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A RESET FOR GERMANY'S SECURITY POLICY AND ARMED FORCES

Wilfried von Bredow

INTRODUCTION

On February 20, 2014, Russia started a military conflict on the Eastern border of Ukraine. It occupied and annexed the Crimean Peninsula, and promoted secessionist attempts in two Eastern provinces of Ukraine. Evidently, this aggression was carefully calibrated. The hybrid war operations were a mixture of physical violence, cyber-attacks, and massive propaganda. This violation of international law was widely criticized by Western governments and international organizations. Various diplomatic efforts to stop the war and find a political solution to the conflict however remained unsuccessful. Some comparatively mild sanctions against Russia's political and economic establishment had no measurable effects on the Kremlin. On the contrary – many Western governments continued to buy strategically important goods (like natural gas and other fossil energy sources) from state-owned Russian companies. Thus, the energy consumption of some European countries, including Germany, had become dependent on energy imports from Russia. A rather uncomfortable situation, but widely ignored.

Eight years later, on February 24, 2022, Russia launched a comprehensive military aggression against Ukraine. President Putin (and subsequently all state-controlled media in Russia) called it a *special operation* with the objective of terminating the status of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state. It came as a shocking surprise to Western governments in the European Union and in NATO. This time reactions differed sharply from the low-profile response in 2014. Western governments denounced the Russian aggression not only as a serious breach of international and grave violation of humanitarian law but also as an attack on international order.

The Russian military procedure abruptly revealed the Western naivety of putting their energy security in the hands of a ruthless dictator. February 24 ,2022 marks a

turning point in Western perceptions of Russia’s political trustworthiness. Popular concepts in international relations like democratic ‘change through trade’ suddenly had lost their convincing power. EU and NATO states began supporting the Ukrainian government not only in political and economic terms, but also by providing weapons and military aid.

WAKE-UP CALL

No country has been more deeply imbedded in the clouds of international policy illusions than Germany. For several years now, most experts within Germany’s (relatively small) security community have repeatedly demanded a reset of the country’s foreign and security policy. Until February 2022 practically without public resonance. After World War II, the Federal Republic of Germany developed a political culture with strong pacifist and anti-military characteristics. The inaccurate slogan “war is no solution” was (and still is) rather popular among Germans. In their political judgment, international politics is mostly influenced by a mixture of moral values and rationally calculated economic interests. In this worldview, mutually useful trade relations and the common search for civilized compromises will eventually bring about a peaceful world. The triumph of modern democracies will guarantee worldwide democratic peace.

No country was consequently more surprised and disappointed when Russian President Putin started his war against Ukraine. It was a wake-up call which required an immediate response, and a fundamental change of the country’s security concepts and priorities. The era of chancellor Angela Merkel had ended in December 2021. The successor coalition government (Social Democrats, Green Party, Liberal Party) started with high hopes for progress in energy and climate policies. These priorities were, indeed, turned upside down by the Russian attack on Ukraine. Three days after the attack, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz issued a policy statement in the German Bundestag. In it, the term ‘turning point’ (*Zeitenwende*) took center stage. Scholz emphasized the dramatic geopolitical turnaround and announced a handful of special German measures together with a strong collective response by Western states¹. The collective measures included economic sanctions against Russian banks, against the



¹ “Policy statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag,” *Federal Government of Germany*, February 27, 2022, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/search/policy-statement-by-olaf-scholz-chancellor-of-the-federal-republic-of-germany-and-member-of-the-german-bundestag-27-february-2022-in-berlin-2008378>.

assets of Putin-friendly oligarchs in Europe, and a prevention of the export of cutting-edge technology to Russia. More important (and much more difficult) is the implementation of measures to reduce the import of gas, oil, and coal from Russia. Up until February 2022, Germany had invested considerable funds in a joint venture with the Russian state-owned energy company *Gazprom* to build a second gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea (*North Stream 2*). During its construction period, this project had been harshly criticized by many Western allies, especially by the neighbouring Poland, but also by countries as geographically distant as the U.S.A. For years, the government ignored all objections and continuously protected the involved German companies against all foreign pressures. In early 2022, the construction of North Stream 2 was completed. But the Russian attack on Ukraine meant its temporary, perhaps its definitive death.

