirclement by downplaying its global ambitions and maintaining friendly relations with the United States. But that period is over. As Beijing has become more **aggressive** in the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, and elsewhere, it has engendered hostility nearly all around. Over the past five years, the **United States** has abandoned engagement and **embraced neo-containment**. Washington has carried out its largest naval and missile expansion in a generation, imposed its most aggressive tariffs since World War II, and implemented its tightest restrictions on foreign investment since the Cold War—all directed at China. Arms sales and military support to frontline states have increased; U.S. technological sanctions are **threatening to destroy** Huawei and other Chinese firms. In 2021, China’s deputy foreign minister complained that “a whole-of-government and whole-of-society campaign is being waged to bring China down.” The United States’ **turn against China** has contributed to a broader backlash against Beijing’s power. In Northeast Asia, Taiwan has become more determined than ever to maintain its de facto independence, and the government has approved a bold new defense strategy that could make the island extremely hard to conquer. Japan has agreed to cooperate closely with the United States to fend off Chinese aggression in the region. Through its own belligerence, Beijing has given the U.S.-Japanese alliance an explicitly anti-China cast. The countries around the South China Sea are also starting to hedge against China. Vietnam is acquiring mobile shore-based missiles, Russian attack submarines, new fighter aircraft, and surface ships armed with advanced cruise missiles. Singapore has quietly become a significant U.S. military partner. Indonesia increased its defense spending 20 percent in 2020 and another 21 percent in 2021. Even the Philippines, which courted China for most of President Rodrigo Duterte’s term, is now reiterating its claims in the South China Sea and ramping up air and naval patrols. China’s ambitions are provoking a response beyond East Asia, too, from Australia to India to Europe. Everywhere Beijing is pushing, a growing cast of rivals is pushing back. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue—a strategic partnership that includes Australia, India, Japan, and the United States—has emerged as a focal point of anti-China cooperation among the most powerful democracies in the Indo-Pacific. The new AUKUS (Australia–United Kingdom–United States) alliance unites the core of the Anglosphere against Beijing. The **United States** is forging overlapping mini-coalitions to ensure that advanced democracies stay ahead in key technologies, while the G-7 and NATO are staking out tougher positions on Taiwan and other issues. To be sure, counter-China cooperation remains a work in progress, because many countries still rely on trade with Beijing. But these interlocking partnerships could eventually form a noose around Beijing’s neck. FLAMING OUT China is a risen power, **not a rising one**: it has acquired formidable geopolitical capabilities, but its best days are behind it. That distinction matters, because China has staked out vaulting ambitions and now may not be able to achieve them without drastic action. The CCP aims to **reclaim Taiwan**, dominate the western Pacific, and **spread its influence** around the globe. Xi has declared that China seeks a “future where we will win the initiative and have the dominant position.” Yet that dream is starting to slip away, as growth slows and China faces an increasingly hostile world.

### Uniqueness

#### China currently thinks the US will come to the defense of Taiwan

**O’Hanlon 10/26/21** – Michael O’Hanlon, a [senior fellow](https://www.brookings.edu/experts/michael-e-ohanlon/) at the Brookings Institution, is author of "[The Art of War in an Age of Peace: U.S. Grand Strategy and Resolute Restraint](https://www.brookings.edu/books/the-art-of-war-in-an-age-of-peace-u-s-grand-strategy-and-resolute-restraint/)."

Michael O’Hanlon, October 26 2021, “China is definitely on the rise. But don't write off American dominance just yet.” USA Today, https://news.yahoo.com/china-definitely-rise-dont-write-130043143.html?guccounter=1

China is flexing its muscles more than preparing for war; this is not the equivalent of Europe in the late 1930s, given how much China depends on a stable international order for its continued success. We do need to stay vigilant, remember the art of war even in this age of (relative) peace, and expand our economic as well as military toolkit for crisis management. **We need not and must not panic, however, because doing so could turn manageable crises into truly scary ones.**

**China won't take the risk**

First, let’s remember America’s many strengths. Our[military budget](https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-415t)is about three times’ [China’s](https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-chinas-2021-defense-budget), and our allies in [Europe](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202107/1227808.shtml)and [East Asia](https://www.dw.com/en/japan-defense-ministry-seeks-budget-hike-amid-china-fears/a-59037717) together outspend China themselves (even if not all would fight in a war in the Pacific, admittedly).

The loose coalition of European nations and the USA also represents the consumer market of [more than a billion](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/europe-population/) comparatively wealthy [individuals](https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2015/07/08/mapping-the-global-population-how-many-live-on-how-much-and-where/)whom China needs in order to sustain its still-[export-driven economy](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/13/exports-cant-help-china-grow-as-much-this-year.html). **That means we have many tools of economic, as well as military, warfare if needed.**

Since 1945, [seven Democratic and seven Republican U.S. presidents](https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/) have collectively upheld a rules-based international order that has established a very strong norm against interstate aggression, making any Chinese attack on Taiwan hugely problematic for President Xi Jinping and his fellow leaders in Beijing.

Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers assemble on Jan. 4, 2021, during military training in the northwestern Xinjiang region.

The world’s response to an actual attack against Taiwan – and this is the scenario that is truly the most worrisome for its potential to shake world peace – **would likely be rather unified and strong**. China knows it. For this reason, I believe that U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and other parts of the government need to be careful and restrained with their rhetoric (as most but not all are). China may have growing capacity to attempt to seize Taiwan, but it knows that actually making the attempt would be a cosmic roll of the dice, to be attempted only under the most extreme of circumstances.

### China Threat

#### China will potentially attack – They fear Ukraine’s independence

Al **Jazeera**, 6-2-20**24**, "China ready to ‘forcefully’ stop Taiwan independence: Defence minister", https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/2/china-ready-to-forcefully-stop-taiwan-independence-defence-minister

Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun has said the country’s military was ready to “forcefully” stop Taiwan’s independence, in a fiery speech at a Singapore security forum. Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue conference in Singapore on Sunday, Dong said the self-ruled democracy of Taiwan was the “core of core issues” for China, but claimed Taiwan’s governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was incrementally pursuing separatism and bent on erasing Chinese identity. China views Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve unification. Last month it staged two days of war games around the island after the May 20 inauguration of President William Lai Ching-te. Lai and the DPP say it is up to the people of Taiwan to decide their future. Beijing calls him a “separatist”. “Those separatists recently made fanatical statements that show their betrayal of the Chinese nation and their ancestors. They will be nailed to the pillar of shame in history,” Dong said. “The Chinese People’s Liberation Army has always been an indestructible and powerful force in defence of the unification of the motherland, and it will act resolutely and forcefully at all times to curb the independence of Taiwan and to ensure that it never succeeds in its attempts,” Dong told the forum on Sunday. “Whoever dares to split Taiwan from China will be crushed to pieces and suffer his own destruction.” Reacting to the Chinese minister’s statements, Taiwan’s government said it deeply regretted the “provocative and irrational” remarks. Dong’s comments in Singapore followed the first substantive face-to-face talks in 18 months between the defence chiefs of China and the US. Dong and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met for more than an hour at the luxury hotel hosting the forum.

