

INDSR Newsletter



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Future Challenges of Governance in Hong Kong as Seen from Lee Ka-chiu's Visit to Beijing

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Keyword: Chief Executive of Hong Kong, John Lee Ka-chiu, Xi Jinping

On 8 May 2022, the Election Committee of Hong Kong elected Lee Ka-chiu, the only nominee, as the new Chief Executive of Hong Kong. He received 1,416 votes of support against 8 votes of disapproval from 1,428 members of the Election Committee, representing a vote share of 99.16%. The result was in line with the calculations of the CCP.¹ On May 30, Lee, also known as John Lee, arrived in Beijing as Chief Executive-designate to receive State Council Order No. 754 from Premier Li Keqiang and met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on the same day. This article examines the governance challenges that Lee Ka-chiu will face

when he begins his term in Hong Kong.

CCP establishing new governing authority through Lee

On 8 May, the day Lee Ka-chiu was elected, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council of the PRC immediately published an article titled, “New Electoral System Shows New Vision, New Beginning for New Glory,” to congratulate him. The article not only boasted that the new electoral system realized the principle of “patriots ruling Hong Kong”, but also focused on the expectation that the next five years to be a “critical period for Hong Kong to move from chaos to stability, and from

1. “Lee Ka-chiu Elected as Chief Executive, Official Media said Hong Kong’s New Election System Fully Implemented,” *Central News Agency*, 8 May 2022, <https://www.cna.com.tw/news/acn/202205080176.aspx>.

stability to prosperity.”² When Xi Jinping met with Lee, he also emphasized in a press release that this year marks 25 years since Hong Kong's handover and that “a major turnaround from chaos to stability has been achieved.” The CCP's greatest expectation for Lee, a former police officer, is that he will represent the Party to govern Hong Kong well. He is also expected to build up a new authority based on his experience in suppressing social democratic movements to achieve a new situation in Hong Kong. But the process will not be smooth, and many challenges still exist.³

Challenge 1: Legislation of Article 23 of Hong Kong Basic Law will further tear Hong Kong community apart

At a briefing on his election meeting during the Chief Executive election, Lee Ka-chiu made it clear that he “will promote the legislation to implement

Article 23 of the Basic Law, which prohibits any act of treason, secession, sedition, and subversion against the Chinese Government and theft of state secrets.”⁴ In 2003, Tung Chee-hwa once pushed for the legislation of Article 23, but it was not resolved due to massive pro-democracy protests. This time, the election of Lee Ka-chiu foreshadows a possible return of the conflict between the government and the people. The major difference between these two legislative contexts is that the passage of the Hong Kong National Security Law has created a chilling effect, which caused the democratic movement in Hong Kong, including the Legislative Council elections within the system and the mass protests outside the system, to come to a standstill; but the public's reluctance to take a stand does not mean that the future legislation of Article 23 will be promoted smoothly. What Lee Ka-chiu is likely to face is a longer or more indirect

2. “New Electoral System: New Vision for New Beginning and New Glory,” *The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council*, May 8, 2022, http://big5.news.cn/gate/big5/www.news.cn/gangao/2022-05/08/c_1128631153.htm.

3. “Xi Jinping meets Lee Ka-chiu, Han Zheng Joins,” *People's Daily Online*, May 30, 2022, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0531/c64094-32434433.html>.

4. “Lee Ka-chiu: If Elected as Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Article 23 Legislation is the Focus of Work,” *Central News Agency*, April 14, 2022. <https://www.cna.com.tw/news/acn/202204140200.aspx>.

social rebound, and it is expected that the social confrontation will tear the pro-establishment and the democratic camps further apart in the promotion process.

Challenge 2: Hong Kong civil servants have long-standing grievances

In 2021, 129 civil servants were sacked after they refused to take the oath of allegiance to the SAR as requested by the Hong Kong government.⁵ Lee Ka-chiu himself had discussed with Beijing the division of labor for epidemic prevention during his term of office as the Chief Secretary for Administration in early 2022. Still, the inconsistency in the released information and its implementation triggered a backlash from the public and Hong Kong civil servants. The then-Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, had to step in to put out the fire on Lee's behalf.⁶ These two incidents show that dissatisfaction among Hong Kong civil

servants has been building up against the SAR Government. Whether Lee can gain support of civilian officers, or at least not be negligent in his administration, in the future will be a major challenge that will affect his performance.

Challenge 3: Hong Kong's economy is facing a headwind

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index ended 2021 down 14.1%, the largest annual drop in a decade. Financial performance has been greatly affected by the impact of the epidemic and uncertainties such as the CCP's regulation of financial, insurance, and property stocks, which have traditionally supported the Hong Kong stock market.⁷ On the eve of his appointment, Lee was confronted with another major outbreak of the epidemic in Hong Kong since the beginning of 2022, another problem to add to the pile of issues plaguing Hong Kong. He had to gradually resume daily economic

5. "129 Hong Kong Civil Servants Refuse to Swear Allegiance to the SAR and will be Sacked," *Central News Agency*, April 14, 2021, <https://www.cna.com.tw/news/firstnews/202104140094.aspx>.

6. "Anti-epidemic Work - The Officials' Division of Labor Uneven. Carrie Lam: Lee Ka-chiu Could Only Give a General Briefing that Night," *HKET*, February 15, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/g2rjLV>.