The most spectacular part of Scholz' government statement was the announcement of starting a build-up program for the armed forces. Germany will take on a leading role in preventing Putin's war from spilling over into other European countries. For this purpose, it needs a powerful, cutting-edge progressive Bundeswehr with renewed strong capacities to deter a bellicose aggressor and defend NATO territory on its Eastern border. The chancellor announced a one-off sum of 100 billion euro for necessary investments and armament projects. Meanwhile, this special fund has been integrated in Germany's Basic Law (Constitution). Scholz also declared that his government will from now on raise the military budget to above 2% of the country's GDP.

POLITICAL SIGNALS AND MILITARY BUILD-UP

International crises and rapid cooling of the political climate in international affairs hardly ever occur at the right time. Decision-makers must improvise, immediate measures are required – even if the attention of the political personnel and the public are distracted by other issues. Furthermore, any cognitive dissonance between the familiar worldview and new realities may be the root cause of political mistakes. In early 2022, the Covid-19 pandemic and its repercussions on social life overshadowed all other discourses. And the Bundeswehr was still in a state of shock because of the badly

EXTENDED SHOPPING LIST

Both chambers of the legislature (*Bundestag and Bundesrat*) adopted the government draft of the 100-billion-euro fund for the build-up of the Bundeswehr. For decades, the annual military budget in combination with the over-bureaucratic and time-consuming procurement regulations had resulted all too often in delays and breakdowns. It is therefore one of the main purposes of the fund to help procure the necessary equipment for the Federal Armed Forces more quickly.

Current plans for acquisitions are distributed between the air force (about 41 billion euro), the naval forces (about 20 billion euro), and the army (nearly 17 billion euro). Approximately 21 billion euro are earmarked for procurements to promote the command capability and digitalization. Furthermore, a considerable portion will be used to modernize the personal outfit of the soldiers, e.g., new battle helmets and night vision devices.

The air force will purchase American-built F-35s jets as successors of the outdated Tornado jets. This is a bold decision by Defense Minister Lambrecht for the jet is a most complex and vulnerable aircraft with high service and maintenance costs. The special fund will also be used to support the development of the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) in cooperation with France and Spain, by buying more Israel-built Heron drones and, among others, support helicopters. In addition, the Bundeswehr will purchase 60 transport helicopters Chinook CH-47F.

The navy wants to buy more corvettes K130, frigates F126, and submarines. Some money is allocated towards the development and procurement of future naval strike missiles, anti-submarine missiles IDAS, and underwater locating and communication systems. The army is waiting for more and retrofitted armoured infantry vehicles Puma (successor of the armoured infantry vehicle Marder) and the armoured personnel carrier Fuchs.

The military shopping list features more details, some of which may still be changed or dropped. To be sure, various troops have much longer wish lists. All in all, the special fund presents a considerable boost for the armed forces which had become used to improvising with all kinds of insufficient equipment.

OBSTACLES

Meanwhile, the plans for making the Bundeswehr strong again are on the verge of implementation. The determination of both the political and the military top decision makers is not questionable. The long and complicated implementation process,

many buttons to bring about a reset of the Bundeswehr. There are other signs which appear to illustrate that Germany's self-image and its perception of conflicts in world politics are changing. This is a painful process. And new conflicts lurk on the horizon, the future of Germany's economic relations with China among them. Fortunately, the basic German consensus about the multilateral integration of the country in alliances like NATO and European Union is not up for discussion.

It remains to be seen whether the new alertness will create new durable self-perceptions, more suitable concepts for Germany's security policy, and new military capacities for the currently de-globalizing international world.

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THE STRAIT TOO WIDE AND THE ISLAND TOO FAR

PR Shankar

To succeed in war, there is a need for heavy dollops of political, diplomatic, economic, and military equity. The Chinese song and dance of the past few days indicates that China lacks this equity to capture Taiwan. Hence all this hulla-bulla. Early on I learnt that an implied threat is far more important than the applied threat. A threat which has no credibility is useless. An applied threat with no credibility is huffing and puffing. Ever since Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, China has been huffing militarily and puffing diplomatically. Launch of a Chinese missile recorded from different angles is being shown as multiple firings through different videos. I have shown only one video here. A flood of analysis and reports of military manoeuvres which simulate a blockade of Taiwan, or its invasion is information overdrive known to old timers as communist propaganda. All this gives me a sense that the Strait of Taiwan has widened. Taiwan is now an island too far for communist China. One might argue that this is a simplistic view. However, there are cogent factors due to which Taiwan will beyond remain out of China's grasp.

