

[China](#)'s military could isolate [Taiwan](#), cripple its economy, and make the democratic island succumb to the will of Beijing's ruling Communist Party without ever firing a shot, a prominent think tank warns.

Fears the Communist Party might make good on its promise to one day take control of Taiwan, by force if necessary, have been heightened in recent years by Chinese leader Xi Jinping's increasingly bellicose actions towards the self-ruled island.

China's refusal to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine has only added to those fears.

In such a scenario, analysts and military strategists have long focused on two key options available to China – a full-scale invasion or a military blockade.

But a Washington think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), warns there is a third way, one that will make it far harder for the United States and other like-minded democracies to counter: Quarantine.

Using “gray zone” tactics – actions just below what might be considered acts of war – the China Coast Guard, its so-called maritime militia and various police and maritime safety agencies could initiate a full or partial quarantine of Taiwan, possibly cutting off access to its ports and stopping vital supplies like energy from reaching the island's 23 million people, a newly released report from CSIS says.

The naval, air and ground components of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest military force, might play only auxiliary and support roles, authors Bonny Lin, Brian Hart, Matthew Funaiole, Samantha Lu and Truly Tinsley write.

“China has significantly increased pressure on Taiwan in recent years, stoking fears that tensions could erupt into outright conflict. Much attention has been paid to the threat of an invasion, but Beijing has options besides invading to coerce, punish, or annex Taiwan,” the report says.