7. "HSI 2021 Wrap-up: Hang Seng Index down 14.1% for the Year, Li-Ning (02331), Sunny Optical Technology (02382) Buck Trend to Lead Blue Chips," *Sina Finance*, December 31 2021, <https://finance.sina.com.cn/stock/hkstock/ggscyd/2021-12-31/doc-ikyammz2402818.shtml>.

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development after the epidemic had stabilized while fighting against the uncertainty of the general environment, which would be a considerable challenge for him coming from the police system. Even though Li Keqiang has encouraged Lee in person to “enhance the status of the three major centers of international finance, shipping, and trade, and accelerate the development of an international innovation and technology center,”⁸ the challenges are enormous in reality. Firstly, even though efforts have been made in recent years to integrate Hong Kong into the Greater Bay Area of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, the interconnection has not yet matured, making it difficult to achieve the desirable mutual synergy. Secondly, the independent legal and business culture tradition that made Hong Kong a world financial center in the past has been severed from the West due to the Hong Kong National Security Law. It is now indeed difficult to regain international trust. Thirdly, Hong Kong is relatively weak as a center of technological innovations, and its

technology manufacturing clusters have a scale far smaller than pivotal places such as Taiwan and South Korea.

Lee's leadership of Hong Kong into “one country, one system” is bound to meet challenges

As a former “armed official,” Lee has experienced many large-scale democratic protests in Hong Kong, so his appointment by the CCP is a good indication that economic development is not the first priority for Beijing. China's most urgent task is completing the “second handover” of Hong Kong people's hearts after the first of the territorial sovereignty. Lee is expected to lead Hong Kong to be assimilated by mainland China under the “one country, one system” principle. However, as observed from the above three challenges, the challenges from the citizens and international parties will also increase.

(Originally published in the “National Defense and Security Real-time Assessment”, June 8, 2022, by the

8. “Li Keqiang Meets Lee Ka-chiu and Issues State Council Decree Appointing Lee as the Sixth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR in the Presence of Han Zheng,” *People's Daily Online*, May 30, 2022<http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0530/c64094-32434157.html>.

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Observation of Japan's Ministry of Defense establishing the "Commander of Joint Forces" Role

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Keyword: Self-Defense Force, Military Reform, International Trend

The Kyodo News reported on June 6, 2022, that as China continues to strengthen its military capabilities in sea, space, internet, and electromagnetic warfare, Japan's Defense Ministry intends to appoint a "Commander of Joint Forces Command" role. A "Command of Joint Forces" to support the commander will also be established to unify the administration of its Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces.¹ This article will discuss the history of Japan's intention to establish a "Commander of Joint Forces" and the purpose of its establishment.

Idea of "Commander of Joint Forces Command" has been around for long time

As early as 2006, when Japan's Joint Staff Office was established, the idea of setting up a "Command of Joint Forces" in charge of the operation of military branches was already in the works.² In 2016, the then Chief of the Joint Staff (equivalent to Taiwan's Chief of General Staff), Katsutoshi Kono, also proposed the idea of establishing the said Command.³ In May 2018, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Policy Research Council released the "Proposal for a New National Defense Program Outline and Medium-

1. "The Evaluation of Establishment of SDF 'Commander of Joint Forces Command' Regarding Taiwan's Strategic Situation and Mobility of Japanese Forces," *Kyodo News*, June 7, 2022, <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/8f6b6faf035b69243f834cd040c7f5e32c138eff>
2. "Exclusive: Defense Ministry Formally Considers New 'Commander of Joint Forces'," *Kyodo News*, June 7, 2022, <https://tchina.kyodonews.net/news/2022/06/f2e91192e682.html?phrase=%20統合司令部=統合，司，令，部。>
3. "SDF Top Official Considers the Permanent Establishment of 'Command of Joint Forces'," *Sankei Shimbun*, March 1, 2016, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20160301-ADFFGV5HFZOKROLFZTTTVFOZWQY/>.

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Term National Defense Capability Development Plan," which proposed the establishment of a permanent "Command of Joint Forces" in response to the growing threat from North Korea and China. In addition to strengthening the command system of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF), the establishment of the Command will further integrate the Self-Defense Forces in the fields of integrated air and missile defense, space, internet, electromagnetic wave, amphibious operations, information, and logistics.⁴ The then chairman of the LDP's Policy Research Council was Fumio Kishida, the current Prime Minister. Citing the experience of the Joint Task Force temporarily established by the SDF in Northeast Japan during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 to incorporate the efforts of the ground, maritime, and air forces, Kenji Wakamiya, the then head of the LDP's National Defense Division, suggested that a permanent "Command of

Joint Forces" could be established on the Ryukyu Islands. For example, the Ground SDF's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade uses Maritime SDF ships for transportation, while the Air SDF supports the missions from the air. This is more conducive to the defense of the outlying islands under the integration of the Command of Joint Forces.⁵ The concept of Command of Joint Forces was originally expected to be included in the "National Defense Program Guidelines" and the "Medium-Term Defense Program (FY 2019-FY 2023)" expected to be presented in late 2018 but was not included in the end.

Integrating chain of command and relieving Chief of the Joint Staff

The main purpose of the Ministry of Defense's plan to establish the Command of Joint Forces and its Commander is to integrate the command structure and to relieve the work of the Chief of the Joint

4. "Proposals for the Formulation of a New National Defense Program Outline and Medium-Term Defense Force Development Plan," *Liberal Democratic Party Policy Research Committee*, May 29, 2018, p.3, https://jimin.jp-east-2.storage.api.nifcloud.com/pdf/news/policy/137478_1.pdf.