The vibrant democracy of an economically successful Taiwan is the very antithesis of the Chinese propaganda that communism is the best form of governance. 23 million democratic Taiwanese refute Xi's authoritarian model of life. Annexing Taiwan fulfils Xi Jinping's nationalistic goal of destroying a land inhabited by successful, rich and democratic Chinese with communists. Taiwan also has the potential to inject the virus of freedom into 1.4 billion Chinese under the communist yoke. The innate Chinese fear that someday a Taiwanese will fulfil Chiang-Kai-shek's dream of "recovering the mainland" scares the daylight of communist pundits. For them, Taiwan is full of venom which has to be drained. Taiwan's prowess in Chip manufacturing makes it an attractive economic proposition to own it by capture. Capturing Taiwan also means defeating USA and showing the latter's inability to withstand PLA's military might. That puts China in the superpower category unambiguously. The fall of Taiwan breaks the first island chain irrevocably. The permanent hole in the chain allows unhindered global deployment of PLAN and, brings China into direct contact with USA in Guam. It also

prevents direct military contact with mainland China. An unassailable China transfers itself from being a nation consigned to defending itself to an outbound nation which can dominate the seas. Once Taiwan is taken, South Korea, Japan, Philippines and Vietnam are next in the line of annexation as the expanding arc of the threat reaches their shores. That, to me, is the geopolitical importance of Taiwan.

A major crisis might be staved off now in the Taiwan Straits. But what happens next is the larger question. The Chinese military exercises have not changed the status quo on the ground. However, they have changed the situation in Taiwan completely as per what one can assesses. 87% in Taiwan did not want to be under China as per a poll. Another poll conducted soon after Russia's invasion of Ukraine showed that 73% people in Taiwan were willing to take up arms to defend against a Chinese invasion. After this Chinese show of force, which the Taiwanese have faced with equanimity and quiet confidence, these percentages will go up. PLA war games have stiffened anti-China sentiment in Taiwan. The DPP's 'independence' plank will be seen as fighting for the island. Mainland-friendly parties like the KMT will also change stance lest they are politically side-lined. The Taiwanese have also witnessed the events in Hongkong where people have lost freedom and democratically inclined politicians have lost power. Political power in Hong Kong is hereafter for patriots (nee communists) as per Xi. It is doubtful if Taiwanese people are willing to lose their freedom and politicians are willing to lose their power to the communist yoke. Further, China's ambassador to France, has indicated of 're-educating' Taiwanese if the island is reunified with mainland China. This free 're-education scheme' reminds one of Xinjiang and will only drive Taiwanese farther away. Taiwan is the centre of the global semiconductor industry and is the chip foundry to the world. Its people enjoy a high living standard. It has achieved one of the world's lowest Covid death rates without resorting to the harsh lockdowns imposed by China. Why will Taiwan keel over and hand itself to Xi and Communist China, which has never ruled it for a single day. As time goes by, it will improve its defense capacities. Nancy Pelosi's visit has recommitted a prevaricating USA to assist Taiwan. The world is now more alive to the larger perils of Chinese expansionism. Taiwan will hereafter increase the risk and cost of any invasion by China to an unacceptable level. It is committing more into increasing its military capabilities. Taiwan is on its way to become a porcupine which China will find it difficult to swallow citing the Ukrainian model. In fact, Taiwan has no other choice.