#### China may attack by 2027

**Rai 24** (Arpan Rai, journalist for The Independent, covers human rights issues, political affairs and wildlife conservation efforts and tracks other big stories from Asia, “China-Taiwan conflict explained: What happens if Beijing tries to invade?”, article for The Independent, May 24, 2024, https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/east-asia/china-taiwan-war-invasion-latest-conflict-b2550985.html)

**Tensions between China and Taiwan soared to new heights** this week as Beijing deployed warplanes and naval vessels in a mock invasion of the island to demonstrate its anger and towards the new president in Taipei. The Chinese military openly said its two-day war games are designed to “test the [armed forces’] ability jointly seize power... and occupy key areas” around Taiwan and the island chains it controls. Xi Jinping is flexing his military muscles in an effort to intimidate the new Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te, who used his first speech after being inaugurated on Monday to urge China to “accept the reality” of the self-governed island’s de facto independence. China views democratically-governed Taiwan as a breakaway province, while Mr Lai says only the Taiwanese people can decide their future. **The escalation of China’s military activity around Taiwan is being watched with growing alarm from around the world**, with neighbouring powers in the Asia-Pacific urging the two to maintain peace and stability. According to US intelligence, Chinese president Xi Jinping has instructed his country’s military to “be ready by 2027" to invade Taiwan. The 70-year-old autocrat has previously vowed to ensure Taiwan is “reunited” with the mainland during his time in power, and has also said the matter of the island’s future “cannot be passed on from generation to generation”. The CIA director William Burns has said the US must take Mr Xi’s desire to seize control of Taiwan “very seriously”, even if military conflict is not inevitable. “We do know, as has been made public, that president Xi has instructed the PLA, the Chinese military leadership, to be ready by 2027 to invade Taiwan, but that doesn’t mean that he’s decided to invade in 2027 or any other year as well,” Mr Burns said last year. Many analysts have drawn parallels between Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine and Mr Xi’s aspirations with Taiwan. For now, Mr Burns argued, Russia’s struggle to make meaningful headway in the war in Europe despite its numerical superiority may be acting as a deterrent to Beijing.

### Answers to: Ukraine Problems for Russia Mean China Won’t Attack

#### China will attack; Ukrain problems won’t deter

Lin & Culver, April 18, 2022, Bonny Lin is the director of the China Power Project and senior fellow for Asian security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS); John Culver is a retired senior intelligence officer with 35 years of experience as a leading CIA analyst of East Asian affairs. He was national intelligence officer for East Asia from 2015-2018; China’s Taiwan Invasion Plans May Get Faster and Deadlier, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/19/china-invasion-ukraine-taiwan/

To date, there is no clear evidence that the Ukraine conflict has altered China’s willingness to use force against Taiwan. Beijing remains ready to use force if Taipei crosses Beijing’s redlines. The Ukraine crisis has not caused China to revise or add additional redlines. The power differential between China and Taiwan continues to grow to Beijing’s advantage—this allows the Chinese leadership to argue that time is on Beijing’s side and China does not need to take immediate action against Taiwan.

## Politics Links

#### Congress is undeniably united against China; All related legislation is unquestionably bipartisan.

**Chivvis 23 – [** Chris Chivvis, November 15, 2023, “The Role of Congress in U.S.-China Relations - https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/11/the-role-of-congress-in-us-china-relations?lang=en” , Chirs Chivvis is a senior fellow and director of the American Statecraft Program at the Carnegie Endowment. He has more than two decades of experience working on U.S. foreign policy and national security challenges.  He most recently served as the U.S. national intelligence officer for Europe.  PhD, Johns Hopkins University]