5. "Establish a Joint Force for Space, Computer, and Electromagnetic Warfare," *Nikkei Business*, September 21, 2018, <https://business.nikkei.com/atcl/report/16/082800235/091900006/?P=4>.

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Staff in response to the new threats.⁶ Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines and Medium-Term Defense Program (FY 2019-FY 2023) proposed in 2018 places special emphasis on threats from the internet, space, and the electromagnetic spectrum. Since the authorization to operate the military resources is vested in the respective defense forces, the function of the Joint Staff Office is limited for the SDF to respond effectively and flexibly to new types of conflicts.⁷ With the new types of threats, the SDF's current command system may not be able to meet the modern warfare requirements. The capabilities call for rapid response to immediate crises if subjected to simultaneous attacks from multiple fronts such as electronic warfare, cyberattacks,

missiles, and conventional naval and air forces. In addition, although the Chief of the Joint Staff position is the highest rank of the uniformed SDF personnel, it has only a supervisory relationship with the Chief of Staff of Ground, Maritime, and Air SDF but no right or responsibility to command or direct them.⁸ In terms of integration and coordination, it may take more time from communication to the actual execution of the operations.⁹ Thus, establishing an organization that can immediately coordinate the Ground, Maritime, and Air SDF and the joint forces has become imminent.¹⁰ The Medium-Term Defense Program (FY 2019-FY 2023) does not include the Command of Joint Forces, but it does mention that in addition to the planned establishment of related forces, Japan

6. The Minister of Defense has the authority to command and supervise the SDF, but orders are given through the Chief of the Joint Staff and the Chief Staff of Ground, Maritime, and Air SDF, as detailed in Article 8 of the Self-Defense Forces Law. Theoretically, the Chief of Staff does not have command of the forces but carries out the military orders of the Defense Minister. For more details on the issue of military administration and commands in Japan, see Fan, Sheng Meng, "A Study on the Armed Forces and Organization under the Principle of the Rule of Law," *National Defense Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 6, July 2014, p.107.

7. Tseng, Chi-Yan, "Recognize the Development of the Japanese Cyber Self-Defense Forces from the Viewpoint of Departmentalism," *Review of Global Politics*, Special Issue 006, September 2021, p.177.

8. The Chief of Staff of Japan's Ground, Maritime, and Air SDF are the highest ranks in the respective SDF branches.

9. For details, see Fan, Sheng Meng, "A Study on the Armed Forces and Organization under the Principle of the Rule of Law," *National Defense Journal*, vol. 29, no. 6, July 2014, p.107.

10. The Joint Forces report directly to the Ministry of Defense, and orders are executed through the Chief of the Joint Staff. The Forces include the SDF Intelligence Security Team and the Command Communications System Team.

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will evaluate the establishment of a cross-sectoral combat organization that unifies the countermeasures against these threats and strengthens the function of the unified Joint Staff Office.¹¹

On the other hand, the establishment of the Commander of Joint Forces Command would also help to share out the work of the Chief of the Joint Staff. The Chief of the Joint Staff's primary duties are to work under the command and supervision of the Minister of Defense, advise the Minister of Defense on military matters, and deliver the orders from the Minister of Defense to the troops.¹² However, the Chief of the Joint Staff may not be able to assist the Defense Minister and the SDF simultaneously in the event of an emergency. For example, during the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Chief of the Joint Staff had to be detached from control of the troops to spend more than half of his time reporting at the Prime Minister's residence and coordinating

with the U.S. military.¹³ Therefore, with the establishment of the Commander of Joint Forces Command, the Chief of the Joint Staff will be able to assist the Defense Minister in the events of future emergencies, while the Commander of Joint Forces Command will focus on carrying out the orders of the Defense Minister and leading the SDF in their missions.

The achievement of Commander of Joint Forces remains to be seen

Although establishing a Commander of Joint Forces and the Command could streamline the SDF command process and strengthen joint warfare capabilities, possible opposition from the SDF branches could affect the schedule and scope of the position. The factors may include the division of responsibilities between the Command of Joint Forces and the Joint Staff Office and the scope of the coordinated command system. The

11. "Medium Term Defense Program (FY 2019 - FY 2023)", *Japan Ministry of Defense*, December 18, 2018, pp. 3-5, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/pdf/chuki_seibi31-35.pdf.

12. For details, see Article 9 of the Self-Defense Forces Act of Japan.

13. "The Command of Joint Forces was Created, and the Ministry of Defense Performed the Final Adjustment. The SDF is under Permanent Unified Command," *Sankei Shimbun*, April 25, 2018, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20180425-7F4G4VVMTRMWVJ3KH2J5T6VIUM/>.

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Japanese government intends to revise the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Program Guidelines, and the Medium-Term Defense Program by the end of this year;¹⁴ the future establishment of the Commander of Joint Forces and the Command and whether their functions align with their original purpose will be judged by the contents of the documents mentioned above.

As the military situation on both sides of the Taiwan Strait continues to be tense, the question of how to effectively operate the armed forces and mobilize troops to respond to a large-scale attack immediately is one that Taiwan should seriously consider.

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(The contents and advice in the assessments are the personal opinions of the authors, and do not represent the position of the Institute for National Defense and Security Research.)

14. "Responding to the Threat of China, Japan Intends to Shorten the Revision Period of the Defense Outline," *Liberty Times*, December 31, 2021, <https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/world/breakingnews/3786179>; "Japan's Self-Defense Forces Face Pressure for Structural Reform," *Nikkei Chinese*, January 4, 2022, <https://zh.cn.nikkei.com/politicaeconomy/politicasociety/47186-2022-01-04-05-00-26.html>.