China has been nudged into political and military irrationality by Nancy Pelosi who is hated by the communists. China's ham-handed military actions have virtually closed the door for any political annexation of Taiwan by peaceful methods. Even if annexed militarily, China will not have the political equity to convince Taiwanese to adopt to communist methods. The Hongkong model of subjugation of people and the Xinjiang

model of 're-education' is too fresh in Taiwanese minds. The military drills and political intent of Xi and China's usurpation of Hongkong through false promises will get conflated. China now faces a 23 million political problem in Taiwan loaded with distrust. Even if annexed politically, 23 million people have the potential to stage a 'colour revolution' and spread it to the mainland. That is something Xi Jinping is paranoid about. He holds the view that China is beset by malevolent forces and internally prey to centrifugal forces and is a target of colour revolutions. It is a top of the mind issue for him. Dismantling the tech sector, common prosperity, zero covid, draconian censorship, purges and his hard left steering of the Chinese wheel are all part of his 'anti colour' strategies expressed through the 'Xi Jinping thought'. Military take-over of a politically hostile Taiwan could generate a genie which will dismantle China altogether. This is the 23-million-dollar question which has singlehandedly widened the Taiwan Strait in my opinion. The military perspective has added to the width. Chinese military actions might have provided an insight into the fearsome PLA capabilities and its modernization. However, they have also exposed limitations and chinks of China's military capability. Many military options get restricted heavily when seen in the larger political, economic, and diplomatic context. A blockade of Taiwan sounds nice, but it results in an auto self-blockade. In depressed economic times it is a self-inflicted injury. Other countries have currently backed off since they knew that China was not prepared for an invasion. However, if an invasion was to be actually executed, Japan, S Korea, Philippines, USA and Vietnam would have been forced to deploy their navies defensively even if they did not assist Taiwan. That will result in a blockade of China till stability returns to the area. An extended blockade of China with the danger of escalation into a wider conflict will be an inevitable reality. Is it not a self-defeating argument for China? The current military drills could be a rehearsal of China's ultimate invasion. However, there are international views that 'China has the separate pieces of shiny new military hardware, but there have been doubts over whether the forces that operate this new equipment are able to deploy them as a coordinated and cohesive fighting force'. In this context, the huffing and puffing drills have also exposed PLA's tactical capabilities and vulnerabilities to US and Taiwan. The sinking of Russian warships in Black Sea, vulnerability of amphibious mounting bases, fleets in water and on landing in beach heads are topics which are discussed in China as being dangers of an invasion. What is not discussed is that war is dirty bloody dangerous and risky in which China has not had any recent experience. The value of cyberwar, AI, EW et al are all overblown to good effect as part of Chinese propaganda. They are all force multipliers and not force itself. When firing starts most of these lose value as we have seen in Ukraine. Further, the lesser-known fact is that Western Taiwan is a dense network of urbanised built-up areas interspersed with obstacles consisting of canals

and waterways (see map). Taiwan is a defenders dream and an attacker’s nightmare. If the people of Taiwan back their military, they can give bloody hell to PLA. The complication of operating in such terrain after an amphibious operation will defy most battle-hardened professional armies. PLA? I leave it to your imagination. Has the Island got farther from China?