In the past five years, the U.S. Congress has played an important role in designing and implementing America’s response to the challenge posed by a more powerful and nationalistic China. By the mid-2010s, it was apparent that China’s military modernization, aggressive (sometimes illegal) efforts to acquire advanced technology, protectionist economic policies, territorial encroachments, and other actions constituted a serious challenge, especially in the face of predictions that China might surpass the United States in economic output. Congress has responded accordingly, often working closely with the executive branch. Members have debated and passed a variety of measures aimed at strengthening the United States for a long-term competition and confrontation with China. They have introduced bills on a myriad of China-related issues, held a far-reaching set of hearings on the country, and increasingly raised China from the bully pulpit. Much of what Congress has achieved has been necessary, although there is a risk that it could go too far. Congressional concern about Beijing is of course one part of a broad trend in Washington’s policy discussion, and congressional action is one element in America’s response to China’s rise. But Congress still matters. The nature of congressional foreign policy powers gives it an important role to play in the design and implementation of the U.S. approach to China. The executive branch may often lead on foreign policy, but many key competencies for a strategy for long-term competition with China are subject to congressional legislation or influence. For example, defense spending, investment, and trade policy are all affected by congressional budgetary and other statutory powers.1 Members of **Congress** **have** somewhat **different policy preferences when it comes to China**, but there has been a surprising degree of **bipartisanship** in their assessments of the threat that China poses to the United States.2 As Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) observed in a speech in March 2022, a new consensus is emerging around the idea that “China is the most formidable near-peer adversary our nation has ever faced.”3 This is a notable statement, given the magnitude of the threat the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and imperial Japan once posed to the free world. Members’ policy preferences vary in the emphasis they place on the military, ideological, and economic aspects of the U.S.-China competition. They also vary based on how far members are willing to go on these issues, the degree of urgency they express, and their attitudes toward the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Some members take a view of China reminiscent of president Ronald Reagan’s view of the Soviet Union in his first term, when he called it the “evil empire” and greatly increased U.S. defense spending. For these members, there are grave, existential stakes for America in the unfolding competition. They see America as locked in an intense ideological rivalry with China, which they say aims to supplant the United States as the world’s superpower. They warn that unless America acts now, and forcefully, to counter China’s rise, the country will find itself hemmed in by China’s military, economic, and technological power in just a few years. Other members focus more heavily on the economic aspects of the competition. These economic hawks assess that the countries’ economic relationship is badly in need of reform. They agree with the “neo-Reaganites” that the problem is serious but focus on the need for measures to strengthen America’s domestic economic competitiveness in order to better compete with China. They hope that a healthier economic relationship will reduce other sources of tension and help stabilize U.S.-China relations over the long term. There also appear to be some moderates who share concern about Beijing’s actions but are less ready to make China the framing focus of U.S. foreign policy or rule out the possibility that China might still rise peacefully. These moderates, however, find themselves on the back foot in the face of a surge of political pressure to demonstrate toughness on China—a policy which, as one congressional staffer explained to us, has become a proxy for how members see America’s role in the world. To be tough on China is widely seen as reflecting a pro-American toughness that can appeal to voters on both sides of the aisle. Moderates may also hesitate to critique the consensus because China is one of the last remaining areas of bipartisanship on the Hill. As might be expected, Congress’s response to China has been driven at least in part by domestic politics. In the past five years, those pushing for a more aggressive response have mostly had the upper hand and those who might prefer a more moderate approach have found themselves on the back foot, concerned that attempts to moderate could be portrayed as weakness or as un-American to voters. Even as Congress enacts necessary legislation to protect America’s vital interests in the face of China’s rise, there is thus a risk of overshooting. Efforts to stabilize the relationship and find an acceptable modus vivendi with China—one that protects vital U.S. interests while avoiding war—could suffer. Moreover, Beijing is almost certainly listening to what Congress says, and the tone of congressional debate over China could contribute to suspicion, misperception, and thus escalation from China’s leaders. In this case, both sides will incur greater risks and costs across economic, financial, military, and human spheres. Moderate voices may need to speak with a louder voice to reduce the chances that Congress overshoots a well-reasoned policy response to the challenge that China poses. A bipartisan visit to Beijing in October 2023 led by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) suggests that some members now appreciate the need for such an approach, and this should be a welcome sign. Our research combines quantitative analysis of the large volume of bills that have been introduced in Congress in recent sessions with qualitative analysis of the main ideas and character of the debate, especially as expressed in the positions of congressional thought leaders. To understand this debate, we have relied on the Congressional Record, articles, speeches, and reporting on members’ views, as well as informal interviews with congressional staff from both parties. One challenge we encountered is that some members are more vocal in public about their views on China, and this may create bias in our sample. As researchers, however, we have to rely on these public statements, even though we recognize that they may or may not tell the whole story, and members who have said less in public may still hold developed views on China that differ from those of the more outspoken. Section one of this paper describes how congressional attention to China has increased in the past five years and outlines the major legislative muscle movements that have shaped U.S.-China relations. Section two then maps the thinking of key congressional thought leaders on China. Congressional Action on China Since 2020 Congressional attention to China has exploded since 2018. The number of bills introduced that Congress.gov codes as being about China increased sixfold between 2013 and 2021 (the 113th and 116th Congresses). During the 117th Congress, the most recent session to be completed, more bills were introduced on China than on the entire Middle East.4 In the process, Congress has moved to strengthen U.S. ties to Taiwan, authorized billions more in military spending for defeating China’s military, restricted China’s access to semiconductors, questioned the legitimacy of the CCP, and supported executive branch efforts to build a broad anti-China regional and global coalition. Since 2021, Congress has worked with but also been more aggressive than the administration of Joe Biden, whose approach has recently focused on restoring diplomatic communication with China. Very few voices in Congress have pushed for cooperation with China or taken a strong and vocal stance in favor of diplomacy, with the exception of the bipartisan delegation that Senator Schumer led to Beijing in October 2023. Many members believe there is still much more that needs to be done to defend America against China’s threats, judging from legislative initiatives and statements by congressional leaders as of fall 2023. The surge in Congress’s tough on China attitudes began with the 116th Congress in 2019,5 and they accelerated in response to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when anti-China sentiment in the United States intensified. For example, the Pew Research Center found that nearly 73 percent of Americans had an unfavorable opinion of China in July 2020, a 26 percent increase from 2018.6 An April 2020 Politico poll found that 31 percent of U.S. voters saw China as an “enemy,” an 11 percent increase from that January, before COVID-19 had spread widely in the United States.7 These broader trends are mirrored in the rise of China-related bills in recent sessions of Congress (see figure 1). **Most pieces of draft China legislation that have come to a vote in the House of Representatives or the Senate passed with little or no debate**. In part this is because congressional staff negotiate and revise the bills before any vote. But given the divisions in Congress on so many other policy issues, it is still striking that so much China-related legislation has passed with bipartisan support. **For example, Congress passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019** (S. 1838) and the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (H.R. 6256), two big pieces of human rights legislation, nearly unanimously and with bipartisan sponsorship in both houses. The same was true for the Secure Equipment Act of 2021 (H.R. 3919), which became law during the first session of the 117th Congress and prevents the U.S. Federal Communications Commission from issuing licenses to Chinese state-backed telecommunications companies. In the House, the Promoting United States International Leadership in 5G Act of 2021 (H.R. 1934) passed 405 to 20 during the 117th Congress, and the CHIPS and Science Act (H.R. 4346), which passed with bipartisan support in 2023 despite simultaneous high levels of partisan rancor. All Republicans and 146 Democrats also voted in favor of establishing the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party. Human Rights Figure 2 shows the extent to which Congress has increased its attention on China’s human rights abuses.8 Ten years ago, before Washington’s attention fixated on China, most legislation on the country focused on trade or human rights issues. Leading members of Congress often sought to highlight the issues of Tibet and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre as a means of pushing back against what they perceived as the executive branch’s permissiveness on China. Congressional scrutiny of China’s human rights repression broadened in 2019, however, in response to Beijing’s repression of massive citizen protests in Hong Kong. Congress passed legislation over the second half of 2019 and in 2020 that condemned the repression, banned the export of certain weapons to the Hong Kong Police Force, and authorized the White House to revoke Hong Kong’s special trade status. At the same time, Congress responded to China’s mistreatment of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region, with the House and Senate both introducing bipartisan bills in 2020 and 2021 to sanction Chinese government officials and prohibit the imports of goods manufactured with forced labor in Xinjiang. According to Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), who chaired one of the key hearings on the Senate version of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, “Nowhere is [China’s] assault on individual freedom and basic human rights more comprehensive and more atrocious than against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.” Senator Rubio echoed his Democratic counterpart: “The crimes against humanity and genocide that are taking place at the hands of the CCP demand an urgent international response.”9 Some businesses pushed back against these bills, expressing concerns about the breadth of the restrictions, but both parties in Congress nevertheless ultimately backed the legislation, as did the White House. The legislation that President Biden signed into law in December 2021 thus prohibited imports of “any goods, wares, articles, and merchandise mined, produced, or manufactured wholly or in part” in Xinjiang unless they are proven not to be linked to forced labor—a remit with far-reaching implications for a range of U.S. industries.