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Recent Developments of the Indo-Pacific Strategy: An Assessment of Strategic Environment

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Topic: Indo-Pacific

1. News Highlights

In May 2022, the Biden administration of the U.S. took a series of actions to advance its “Indo-Pacific Strategy.” The actions included the U.S.-ASEAN Special Summit in Washington, D.C. between May 12-13 and U.S. President Joe Biden’s visit to South Korea and Japan between May 20-24. The U.S. also announced the launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) on May 23 and Biden’s attendance at the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) Summit in Tokyo on May 24. On May 26, Secretary of State Antony Blinken delivered a speech on China policy at

George Washington University. In just half a month, the U.S. exchanged views with most countries under the Indo-Pacific Strategy framework, and a series of “joint statements” and “fact sheets” have been released. These documents contain an overwhelming amount of information. On the other hand, the Pacific Island countries not part of the U.S. scheme were visited by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi from May 26 to June 4.¹

In February, the Biden administration released the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy Report with a 10-point action plan. However, before the action plan can be implemented, the report stated that the U.S. must “shape the strategic

1. Wang Yi visited seven South Pacific Island countries, including Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste. However, the signature of the Comprehensive Agreement on Regional Security and Economic Development, which has attracted the most attention, has not been completed because it has not been unanimously agreed upon by the 10 Pacific countries.

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environment to best serve the U.S. and its allies and partners...” while Blinken’s China policy speech emphasized the need to “shape the strategic environment in which Beijing operates to advance our vision...” This article examines what recent Biden administration activities and documents have accomplished in “shaping the strategic environment” and their limits.²

2. Security Implications

In May, a series of activities by the Biden administration further completed the “Indo-Pacific Strategy” framework. For example, IPEF, the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, attracted the participation of 14 countries.³ South Korea’s new president, Yoon Suk-yeol, pledged to strengthen traditional security and economic security cooperation with

the U.S. to reinforce the Indo-Pacific Strategy in Northeast Asia, especially in response to North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile threats. But the reluctance of ASEAN countries and India to choose sides between the U.S. and China, or to confront China, remains largely unchanged.

2-1. Economic pillars of the Indo-Pacific Strategy are taking shape

Most countries in the region expect the Indo-Pacific Strategy to build an economic pillar like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), in addition to the diplomatic and security supports like the Obama administration’s “Pivot to Asia” and “Asia Rebalancing.” Although public opinion in the U.S. has not supported the traditional regional free trade mechanism emphasizing “tariff concessions” and

2. The wording of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy Report is that “the U.S. goal is not to change China but to shape a strategic environment... that is in the best interests and values of the U.S. and its allies and partners.” Blinken said in his China policy speech, “we don’t expect Beijing to change its ways, so we will therefore shape the strategic environment in which Beijing operates to advance our vision of an open and inclusive international system.” See “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States,” *The White House*, February 11, 2022, p. 5, <https://reurl.cc/loXXld>; Antony J. Blinken, “The Administration’s Approach to the People’s Republic of China,” *U.S. Department of State*, May 26, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/b2xxey>.

3. In addition to the U.S., 14 countries, including Japan, Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, and Fiji, have expressed their participation in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

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“market access” in recent years, the Biden administration has still launched the “Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.” But U.S. officials have repeatedly emphasized that IPEF is not a traditional free trade agreement. So far, IPEF has revealed only four main areas and principles: a. fair, flexible trade regulation on digital trade, labor, and environment; b. “supply chain resilience”; c. infrastructure and green technologies; and d. taxation and anti-corruption. The details will not be finalized until participating countries begin negotiations this summer.⁴

2-2. South Korea actively responds to “Indo-Pacific Strategy” framework

Prior to Biden’s visit, South Korea announced the establishment of the Apache Combat Helicopter Unit in the Korea-US Joint Division, and Korea’s National Intelligence Agency joined the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) to become the first Asian country in the organization.

During Biden’s visit, the two

countries reaffirmed their commitment to the U.S.-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty, agreed to reactivate the high-level Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG) as soon as possible, agreed to expand the scope and scale of joint exercises around the Korean Peninsula, significantly expanded the fight against North Korean cyber threats, and emphasized the importance of the trilateral cooperation of U.S., Japan, and South Korea in addressing North Korean challenges. In the meantime, the two countries also pledged to expand and deepen cooperation in “key emerging technologies” (such as advanced semiconductors, electric vehicle batteries, artificial intelligence, quantum technology, biotechnology, biopharmaceuticals, and autonomous robots), cybersecurity, supply chain, energy safety, nuclear energy, and space technology. Seoul has said it will participate in IPEF, and Biden has also welcomed Yoon’s willingness to participate in the Quad.

4. Yang Mingzhu, “U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai: Formal Consultation on Indo-Pacific Economic Structure This Summer,” *Central News Agency*, May 29, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/9GyQ5O>; “Statement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity,” *The White House*, May 23, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/GxDlkp>.

2-3. ASEAN and India remain relatively conservative

Just as the statements of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Leaders' Summit in the past did not directly name China, neither did the "Joint Vision Statement" nor the "Fact Sheet" of this special summit between the U.S. and ASEAN. Given their close economic and trade ties with China, most ASEAN countries remain cautious about leaning on the U.S. Similarly, India has been reluctant to state that the Indo-Pacific strategy is directed at China and has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine or impose sanctions on Russia. The Quad Summit did not name China's expansion in the region but only called it "a matter of concern" for the four countries and described the war in Ukraine as "a tragic conflict." These relatively mild words are clearly the result of India's insistence.