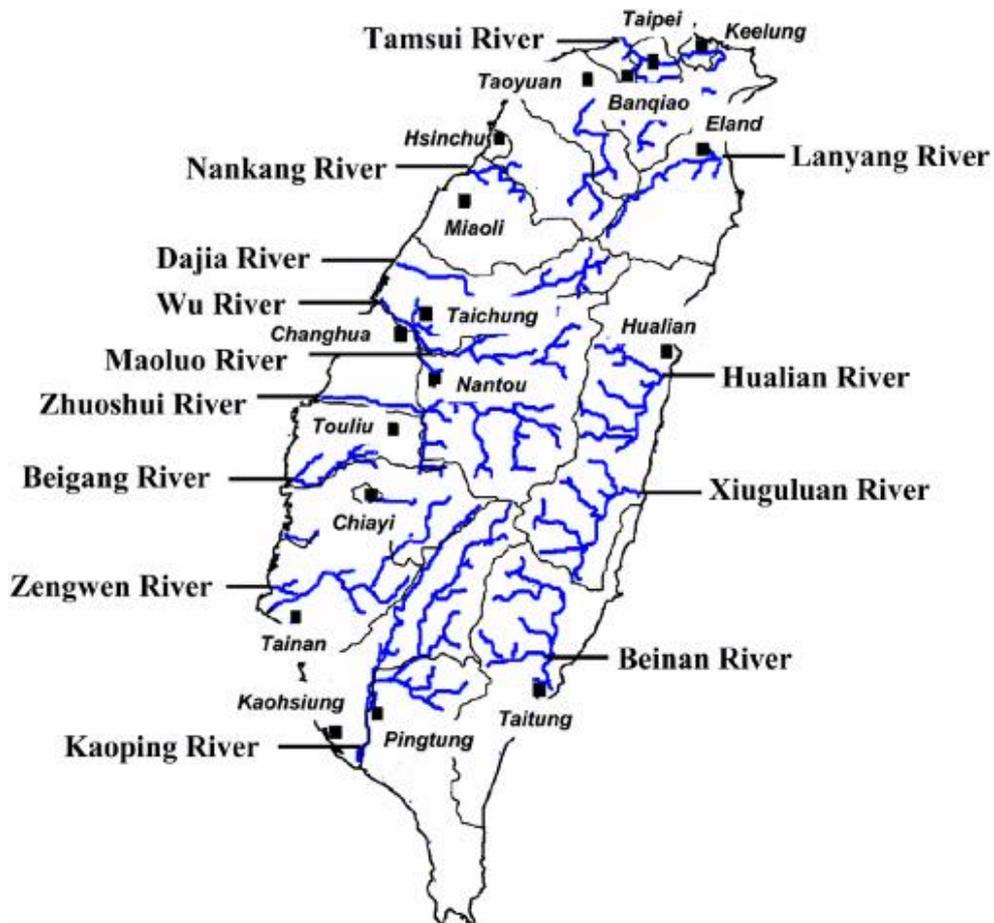


FIGURE: Map of rivers in Taiwan

USA has been jolted out of its somnambulance by Nancy Pelosi. Its gigantic military machine has cranked itself into action. By now, USA would have tracked each and every Chinese move minutely. For those who have forgotten. During Op Parakram (2000-1), USA was able to track the move of a brigade ahead of an agreed to red line. It led to huge repercussions in India. That capability would have been enhanced much more in the past two decades. Every military drill of China informs the USA as to how to counter it militarily. It has the capability to cripple PLAN. Geopolitically, USA is now clear that its position is under threat as never before. It will be spurred to take suitable deterrence measures against China taking any precipitous action. It will arm and train Taiwan to its teeth if it has an iota of sense. It will also now stitch together a more

potent alliance against China. It should spur USA to strengthen QUAD and hasten up AUKUS. Most importantly there is bipartisan political support for Taiwan and against China. If I were a Chinese, I would be more worried about that.

South Korea, Japan, Philippines, and Vietnam would have realised that their security lies in ensuring that Taiwan is standing. If Taiwan falls, their security is jeopardized. As simple as that. They have no choice but to support Taiwan and USA in any way they can. In a slightly deferred spatial and time dimension, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore also face that risk. They also have no choice in supporting Taiwan in any manner they can. Taiwan might be a three-actor play, but it has a cast of seven strong supporting players who complete the game. The happiness of these seven countries is assured till the time China remains fixated on Taiwan. It is their interest that Taiwan remains out of China's grasp. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has warned citizens that the region "may not be as peaceful and stable" as it has been and has stressed on the importance of maintaining a strong military. Japan and Philippines have already gone against China diplomatically while preparing militarily. The game has started to unfold.

In the past one week a few issues have been proven. China, under the authoritarian leadership of Xi Jinping, has become more bellicose. However, it will not risk any major military action across the strait which might result in a US military retaliation or intervention. Further it does not have the wherewithal to invade Taiwan as yet. It now faces the dilemma to escalate further or mend fences with USA and EU or court its neighbours who are also threatened. An economy under stress, global headwinds, internal problems, a declining cum ageing population and an untested military have all contributed to China's irrational actions. The Taiwan strait has become wider than the 130-160 km and the Island is now too far for China to get hold of.