#### There is Bipartisanship Against China, Plan Necessary to Focus Consensus

**Gambino and Greve 23** (Joan E Greve is a senior political reporter for Guardian US. Lauren Gambino is political correspondent for Guardian US. “Capitol Hill finds rare bipartisan cause in China – but it could pose problems” 2-26-2023. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/feb/26/chinese-balloon-bipartisan-capitol-hill-risk) – 7/12/2024

In the weeks since the US military shot down a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon**, Democrats and Republicans** on Capitol Hill **have spoken** passionately **about the need to** more effectively **compete with Beijing**. A resolution condemning China for the balloon incident passed the House in an unanimous vote of 419 to 0. Joe Biden has similarly expressed hope that efforts to strengthen America’s global competitiveness in response to a rising China can unite Democrats and Republicans in an era defined by bitter partisanship. “Today, we’re in the strongest position in decades to compete with China or anyone else in the world,” Biden said in his State of the Union address earlier this month. “Let’s be clear: **winning the competition with China should unite** all of us.” I don’t believe we have a clear consensus on the precise mix of policies that are necessary to address this challenge Patricia Kim, US-China relations expert at the Brookings Institute The new House select committee on China will hold its first primetime public hearing on Tuesday, and the panel’s supporters are optimistic its work will provide a rare opportunity for bipartisan cooperation in the divided Congress. But while there’s widespread **agreement among policymakers and lawmakers** in Washington over the need **to** better **compete with China**, there is no prevailing consensus on how to do so. Some experts also fear this kumbaya moment in Washington could escalate tensions with Beijing and increase the risk of conflict. “There is a bipartisan consensus on the fact that China poses a broad challenge to the United States across multiple domains,” said Patricia Kim, an expert on US-China relations at the Washington-based Brookings Institution. “I don’t believe we have a clear consensus on the precise mix of policies that are necessary to address this challenge.”

A committee walks the ‘fine line’

One of Republican Kevin McCarthy’s first major victories after securing the House speakership (on the 15th ballot) was to create a new select committee examining competition between the US and China. The motion to form the committee was overwhelmingly approved in a 365 to 65 vote, with 146 Democrats joining all Republicans. “I’ve heard my colleagues on both sides say that the threat posed by Communist China is serious. I fully agree. This is an issue that transcends our political parties,” McCarthy said. The panel, officially named the House select committee on strategic competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist party, **is** broadly charged with examining a host of economic, security and human rights issues involving China. The panel will be led by congressman Mike Gallagher, a Republican of Wisconsin and prominent “China hawk”, who emphasized that it would work in a bipartisan fashion to expose the threats the CCP poses to US national security and economic interests. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, a Democrat of Illinois, will serve as the committee’s ranking member. The leaders have stressed that the target of their **scrutiny is China’s ruling party**, not its people, and hope their work yields policy and legislative recommendations that win support from lawmakers of both parties. Of course, partisan divisions will arise. Republicans increasingly depict China as an outright “adversary” intent on reshaping the international order while the the Biden administration and many Democrats ​have treaded more delicately, describing it as “our most consequential strategic competitor”. Republicans have repeatedly attacked Biden over his approach to Beijing, though members of both parties criticized the president’s handling of the balloon incident with some lawmakers accusing the White House of concealing information. And there have also been partisan disagreements about how the US should engage China over shared challenges such as the climate crisis. At the same time, some of the rhetoric from Gallagher and his Republican colleagues has alarmed Democratic members of the committee. Congressman Andy Kim, a Democrat of New Jersey, voiced concern after McCarthy and Gallagher co-signed a Fox News op-ed outlining a strategy to “win the new cold war” against China. “If Chair Gallagher keeps talking about this as a ‘new cold war’, that is not helpful,” Kim told NBC News. “There’s a fine line between deterrence and provocation, and you are crossing over that in a way that is only going to inflame and create greater escalatory challenges.” And there is fear that language casting China as America’s enemy will encourage anti-Asian sentiment amid a surge in hate incidents. Those of us concerned about not devolving into a cold war or anti-Asian American sentiment have to be particularly vocal Ro Khanna, US congressman “I have a lot of respect for Mike Gallagher in terms of how he’ll conduct the committee in a serious way, but it’s important to see how the conversations unfold,” committee member Ro Khanna, a Democrat of California, told the Guardian. “For those of us who are concerned about not devolving into a cold war or anti-Asian American sentiment, we have to be particularly vocal.”

A transition is under way

Over the last decade, as the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, consolidated power at home, hope in Washington of improving US-China relations dimmed. Under Xi’s rule, the US has accused China of committing genocide against the Uyghurs and other Turkic and Islamic minority people in the country’s Xinjiang province. Xi has meanwhile overseen an expansive military buildup. This month, the Pentagon informed Congress that China now had more missile silos than the US, though the US has a much larger nuclear force than China. Amid rising fears of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, a self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own, the US military has expanded its presence in Asia. Just this month, the US gained expanded access to four military bases in the Philippines. Meanwhile, US lawmakers, including former House speaker Nancy Pelosi, have enraged Beijing with visits to Taiwan in a show of support for the island’s democracy. Gallagher and Khanna made official trips to the capital city of Taipei this month for meetings with top political, national security and business leaders. The discovery of the suspected Chinese spy balloon sparked a diplomatic crisis that resulted in the cancellation of a long-planned trip to Beijing by the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken. Just weeks prior, a top US military commander warned officers in a memo that his “gut” told him the US and China would be at war by 2025. Now US officials say **China is considering supplying lethal weapons to Russia** for its war in Ukraine. China denies the claim, though that didn’t stop the US national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, from telling CNN on Sunday that it would be “a bad mistake” for Chinese officials to do that. “China should want no part of it,” Sullivan said. In a sign of lawmakers’ hardening views on China, measures to confront Beijing on multiple fronts now routinely attract bipartisan support. Last year, **Congress overwhelmingly approved** sweeping **legislation** aimed at growing the nation’s domestic manufacturing and technology sectors to try **to boost US competitiveness with China**. Shortly thereafter, Biden introduced export restrictions on semiconductors in an effort to strangle China’s microchip sector. Congress also gave the Biden administration new authority to send Taiwan weapons​, though lawmakers say a spending dispute is slowing efforts to help the self-governing island fortify its defenses against China. It’s a very fraught environment for companies to operate in Scott Kennedy, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies Meanwhile, there is growing support for legislation that would ban the Chinese-owned video sharing platform TikTok that lawmakers say poses a security risk, as well as for efforts to hold China accountable over the country’s alleged abuses of Muslim minorities in its Xinjiang province. The US is turning from a strategy of integration with China to one of confrontation and competition, said Scott Kennedy, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. ​The sharp erosion in relations between the world’s largest economies​​, underscored by calls for an economic “decoupling”, has left multinational ​companies ​scrambling to adapt to the new geopolitical reality. “It’s a very fraught environment for companies to operate in,” Kennedy said. “They’ve become careful to a fault.” Yet despite the rising tensions, he noted that the countries’ economies remain highly interdependent. Last year, trade between the US and China reached a record high of nearly $700bn.