3. Trend Observation

In his speech on the China policy, Blinken pointed out that the Biden administration would compete with China, but not to seek conflict or a new Cold War. The U.S. will not prevent China from playing a role as a major power,

nor prevent China from developing its economy or promoting the interests of its people. But the U.S. will protect the international laws, agreements, principles, and mechanisms that allow all countries to coexist and cooperate. The U.S. and its allies must construct a strategic infrastructure to achieve the goals. The aim being to deter China from distorting the market mechanism with its policies, forcing technology transfer from multinational companies, pressing other countries with economic coercion, and interfering with the maritime economic activities of neighboring countries with maritime militias. The U.S., additionally, aims to defend the "rule-based" international order and the universal value system. Such economic and security cooperation is also gradually building what U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin calls "integrated deterrence".

3-1. Strengthening "supply chain resilience" is core of strategic economic environment

Almost all of Washington's activities in May were related to "supply chains." The U.S. Secretary of Commerce said on May 12 that the U.S. is seeking to work with Southeast Asian partners to

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deepen “supply chain resilience.” South Korea agreed to strengthen supply chain cooperation with the U.S., while Japan expressed the semiconductor supply chain requires support from South Korea and Taiwan. The U.S. and Taiwan launched the U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st-Century Trade to promote bilateral trade, strengthen technology export controls, and improve supply chains.

The supply chains are also the most important of the four pillars of IPEF (international trade, supply chain, green energy, taxation and anti-corruption). The IPEF Fact Sheet states that the framework will provide an unprecedented supply chain commitment that can better anticipate and prevent supply chain breakdowns. It is also expected to create a more resilient economy and protect against price surges that could lead to higher household spending. Specific approaches to building a “resilient economy” include establishing early warning systems for supply chain disruptions, mapping key mineral supply chains, improving traceability in key sectors, and

coordinating for better diversity. In May of this year, the second meeting of the U.S.-E.U. Trade and Technology Council announced a two-month pilot study to develop an “early warning system” for disruptions in the semiconductor supply chain, demonstrating the multi-faceted approach of the U.S.⁵

In addition, moving production back or sourcing raw materials from other countries for industries, such as pharmaceutical or minerals, can enhance the security and resilience of the supply chain. Although IPEF does not provide “market access” or “tariff incentives,” it can help member countries avoid supply chain disruptions. In the supply chain restructuring, manufacturers may be moving out of China to Southeast Asia, such as the recent Apple supply chain restructuring that benefited Vietnam.

3-2. Strengthened countermeasures against threats from North Korea and China

The activities in May reinforced the countermeasures against security

5. “U.S. -EU Joint Statement of the Trade and Technology Council,” *U.S. Department of Commerce*, May 16, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/VDlnyn>.

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threats from North Korea and China. On Northeast Asian security, the U.S.-Korea Leaders' Joint Statement reveals for the first time that "the U.S. will use all of its defensive forces, including nuclear weapons, to defend South Korea against the threat of a nuclear attack by North Korea." In the U.S.-Japan Leaders' Joint Statement, Biden also reaffirmed the U.S. security commitment to Japan and said he would use all military power, including nuclear weapons, to assist in Japan's defense.⁶

Regarding the Taiwan Strait situation, the joint statement by the leaders of the U.S. and Japan reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait as an indispensable element of peace and prosperity for the international community. In addition to asserting the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. and Korean leaders added, "peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is an essential element for the security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific" in their joint statement.

Biden held a joint press conference after the meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Kishida. When asked by the media whether the U.S. would intervene militarily if the same situation occurred in Taiwan as in Ukraine, Biden replied, "Yes...that's the promise we've made." Although the White House later clarified again that U.S.'s China policy remained unchanged, this was the third time Biden has made a clear statement on the issue since taking office. The reasons for this attitude are intriguing.

The Quad Joint Statement proposes the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) on maritime security in Southeast Asia. The partnership aims to share commercial information, track illegal maritime events, and establish a "common operational picture" through digital technology, satellite technology, and information sharing to counter the threat of Chinese maritime militias and prevent grey zone conflicts." This is the first time that the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India have responded to the threat of

6. "United States-Republic of Korea Leaders' Joint Statement," *The White House*, May 21, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/7DlmOy>; "Japan-U.S. Joint Leaders' Statement: Strengthening the Free and Open International Order," *The White House*, May 23, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/QLDx0q>.

a Chinese maritime militia with concrete measures. In his speech on China policies, Blinken also emphasized that through IPMDA regional partners can better monitor coastal waters, address illegal fishing, and protect their sovereignty and maritime rights. The US-ASEAN Special Summit Fact Sheet also states that the U.S. will spend \$60 million to promote maritime security cooperation and deploy a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) patrol vessel to Southeast Asia and Oceania to conduct security cooperation and training.