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THE WEAPONIZATION OF BRI IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Domingo I-Kwei Yang

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates China’s behaviors of weaponizing the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) in the South Pacific Region. Since the launch of BRI in 2013, a plethora of literature tends to highlight the contested economic aspect of BRI, rendering limited discussion on the security dimension.¹ It corresponds to the fact that China has also been deliberately framing the BRI as an economic initiative, rather than a strategic framework.² Xi Jinping has insisted that BRI is merely about economic cooperation and development without any military objectives.³

However, with respect to the military base establishment in Djibouti, China manifests its ambition to expand overseas capabilities of military, logistic, reconnoitering operations via development projects. The recent signing of the security agreement between China and Solomon Is-lands in April of 2022 has proven that the ‘String of Pearls’ theory proposed by Booz Allen Hamilton in 2005, forecasting China’s ambition to establish military facilities across the Indo-Pacific region is more than



¹ Karen P. Y. Lai, Shaun Lin & James D. Sidaway, “Financing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): research agendas beyond the “debt-trap” discourse,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.61 No.2 (2022), pp. 109-124; Peter Harrell, Elizabeth Rosenberg and Edoardo Saravalle, China’s Use of Coercive Economic Measures, *Center for a New American Security*, 2022, https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/China_Use_FINAL-1.pdf.
² Oriana Skylar Mastro, “The Stealth Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/china-plan-rule-asia>; Elizabeth Economy, “China’s New Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-04-17/chinas-new-revolution>.
³ Daniel R. Russel and Blake H. Berger, “Weaponizing the Belt and Road Initiative,” *Asia Society Policy Institute*, September 2020, https://asiasociety.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Weaponizing%20the%20Belt%20and%20Road%20Initiative_0.pdf.

speculation.⁴ China’s attempt to increase its strategic footprints in the Indo-Pacific region is a reality. In light of this context, this paper attempts to investigate the security dimension of the BRI in South Pacific by exploring China’s tendency and means to weaponize BRI projects as instruments of its security interest expansion.

THE WEAPONIZATION OF BRI

Weaponizing the BRI is embedded within China’s security-development nexus, aiming to take advantage of infrastructure deficit among developing countries and to expand China’s strategic interests via development projects. The diversified roles of PLA and civil-military fusion practices further enhance the making of an ecosystem filled with Chinese built infrastructures, strategic technologies, software, and hardware that would disadvantage the U.S. and likeminded partners’ interests militarily and economically.⁵

DEVELOPMENT IS A VEHICLE OF CHINESE SECURITY INTEREST EXPANSION

The development-security nexus defines the framework of China’s overseas developments.⁶ It derives from the belief that economic deprivation causes insecurity and mirrors China’s domestic experience that political stability and security are inextricably linked with economic development success.⁷ When China is expanding its footprints, ‘development’ is upheld as a solution for common security and stability, as if China’s outward engagement concentrates only on development, not the expansion of security interests.

However, given that many of China’s BRI development projects have been distributed in the most unstable areas, when China is promoting overseas development projects, its strategic sphere has been simultaneously extended. In order to make development work as a solution for common security, China has to extend its strategic influence first, creating



⁴ “Assessing the Solomon Islands’ new security agreement with China,” *IJSS*, May 5, 2022, <https://www.ijss.org/blogs/analysis/2022/05/china-solomon-islands>; Benjamin David Baker, “Where Is the ‘String of Pearls’ in 2015?” *The Diplomat*, October 05, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/where-is-the-string-of-pearls-in-2015/>.
⁵ Daniel R. Russel and Blake H. Berger’s “Weaponizing the Belt and Road Initiative,” *The Asia Society Policy Institute*, 2020, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/weaponizing-belt-and-road-initiative>.
⁶ Bertha Z. Osei-Hwedie and Napoleon Kurantin, “Security-Development Nexus: China’s Policy Framework towards Africa,” *Electronic Journal of Social and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 1 No 1 (2020), pp. 1-19.
⁷ Lina Benabdallah and Daniel Large, “China’s Development-Security in Practice: The Case of Mali,” *SAIS-CARI*, 2020, <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/248227/1/sais-cari-pb48.pdf>.

a favorable environment for both development and China's security interests. In this context, development is a vehicle for China to expand its own strategic interests.