Bipartisanship without consensus

As US policymakers intensify their efforts to reorient the relationship between China and the US, critical questions remain about what that strategy will look like in practice. There is broad agreement that the US must decrease its reliance on Chinese-made goods and technologies, said Kim, the Brookings expert, but “**there certainly isn’t a consensus on how much de-risking and decoupling is necessary** to strike the right balance between national security concerns and upholding American values and principles that have long held dear the free flow of information, people, trade and open markets”. The House panel begins its work at a time of rising ​public ​hostility toward China. ​According to a survey by the Pew Research Center​, ​82% of Americans ​hold an unfavorable view of the country, ​more than twice the figure in 2012, when Xi came to power. In general, Republicans, more so than Democrats, tend to harbor more negative views of China and are more likely to support the US taking a more hardline approach to the country, it found. The committee’s hearings, meanwhile, will play out against the backdrop of a presidential campaign cycle, ​with Republicans already aiming to cast Biden as “weak” on China. That makes it even more important for the administration and for others not to signal hysteria Matt Duss, visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Amid this heated political environment, some experts have emphasized the importance of avoiding a drumbeat to war with China. Matt Duss, a former foreign policy adviser to the progressive senator Bernie Sanders, complimented Biden’s overall handling of the balloon incident, but he admonished the administration’s “overreaction” in canceling Blinken’s trip. “The American people are going to take cues from their leaders on these issues,” said Duss, who is now a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “That makes it even more important for the administration and for others not to signal hysteria.” The US will soon mark 20 years since the invasion of Iraq, Duss noted; that vastly consequential and widely criticised decision was supported by members of both parties at the time. “Bipartisanship is good,” Duss said. “But bipartisanship behind bad policy is very bad.”

#### Bipartisan support for Taiwan

Glaser & Lin, 7-2, 24, BONNIE S. GLASER is Managing Director of the Indo-Pacific Program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. BONNY LIN is Senior Fellow for Asian Security and Director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, The Looming Crisis in the Taiwan Strait, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/taiwan/looming-crisis-taiwan-strait

How Washington Can Lower the Tension Between Taipei and Beijing

. The combination of Chinese aggression **and strong bipartisan support in the United States for Taiwan mean the Biden administration is unlikely to curb its support for Taiwan.**

## Surrender

#### If the US is perceived as not being able to defend Taiwan, Taiwan will surrender

Andrew **Nathan 6/23/22**, Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science at Columbia University, 6/23/2022, “Beijing Is Still Playing the Long Game on Taiwan,” <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-06-23/beijing-still-playing-long-game-taiwan?check_logged_in=1&utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20220625>, cc

Beijing can **afford to wait** for power in the Western Pacific to **tip decisively** in its favor. When Washington comes to understand that the **cost** of **defending Taiwan** is **beyond its means**, and **Taiwanese officials** realize that Washington no longer has the **appetite for a clash** with China, Taiwan will pragmatically **negotiate an arrangement** that Beijing can accept. In the meantime, China needs only to **deter Taipei** and Washington from attempting to lock in formal Taiwanese **independence**. Beijing’s **shows of force** are not precursors of an imminent attack, therefore, but measures intended to **buy time** for history to take its course.

Second, contrary to the common portrayal of China as itching for war, Beijing has demonstrated **strategic patience** in pursuit of **its other goals**. A good example is Beijing’s behavior in the **S**outh **C**hina **S**ea, where China has built and militarized seven sand islands without **triggering a war** with the United States or rival territorial claimants. It did so by building only on landforms it already controlled, claiming all along that it wasn’t doing what it was doing. The rival territorial claimants were too weak to confront China, while the United States lacked a justification for doing so because it has no territorial claims where China was building. Beijing restricted access to but refrained from seizing a landform it contests with the sole U.S. treaty ally involved in these disputes—the Philippines—which in any case lacked an appetite to invoke its alliance with Washington by moving militarily to defend itself.

The conflict in Ukraine is reminding Xi that war is unpredictable and rule over a resisting population is costly.

# General Impacts

### China-Taiwan Goes Nuclear

#### China-Taiwan war goes nuclear- empirics prove China acts out of fear. Threats will extend to US allies---Extinction.

**Anderson 24** (James H, the former Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Prior to serving in that role, Dr. Anderson was Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Dr Anderson was the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for defense policy and leads the formulation and coordination of national security policy within the Department of Defense. He was responsible for efforts to build partnerships and defense cooperation with U.S. allies. 3/24 “The Next Taiwan Crisis Will (Almost) Certainly Involve Nuclear Threats” <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2024/march/next-taiwan-crisis-will-almost-certainly-involve-nuclear-threats>)