3-3. The gradual tightening of U.S.-China strategic confrontation

With the release of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy Report and the recent series of actions, whether or not it is intended to be a “strategic containment” against China, the Biden administration has largely completed the construction of the strategic environment for the Indo-Pacific Strategy and is prepared for the

upcoming release of the National Security Strategy Report. On the China side, while Biden was in Tokyo for the Quad Summit, Chinese and Russian warplanes were conducting routine joint strategic air patrols over the waters surrounding Japan. Although Wang Yi’s trip to the Pacific Islands failed to establish a multilateral agreement with 10 South Pacific countries, the region has become a battlefield for China and the U.S. to compete. China has invested in the construction of the Ream Naval Base in southern Cambodia, located in the northern Gulf of Thailand, and the two countries broke ground on the project on June 8. In the meantime, China also announced that the level of foreign ministers’ talks with the five Central Asian countries would be raised to the level of national leaders.⁷ It is obvious that the U.S.-China strategic confrontation is not limited to the “first island chain” and that a new long-term competitive landscape is gradually taking shape.

7. Simone McCarthy, “China and Cambodia Break Ground at Naval Base in Show of Iron-clad Relations,” *CNN*, June 10, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/d2IK3D>; “Wang Yi on the Outcome and Consensus of the Third Meeting of Foreign Ministers of China+5 Central Asian Countries,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*, June 8, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/QLG8rZ>.

Recent Developments of the Indo-Pacific Strategy: An Assessment of Strategic Environment

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Intimidation vs. Communication: Chinese Defense Minister's Strategic Intent at the Shangri-La Dialogue 2022

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1. Preface

After two years of postponement due to the pandemic, the Shangri-La Dialogue was able to take place physically on June 10, 2022, and even then it limited the number of participants from thousands, usually, to just 500. The Shangri-La Dialogue intends to facilitate communication in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the participation and bilateral dialogue of many head-of-states and defense ministers has attracted worldwide attention. Since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war, the international community has focused more on China's military expansion and America's Indo-Pacific policy, placing particular importance this year on the bilateral dialogue between U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin and China's Minister of National Defense

Wei Fenghe. (See the Agenda in the Attachment.)

Under the auspices of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which annually hosts the Shangri-La Dialogue, the forum has become a major platform for discussing global and regional security issues. IISS is headquartered in the UK, but has an office in Singapore, where the forum takes place. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida delivered the keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Shangri-La Dialogue. Defense ministers from influential countries in the Indo-Pacific region have actively participated in the forum, showing the importance they attach to it. Therefore, defense ministers from major countries, especially China and the U.S., delivered keynote speeches

with premeditated goals in mind. Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war and Taiwan-China relations, China and the U.S. are closely related to these two issues, and their future policies and development are worth our attention.

2. Speech and Response by Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe

According to the official website of China's Ministry of National Defense, Wei Fenghe delivered a speech on "China's Vision for Regional Order" via the script that he was supposed to stick to in his delivery. The key points of the script are as follows:

2-1. Multilateralism is the solution to regional security issues

Wei Fenghe pointed out, "The world is facing multiple crises rarely seen in history. The way forward is to uphold and practice multilateralism and build a community with a shared future for mankind." Despite its unilateral actions in the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea, China insinuates that the threat in the Indo-Pacific region comes from American unilateralism,

while it is China that is safeguarding peace with multilateralism. Moreover, Wei Fenghe has accused the U.S. of "smearing" Beijing. It is a classic example of a thief shouting, "Catch the thief!" Wei Fenghe reiterated, "China resolutely pursues defensive national defense policy. The military of China has always been a military of peace and will firmly safeguard national sovereignty, security, development, and interests." We can see similar language in China's National Defense Report. Wei Fenghe forcefully used such language at the Shangri-La Dialogue, but Indo-Pacific stakeholders were unconvinced.

2-2. China's firm stance and bottom line on the Taiwan issue

Wei Fenghe stressed, "The Taiwan issue is China's internal affairs and the unification of the motherland will absolutely be achieved. 'Taiwan separatists' will definitely come to no good end and foreign interference will categorically fail." "Peaceful reunification is the biggest aspiration of Chinese people and we're willing to put our best effort into that. If anyone dares to separate Taiwan from China, we will fight to

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the very end at all costs. No one should underestimate the determination and ability of the Chinese military.”¹

However, if we look at the audiovisual materials of the Shangri-La Dialogue, Wei Fenghe ramped up his rhetoric around Taiwan. For example, he said, “If anyone dares to separate Taiwan from China, we will fight to the very end at all costs.” He also off-script stated, “Hereby, I’m going to warn ‘Taiwan separatists’ and those forces behind them: Taiwan independence means war. The attempts to join foreign forces will only fail.” This language didn’t appear on the official website of China’s Ministry of National Defense or in People’s Daily, but in Hong Kong’s *Wen Wei Po*². It can be seen as a warning or intimidation. China is not going to invade Taiwan or fight against the U.S. If we compare his speech with other similar materials, the same statement repeats again and again.

2-3. Targeting forces behind Taiwan

When Wei Fenghe stated, “I’m going

to warn ‘Taiwan separatists’ and the forces behind...”, he was talking about the U.S. and Japan. He took a gentle countermeasure when the U.S. tried to get the ASEAN countries onside and voiced their concern about Indo-Pacific security. Even after the speech of Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, He Lei, a PLA lieutenant general, during the question and answer session, asked about the development of China-Japan relations. He Lei focused on the 50 years of China-Japan relations rather than escalating conflicts by questioning Fumio Kishida too directly. When asked about potential conflicts with other neighboring countries, Wei Fenghe stressed, “China and Vietnam are brothers. We all know who is wrong in the China-India border conflict. We won’t use nuclear weapons first unless we need to. It’s normal to develop hypersonic weapons.” On observation, China was justifying its use of aggressive actions using the platform of the Shangri-La Dialogue.

Whether it was before the forum

1 “Wei Fenghe Delivers a Speech at the 19th Shangri-La Dialogue,” *The Official Website of China’s Ministry of National Defense*, June 12, 2022, http://www.mod.gov.cn/big5/topnews/2022-06/12/content_4912761.htm.

2. “Chinese Defense Minister: If Anyone Dares to Separate Taiwan from China, China will Fight to the Very End,” *Wen Wei Po*, June 13, 2022, <https://www.wenweipo.com/a/202206/13/AP62a686d2e4b033218a51cd2c.html>.

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or via conference call with Wei Fenghe, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin consistently emphasized the U.S. “One China” policy has not changed and that the U.S. opposes unilateral changes in the cross-Straits status quo and does not support Taiwan’s independence. The U.S. seemed to try to create a friendly atmosphere with China’s Defense Minister. However, during the Shangri-La Dialogue, Wei Fenghe warned the U.S., “If anyone dares to separate Taiwan from China, we will fight to the very end at all costs. We will crush all separatist attempts and firmly safeguard our sovereignty and territorial integrity.” Compared to the U.S. attitude, China’s response seems out of proportion. We can only conclude that the CCP is doing this deliberately.

2-4. The China-Russia relationship is a partnership, not an alliance

When asked about the recent China and Russia strategic cruises, Wei Fenghe said China-Russia relations would continue to deepen, but the two countries are partners, not allies; the CCP has never donated military supplies to Russia. From Wei Fenghe’s facial expression when replying to the question, we can tell it’s probably not true. The CCP should have

donated non-military supplies to Russia; otherwise, it doesn’t live up to the content of the Sino-Russian Joint Statement before the Ukraine war. Going forward, if the CCP faces countermeasures from the U.S., Japan, and Australia in the Indo-Pacific region, it will need support from Russia, or to show close cooperation between the two countries to increase their ability to intimidate neighboring countries. Especially after Russia vetoed the UN Security Council resolution denouncing its invasion of Ukraine and with China abstaining, there is a high probability that the two countries will cooperate on Indo-Pacific-related issues in the future. This cooperation can happen in diplomacy, economy, and material support but is unlikely to be elevated to an alliance.

3. China’s Strategic Intent

3-1. Use intimidation to address the U.S. strategic communication

Even with many lessons of failure, from an American perspective, maintaining a smooth communication channel can end wars or de-escalate conflicts. Therefore, the Biden administration constantly hopes to establish a strategic communication channel with the PRC to manage the risks

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and prevent surprise wars. When the PRC is busy with internal and external affairs, it might refuse strategic communication or dialogue to avoid pressure from the U.S. When the PRC can't avoid the talk, it will respond in two ways. First, it will respond to all kinds of questions with false rhetoric or perfunctory kind words to confuse the other party's logic and judgment. Second, when the PRC doesn't want conflicts but is under internal stress or the party's nationalism, it will have to use aggressive words to show its tough stance to the world and project a brave image of fighting foreign forces to its people.

Wei Fenghe's approach to the Shangri-La Dialogue is closer to the second one. As U.S. President Biden "gaffed" three times that the United States would defend Taiwan in the event of an invasion, China must not appear weak and has to take a firm stance when meeting with the U.S. To avoid the firm stance from causing domestic political turbulence, China's official media would keep a low profile and remove the aggressive language, which shows the CCP's nature remains unchanged: fierce on the outside but weak on the inside. U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin's reasonable attitude appeared in stark

contrast to the dominance of China's Defense Minister. After the bilateral meeting between Austin and the Chinese Minister of National Defense, when asked whether the meeting went well, Wei Fenghe said yes very loudly, showing the purpose of the CCP is to talk past each other and show its tough stance.

3-2. The CCP takes its tough attitude and military expansion for granted

In China's Annual National Defense Report, when addressing foreign governments, or questioned by the media about military expansion as a spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense of the PRC, the CCP always emphasizes it will not use nuclear weapons and will take preventive national defense policies, and its military development is to safeguard peace. The forceful expression can't hide the CCP's intent to change the status quo with their gray zone actions. This year was only the second appearance of Wei Fenghe at the Shangri-La Dialogue and seeing how confident he is, we can tell the CCP has taken its fierce attitude and military expansion for granted. When replying to the question about the CCP ballistic missile deployment, Wei Fenghe mentioned the 2019 China National Day

Parade demonstrated the CCP's missile capabilities, which he said will continue to develop in the future. It seems the CCP doesn't care whether their narrative will trigger another round of discussion on the "China Threat Theory."

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and its reserved attitude in military support to Ukraine have contributed to the CCP's confidence in its dominance and constant expansion in the Indo-Pacific region. For example, China has built a military base in Cambodia and signed cooperation agreements with the Pacific Island countries. These show the CCP hopes to catch up with the U.S. in military capability before 2027 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the PLA's establishment, making the U.S. hesitate to intervene in the affairs.

3-3. China is trying to get ASEAN countries onside and divide US and ASEAN countries

During the Shangri-La Dialogue, the CCP also signed a cooperation agreement with Singapore. It allows Singaporean troops to train in Mainland China and strengthens the relationship between the two military troops. Singapore is the only country supporting Russia's

dictatorship out of all ASEAN countries. Still, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong once said he did not want to choose between China and the U.S. However, China dispatched a large PLA delegation with deputy commanders of various military ranks at this year's Shangri-La Dialogue. It shows China has had close communication and complete preparation with Singapore. Should conflicts arise in the Indo-Pacific, whether in the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, or the South China Sea, depending on the location and reason for the conflict, it is unlikely for Indo-Pacific countries to support each other without an alliance.