Any battle over Taiwan will not just be a question of territorial aggression but a fight over the core conception of modern China’s soul. And for the leaders who launch such an endeavor, their political futures will hinge on the outcome, as will, possibly, their physical safety and that of their families in the event of failure. Under such circumstances, nuclear use might not be palatable, but it could seem far more plausible if military defeat were to equate to loss of domestic power and possible death anyway.5 It has become conventional wisdom among China watchers that **if China’s leaders decide to invade Taiwan, there is nothing anyone can do to change their minds.** If true, this provides another reason to consider potential Chinese nuclear threats, since the “stop at nothing” narrative logically entails escalation if conventional means fail to achieve success. China’s DF-17 solid-fuel, road-mobile ballistic missile (above, on parade in Beijing) can be conventionally or nuclear armed. In a Taiwan scenario, the United States must be prepared to deal with nuclear threats to its allies in the Indo-Pacific area. These considerations raise the question of how China might use nuclear threats in a Taiwan invasion. Notably, there is evidence that not all Chinese military theorists believe using nuclear weapons on their own soil (which they consider Taiwan to be) would constitute a violation of the NFU policy.6 That said, it is difficult to imagine circumstances in which China might be tempted to use nuclear weapons on the island itself. It is more plausible to imagine Beijing launching an electromagnetic pulse attack over Taiwan.7 In theory, such a weapon could paralyze the island’s communication networks. Inflicting such a sudden and massive psychological blow might, in turn, shock Taipei’s political leaders into capitulation. China also could use nuclear threats to dissuade the United States from rendering military assistance to Taiwan during a crisis. Here, it is worth recalling that senior Chinese officials have already issued such threats against the United States, as happened during the Taiwan crisis in 1996 and again in 2005.8 What is more, Chinese military publications and journals have mentioned—on multiple occasions—the potential for nuclear first strikes against the United States as part of various Taiwan invasion scenarios.9 China might seek to leverage its nuclear weapons in a future Taiwan crisis without resorting to explicit nuclear threats. Since a good portion of the PLA’s nuclear forces are based on mobile platforms, it could disperse them during a crisis to assume a more threatening posture.10 It also could adjust nuclear alert levels to signal intent. If these measures did not deter third-party intervention, China could resort to more dramatic action, such as firing a nuclear demonstration shot near Taiwan, Okinawa, Guam, or even Hawaii during an invasion crisis. One might counter that China is unlikely to cross the nuclear threshold in a Taiwan conflict for fear of international condemnation. This may well be the case, at least initially. But China could reconsider its position, especially if third-party intervention threatened to derail its invasion plans. It is worth remembering that China did not intend to issue nuclear threats when it instigated its 1969 border war with the Soviet Union. But eventually Beijing did exactly that after it feared the Soviets might escalate the conflict.11 China’s Growing Nuclear Arsenal. The growth of China’s nuclear arsenal may increase its willingness to issue nuclear threats in the future. To understand why, it is important to recall China’s nuclear history. At the dawn of the Nuclear Age, China sought to diminish the importance of nuclear weapons. In 1946, CCP Chairman Mao Zedong famously denigrated the bomb as nothing more than a “paper tiger.” Mao made a virtue of necessity because China did not have the technological means to develop nuclear weapons until 1964. For decades afterward, China appeared content with a small nuclear arsenal, confident it could deter the United States—and later the Soviet Union—with an assured second-strike capability. But the discovery of China’s new missile fields in 2021 suggests Beijing’s nuclear doctrine is changing. China’s decision **to dramatically expand its nuclear capabilities is the most consequential development** in the PLA’s ongoing modernization efforts. As the Pentagon’s 2023 annual report put it, “Over the next decade, **the PRC will continue to rapidly modernize, diversify, and expand its nuclear forces.** Compared to the PLA’s nuclear modernization efforts a decade ago, current efforts dwarf previous attempts in both scale and complexity [emphasis added].”12 Over time, China’s nuclear arsenal expansion may embolden its behavior—including the propensity to issue nuclear threats.13 As the 2021 U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission report asserts, “It could also be intended to support a new strategy of limited nuclear first use. Such a strategy would enable Chinese leaders to leverage their nuclear forces to accomplish Chinese political objectives beyond survival, such as coercing another state or deterring U.S. intervention in a war over Taiwan.”14 The United States still maintains an advantage in terms of strategic warheads, but the PLA is closing the gap. In its 2023 report on Chinese military power, the Pentagon estimates China “will probably have over 1,000 operational nuclear warheads by 2030.”15 The fact that the U.S. nuclear arsenal will remain larger than China’s for at least the next few years provides no guarantee that Beijing will refrain from nuclear threats in the near term. Historically, China has demonstrated a willingness to instigate crises, even against stronger military powers, to achieve political aims.16 Moreover, Chinese writings have long focused on the political nature of nuclear weapons, especially their potential to inflict psychological shock. All this should be front of mind when considering the potential for China to resort to nuclear threats during a Taiwan invasion, whether in the near or distant future. The nature of the PLA’s force structure also increases the odds that the next major crisis over Taiwan will include a nuclear dimension. The dual-use capability of selected Chinese missiles, such as the DF-26 “carrier killer,” means the PLA can exchange conventional warheads for nuclear ones in short order. This would present special intelligence and operational challenges for the U.S. Navy during a conflict over Taiwan. In addition, the PLA’s commingling of conventional and nuclear weapons raises the risk of inadvertent nuclear escalation since the Pentagon’s playbook normally involves precision strikes deep into enemy territory.17 **Nuclear Threats Extend to U.S. Allies** The United States also must consider the possibility that China may issue nuclear threats against one (or more) U.S. allies in a Taiwan scenario. Washington’s greatest strength in the Indo-Pacific theater is its extensive web of allies and partners. China understands this full well, which explains its relentless efforts to sow discord among them. In the event of a Taiwan crisis, China will intensify these efforts. China knows that Japan is the most important U.S. ally when it comes to Taiwan, because Washington depends on Japan for military basing and diplomatic support. It should come as no surprise that Chinese officials already have sanctioned a crude nuclear threat against Tokyo. In July 2021, a video surfaced on a CCP-approved channel linked to the PLA that declared, “We are warning Japan and informing the world that if Japan interferes militarily in our domestic affairs—including the unification of Taiwan with the mainland—nuclear weapons will surely be used against them.”18 Japan is not the only U.S. ally that China has threatened with nuclear weapons. China also has threatened Australia over its participation in a nuclear submarine deal with the United States and the United Kingdom. In 2021, an article in the CCP mouthpiece Global Times asserted that such developments “will potentially make Australia a target of a nuclear strike.”19 These examples highlight the need for Washington to coordinate with key allies to neuter the potential impact of Chinese nuclear saber rattling. Washington’s interest in counterproliferation is another reason to take the growth of China’s nuclear arsenal seriously. In this vein, recall that Taiwan pursued a nuclear weapons program for decades before relinquishing its nuclear ambitions in the 1980s. Taipei’s leaders may be tempted to restart the island’s long-defunct nuclear program if they conclude no other course of action can deter a Chinese invasion. Then-President Lee Teng-hui declared Taiwan was reconsidering its nuclear option during the July 1995 crisis with China, though he walked back his statement a few days later. Taiwan has given no indication it is presently reconsidering its nonnuclear status, but its calculus could change over time.20Renewed interest in China’s nuclear program spiked after the 2021 discovery of three new missile fields in north central China. Captured above are satellite images of silo construction at one such site—the missile field near Hami in Xinjiang Province. What is to be Done?Clearly, the safest way to deal with a potential nuclear crisis is to prevent it from arising in the first place. For this reason, the United States must redouble its efforts to make Taiwan an indigestible porcupine from China’s perspective. This means ensuring Taiwan’s defensive quills are long, sharp, and numerous.