Wei Fenghe mentioned last year that the CCP and ASEAN had established a comprehensive strategic partnership, which is a relationship milestone for both sides. He said, "As long as we continue to enhance mutual trust and build consensus, no one can undermine our unity. Those who sow discord, incite confrontation and force others to take sides are doomed to failure." Besides, regarding the South China Sea Issue, Wei Fenghe criticized, "Some powers have been using the name of 'freedom of navigation' to exercise 'hegemony of navigation', sending their ships and aircraft to the South China Sea

to rampage and show off their power.” “The countries in our region are neighbors that cannot move away, and we must work together to guard and prevent extra-territorial countries from interfering and stirring up trouble in the South China Sea.”³ From these words, it is obvious that the CCP is driving a wedge between the U.S. and ASEAN.

If the U.S. asks countries in other regions, such as South Korea, to help with the South China Sea issue, it may not agree. If conflicts arise in the East China Sea or the Taiwan Strait, the ASEAN countries can't voice support or intervene due to misgivings about the CCP. By participating in the Shangri-La Dialogue, the CCP hopes to prevent the U.S. alignment with the ASEAN countries, drive a wedge between the U.S. and the ASEAN countries, and reduce U.S. power in the Indo-Pacific region.

4. Policy Recommendations

4-1. Enhance Taiwan's participation in the Shangri-La Dialogue

The scale of this year's Shangri-

La Dialogue was reduced due to the pandemic. Only a few think tanks from Taiwan were invited. When Wei Fenghe was giving a speech, scholars from the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia actively raised questions; Vietnam, South Korea, the EU, and the UK also expressed their opinions on these important regional issues. However, it's a shame that Taiwan, the subject of the discussion, didn't have a chance to express its opinion or ask questions. Since China's Defense Minister insisted on a standard, tough rhetoric around Taiwan, Taiwan should be able to respond immediately. The participants need to sign up for the sessions and for raising questions; the host has the right to decide on the details. Although Taiwan's representatives were present, they were not allowed to ask questions. Relevant government departments should react immediately after receiving the news. Plus, we can predict Wei Fenghe's cliché before the meeting. Preparing in advance and responding quickly shouldn't be difficult.

3. “Fifth Plenary: China's Vision for Regional Order,” *The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue*, June 13, 2022, <https://www.iiiss.org/events/shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2022>.

4-2. The interaction after the meeting between the two countries is key

Compared with the tough attitude of China's Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin appeared too calm. Does such rationality make the CCP think the U.S. is weak or has too much in its place, and thus lacks the confidence to attend to affairs of the Indo-Pacific region? This is exactly what the CCP wants to see. As we mentioned, the speech of China's Defense Minister at the Shangri-La Dialogue intends to intimidate and declare a political stance. The actual action is open to question. Recently, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken criticized China for its aggressive actions in his speech. The U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met with Yang Jiechi in Luxembourg for nearly 5

hours on June 14, showing disagreement on key Indo-Pacific issues between the two countries. Although the two countries don't want any conflict to arise, the aggressive action and military threat of the CCP make the U.S. and the neighboring countries worry that the CCP could carry out a surprise attack on Taiwan under the chaotic situation caused by the Ukraine war. After Austin's calm appeal, the U.S. has to express a clear stance to warn China constantly.

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Attachement : The 2022 Shangri-La Dialogue Agenda⁴

Dates	Agenda	Participants and Important Questioners
June 10, 2022	Keynote Address	Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister, Japan; He Lei, a PLA lieutenant general, asked about the development of China-Japan relations. Kishida briefly replied.
June 11, 2022	First Plenary Session: Next Steps for the United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy	Lloyd J. Austin, Secretary of Defense, U.S.
	Second Plenary Session: Managing Geopolitical Competition in a Multipolar Region	Prabowo Subianto, Minister of Defense, Indonesia Sébastien Lecornu, Minister of the Armed Forces, France Kishi Nobuo, Minister of Defense, Japan
	Second Plenary Session: Developing New Forms of Security Cooperation	Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Senior Minister of Defence, Malaysia Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah, Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Qatar Richard Marles, Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of State for Defence, Australia
	Fourth Plenary Session: Military Modernisation and New Defence Capabilities	Delfin Lorenzana, Secretary of National Defense, Philippines Phan Văn Giang, Minister of National Defence, Vietnam Tea Banh, Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of National Defense, Cambodia
	Special Address (virtual)	Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President, Ukraine
June 12, 2022	Fifth Plenary Session: China's Vision for Regional Order	General Wi Fenghe, State Councilor; Minister of National Defense, China (11 countries raised questions: France, the Philippines, Australia, Japan, the U.S., Vietnam, Japan, India, Korea, the EU, and Ireland.)
	Sixth Plenary Session: Common Challenges for Asia-Pacific and European Defence	Lee Jong-Sup, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea Kajsa Ollongren, Minister of National Defence, The Netherlands Lord Sedwill, Former Cabinet Secretary and National Security Advisor, Cabinet Office, UK; Member of the Advisory Council, IISS
	Seventh Plenary Session: New Ideas for Securing Regional Stability	Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence, Canada Inia Batikoto Seruiratu, Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, Fiji Dr. Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Defence, Singapore

Sources: Open data compiled by Ming-Shih Shen.

4. The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue Agenda, June 13, 2022, <https://www.iiss.org/events/shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2022/speaker-agenda>.

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