#### China attack on Taiwan escalates to war with the US and destroys the global economy

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The United States isn’t facing a formalized alliance of adversaries, as it once did during World War II. It probably won’t see a replay of a scenario in which autocratic powers conquer giant swaths of Eurasia and its littoral regions. Yet with wars in eastern Europe and the Middle East already raging, and ties between revisionist states becoming more pronounced, all it would take is a clash in the contested western Pacific to bring about another awful scenario—one in which intense, interrelated regional struggles overwhelm the international system and create a crisis of global security unlike anything since 1945. A world at risk could become a world at war. And the United States isn’t remotely ready for the challenge Such a conflict would be catastrophic in multiple respects**. Chinese aggression against Taiwan could well trigger a war with the United States, pitting the world’s two most powerful militaries—and their two nuclear arsenals—against each other**. It would wrench global commerce in ways that make the dislocations provoked by the wars in Ukraine and Gaza look trivial. **It would further polarize global politics as the United States seeks to rally the democratic world against Chinese aggression—pushing Beijing into a tighter embrace with Russia and other autocratic powers** Most critically, if combined with ongoing conflicts elsewhere, a **war in East Asia could create a situation unlike anything since the 1940s, in which all three key regions of Eurasia are ablaze with large-scale violence at once. This might not become a single, all-encompassing world war. But it would make for a world plagued by war as the United States and other defenders of the existing order confronted multiple, interlocking conflicts spanning some of the most important strategic terrain on Earth.**

#### That war goes nuclear---Multiple scenarios for escalation.

**Talmadge 18**, Associate Professor of Security Studies at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. (Caitlin, 10/15/18, "Beijing’s Nuclear Option: Why a U.S.-Chinese War Could Spiral Out of Control", *Foreign Affairs*, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-15/beijings-nuclear-option)

As China’s power has grown in recent years, so, too, has the risk of war with the United States. Under President Xi Jinping, China has **increased** its political and economic pressure on Taiwan and built **military installations** on coral reefs in the **S**outh **C**hina **S**ea, fueling Washington’s fears that Chinese expansionism will **threaten U.S. allies** and **influence** in the region. U.S. destroyers have transited the Taiwan Strait, to loud protests from Beijing. American policymakers have wondered aloud whether they should send an aircraft carrier through the strait as well. Chinese fighter jets have intercepted U.S. aircraft in the skies above the South China Sea. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has brought long-simmering economic disputes to a rolling boil. A war between the two countries remains unlikely, but the prospect of a **military confrontation**—resulting, for example, from a Chinese campaign against Taiwan—**no longer seems** as **implausible** as it once did. And the odds of such a confrontation **going nuclear** are **higher** than most policymakers and analysts **think**. Members of China’s strategic com­munity tend to dismiss such concerns. Likewise, U.S. studies of a potential war with China often exclude nuclear weapons from the analysis entirely, treating them as basically irrelevant to the course of a conflict. Asked about the issue in 2015, Dennis Blair, the former commander of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific, estimated the likelihood of a U.S.-Chinese nuclear crisis as “somewhere between nil and zero.” This assurance is **misguided**. If deployed against China, the Pentagon’s preferred style of conventional warfare would be a potential **recipe for nuclear escalation**. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States’ signature approach to war has been simple: punch deep into enemy territory in order to rapidly knock out the opponent’s key military assets at minimal cost. But the Pentagon developed this formula in wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Serbia, none of which was a nuclear power. China, by contrast, not only has nuclear weapons; it has also **intermingled** them with its **conventional** military **forces**, making it difficult to **attack one** without **attacking the other**. This means that a **major** U.S. military **campaign** targeting China’s conventional forces would likely also **threaten its nuclear arsenal**. Faced with such a threat, Chinese leaders could decide to **use their nuc**lear weapon**s** while they were **still able to.** As U.S. and Chinese leaders navigate a relationship fraught with mutual suspicion, they must come to grips with the fact that a conventional war could **skid into a nuclear confrontation**. Although this risk is not high in absolute terms, its consequences for the region and the world would be devastating. As long as the United States and China continue to pursue their current grand strategies, the risk is **likely to endure**. This means that leaders on both sides should dispense with the illusion that they can easily fight a limited war. They should focus instead on managing or resolving the political, economic, and military tensions that might lead to a conflict in the first place. A NEW KIND OF THREAT There are some reasons for optimism. For one, China has long stood out for its nonaggressive nuclear doctrine. After its first nuclear test, in 1964, China largely avoided the Cold War arms race, building a much smaller and simpler nuclear arsenal than its resources would have allowed. Chinese leaders have consistently characterized nuclear weapons as useful only for deterring nuclear aggression and coercion. Historically, this narrow purpose required only a handful of nuclear weapons that could ensure Chinese retaliation in the event of an attack. To this day, China maintains a “no first use” pledge, promising that it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons. The prospect of a nuclear conflict can also seem like a relic of the Cold War. Back then, the United States and its allies lived in fear of a Warsaw Pact offensive rapidly overrunning Europe. NATO stood ready to use nuclear weapons first to stalemate such an attack. Both Washington and Moscow also consistently worried that their nuclear forces could be taken out in a bolt-from-the-blue nuclear strike by the other side. This mutual fear increased the risk that one superpower might rush to launch in the erroneous belief that it was already under attack. Initially, the danger of unauthorized strikes also loomed large. In the 1950s, lax safety procedures for U.S. nuclear weapons stationed on NATO soil, as well as minimal civilian oversight of U.S. military commanders, raised a serious risk that nuclear escalation could have occurred without explicit orders from the U.S. president. The good news is that these Cold War worries have little bearing on U.S.-Chinese relations today. Neither country could rapidly overrun the other’s territory in a conventional war. Neither seems worried about a nuclear bolt from the blue. And civilian political control of nuclear weapons is relatively strong in both countries. What remains, in theory, is the comforting logic of mutual deterrence: in a war between two nuclear powers, neither side will launch a nuclear strike for fear that its enemy will respond in kind. The bad news is that one other trigger remains: a **conventional war** that **threatens China’s nuclear arsenal**. **Conventional forces** can threaten nuclear forces in ways that **generate pressures to escalate**—**especially** when ever more capable U.S. conventional forces face adversaries with relatively **small** and **fragile nuclear arsenals**, such as China. If U.S. operations **endangered** or **damaged** China’s nuclear forces, Chinese leaders might come to think that Washington had aims **beyond** winning the **conventional war**—that it might be seeking to ~~disable~~ or **destroy China’s nuclear arsenal outright**, perhaps as a **prelude to regime change**. In the **fog of war**, Beijing might reluctantly conclude that **limited nuclear escalation**—an initial strike small enough that it could avoid full-scale U.S. retaliation—was a **viable** option to defend itself. STRAIT SHOOTERS The most worrisome flash point for a U.S.-Chinese war is **Taiwan**. Beijing’s long-term objective of reunifying the island with mainland China is clearly in conflict with Washington’s longstanding desire to maintain the status quo in the strait. It is not difficult to imagine how this might lead to war. For example, China could decide that the political or military window for regaining control over the island was closing and **launch an attack**, using air and naval forces to blockade Taiwanese harbors or bombard the island. Although U.S. law does not require Washington to intervene in such a scenario, the Taiwan Relations Act states that the United States will “consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.” Were Washington to intervene on Taipei’s behalf, the world’s sole superpower and its rising competitor would find themselves in the first great-power war of the twenty-first century. In the course of such a war, U.S. conventional military operations would likely **threaten**, ~~disable~~, or outright eliminate some Chinese **nuclear capabilities**—whether doing so was Washington’s stated objective or not. In fact, if the United States engaged in the style of warfare it has practiced over the last 30 years, this outcome would be **all but guaranteed**. Consider submarine warfare. China could use its conventionally armed attack submarines to blockade Taiwanese harbors or bomb the island, or to attack U.S. and allied forces in the region. If that happened, the U.S. Navy would almost certainly undertake an **antisubmarine campaign**, which would likely threaten China’s “boomers,” the four **nuclear**-armed **ballistic missile submarines** that form its naval nuclear deterrent. China’s conventionally armed and nuclear-armed submarines share the same shore-based communications system; a U.S. attack on these transmitters would thus not only disrupt the activities of China’s attack submarine force but also cut off its boomers from **contact with Beijing**, leaving Chinese leaders unsure of the fate of their naval nuclear force. In addition, nuclear ballistic missile submarines depend on attack submarines for protection, just as lumbering bomber aircraft rely on nimble fighter jets. If the United States started sinking Chinese attack submarines, it would be sinking the very force that protects China’s ballistic missile submarines, leaving the latter dramatically more vulnerable. Even more dangerous, U.S. forces hunting Chinese attack submarines could **inadvertently** sink a Chinese boomer instead. After all, at least some Chinese attack submarines might be escorting ballistic missile submarines, especially in wartime, when China might flush its boomers from their ports and try to send them within range of the continental United States. Since correctly identifying targets remains one of the trickiest challenges of undersea warfare, a U.S. submarine crew might come within shooting range of a Chinese submarine without being sure of its type, especially in a crowded, noisy environment like the Taiwan Strait. Platitudes about caution are **easy in peacetime**. In wartime, when Chinese attack submarines might already have launched **deadly strikes**, the U.S. crew might decide to **shoot first** and **ask questions later.** Adding to China’s sense of vulnerability, the small size of its nuclear-armed submarine force means that just two such incidents would eliminate half of its sea-based deterrent. Meanwhile, any Chinese boomers that escaped this fate would likely be cut off from communication with onshore commanders, left without an escort force, and unable to return to destroyed ports. If that happened, China would essentially have no naval nuclear deterrent. The situation is similar onshore, where any U.S. military campaign would have to contend with China’s growing land-based conventional ballistic missile force. Much of this force is **within range of Taiwan**, ready to launch ballistic missiles against the island or at any allies coming to its aid. Once again, U.S. victory would hinge on the ability to degrade this conventional ballistic missile force. And once again, it would be virtually impossible to do so while leaving China’s nuclear ballistic missile force unscathed. Chinese conventional and nuclear ballistic missiles are often **attached to the same base headquarters**, meaning that they likely share **transportation** and **supply networks**, **patrol routes**, and other **supporting infrastructure**. It is also possible that they **share** some **c**ommand-and-**c**ontrol **networks**, or that the United States would be **unable to distinguish** between the conventional and nuclear networks even if they were physically separate. To add to the challenge, some of China’s ballistic missiles can carry either a conventional or a nuclear warhead, and the two versions are virtually **indistinguishable to U.S. aerial surveillance**. In a war, targeting the conventional variants would likely mean **destroying** some **nuclear ones in the process**. Furthermore, sending manned aircraft to attack Chinese missile launch sites and bases would require at least partial control of the airspace over China, which in turn would require weakening Chinese air defenses. But degrading China’s coastal air defense network in order to fight a conventional war would also leave much of its nuclear force without protection. Once China was under attack, its leaders might come to fear that even intercontinental ballistic missiles located deep in the country’s interior were vulnerable. For years, observers have pointed to the U.S. military’s failed attempts to locate and destroy Iraqi Scud missiles during the 1990–91 Gulf War as evidence that mobile missiles are virtually impervious to attack. Therefore, the thinking goes, China could retain a nuclear deterrent no matter what harm U.S. forces inflicted on its coastal areas. Yet recent research suggests otherwise. Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles are larger and less mobile than the Iraqi Scuds were, and they are harder to move without detection. The United States is also likely to have been tracking them much more closely in peacetime. As a result, China is unlikely to view a failed Scud hunt in Iraq nearly 30 years ago as reassurance that its residual nuclear force is safe today, especially during an ongoing, high-intensity conventional war. China’s vehement criticism of a U.S. regional missile defense system designed to guard against a potential North Korean attack already reflects these latent fears. Beijing’s worry is that this system could help Washington block the handful of missiles China might launch in the aftermath of a U.S. attack on its arsenal. That sort of campaign might seem much more plausible in Beijing’s eyes if a conventional war had already begun to seriously undermine other parts of China’s nuclear deterrent. It does not help that China’s real-time awareness of the state of its forces would probably be limited, since blinding the adversary is a standard part of the U.S. military playbook. Put simply, the favored U.S. strategy to **ensure a conventional victory** would likely **endanger** much of China’s nuclear arsenal **in the process**, at sea and on land. Whether the United States **actually intended** to target all of China’s nuclear weapons would be **incidental**. **All that would matter** is that Chinese leaders would **consider them threatened.** LESSONS FROM THE PAST At that point, the question becomes, How will China react? Will it practice restraint and uphold the “no first use” pledge once its nuclear forces appear to be under attack? Or will it use those weapons while it still can, gambling that limited escalation will either halt the U.S. campaign or intimidate Washington into backing down? Chinese writings and statements remain deliberately ambiguous on this point. It is unclear which exact set of capabilities China considers part of its core nuclear deterrent and which it considers less crucial. For example, if China already recognizes that its sea-based nuclear deterrent is relatively small and weak, then losing some of its ballistic missile submarines in a war might not prompt any radical discontinuity in its calculus. The danger lies in wartime developments that could **shift China’s assumptions** about U.S. intentions. If Beijing interprets the **erosion** of its sea- and land-based nuclear forces as a deliberate effort to destroy its nuclear deterrent, or perhaps even as a **prelude to a nuclear attack**, it might see limited nuclear escalation as a way to **force an end to the conflict**. For example, China could use nuclear weapons to instantaneously destroy the U.S. air bases that posed the **biggest threat to its arsenal**. It could also launch a nuclear strike **with no direct military purpose**—on an unpopulated area or at sea—as a way to **signal** that the United States had **crossed a redline.**