THE DIVERSIFIED ROLE OF THE PLA

PLA's 'New Historic Mission' introduced by Hu Jintao in 2004 manifests the tendency that China's overseas development projects have long been weaponized via the extension of PLA's diversified overseas activities.⁸ Although the motive is to protect China's growing overseas interests, it is also a fact that the PLA has increased its activities along with China's overseas development projects. Military operations other than war (MOOTW) has been an essential component of PLA's overseas behaviors since then, even international assistance such as medical aid would be counted as a routine mission of the PLA.⁹

PLA's diversified tasks have been further intertwined with China's overseas development projects in Xi Jinping's era. According to "the Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces" issued in 2013, PLA aims to strengthen overseas operational capabilities for the protection of economic development projects, overseas energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs), etc.¹⁰ PLA's deployment (including submarines) to the Gulf of Aden, participation of the peacekeeping operations, and non-combatant evacuation operations are examples of the larger role of PLA implemented along with China's overseas projects.¹¹

INCORPORATING DEFENSE ENTERPRISES WITH BRI VIA CIVIL-MILITARY FUSION

China's civil-military fusion policy blends the PLA-related defense enterprises with BRI projects. Civil-military integration was one of the key pillars to the military reform agenda in 2015.¹² Under this guidance, China's military and civilian resources can be compatible, complementary, and mutually applicable. For instance, while China's



⁸ James Mulvenon, "Chairman Hu and the PLA's New Historic Missions," *China Leadership Monitor*, 2009, <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM27JM.pdf>.

⁹ Xu Caihou, "Statesmen's Forum: Gen. Xu CaiHou," CSIS, October 26, 2009, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/event/091026csis_genxu_0.pdf.

¹⁰ "The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces," *Information Office of the State Council*, 2013, http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986506.htm.

¹¹ James Siebens and Ryan Lucas, "Military Operations Other Than War in China's Foreign Policy," Stimson, September 2022, <https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/China-Military-Ops-Report.pdf>.

¹² Brian Lafferty, "Civil-Military Integration and PLA Reforms," in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2019), pp. 627–666.

Beidou System (BDS) provides civilian applications, the major contractors of Beidou System, such as ComNav Technology and NORINCO International are China’s state-owned defense enterprises, serving China’s military capability.

China’s ‘Law of the People’s Republic of China on National Defense Transportation’ is another example of blending military application with civilian projects.¹³ Pursuant to this law, Chinese-made civilian infrastructure projects including railways, roads, waterways, and aviation could be transformed into military installations. In light of the civil-military fusion mindset, BRI’s infrastructure projects might not be excluded from this mandate and also carry a dual function serving both the local civilians and the PLA’s strategic planning.

WEAPONIZING THE BRI IN SOUTH PACIFIC

STRATEGIC INTERESTS OUTWEIGH ECONOMIC INTERESTS

China’s BRI projects toward South Pacific are not aiming at economic benefits, but strategic interests. Comparatively speaking, South Pacific, the most aid-dependent region in the world, provides less incentives for China to promote economic and commercial investments. According to statistics, the top regions receiving the most Chinese investments from 2005 to 2022 are Europe, East Asia, West Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa and South America.¹⁴ Given the inadequate volume of China-South Pacific investment, the South Pacific region is excluded from the list. If we look up ‘China Global Investment Tracker,’ Australia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are the only South Pacific countries on the list.¹⁵ Australia has received US\$ 103 billion of Chinese investment from 2005 to 2022, followed by Papua New Guinea (receiving US\$ 2 billion) and Solomon Islands (receiving US\$ 200 million).¹⁶ With Australia as an exception, it is clear that China’s BRI projects toward the Pacific region are not aiming for economic interests. Since many of South Pacific islands are important for geostrategic implication, it is logical to consider that China’s BRI in the South Pacific aims at strategic interests.



¹³ National People’s Congress, “Zhong Hua Ren Min Gong He Guo Guo Fang Jiao Tong Fa [National Defense Traffic Law of the People’s Republic of China],” National People’s Congress, September 3, 2016, http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/npc/xinwen/2016-09/03/content_1996764.htm.

¹⁴ “Total Chinese investments between 2005 and mid-2022, by global region,” *Statista*, October 7, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/276607/chinese-investments-by-global-region/>.

¹⁵ “China Global Investment Tracker,” *AEI*, 2022, <https://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Construction Company, which is also related to the PLA and sanctioned by the U.S.²⁰ Since these projects are constructed by large Chinese defense enterprises, it is very likely for China to use these infrastructures as aeronautical pivots in the South Pacific to improve military capabilities. For instance, the Canton Island Airport is located in the middle of Asia and America, about 1,864 miles to Hawaii. If China can further install civil-military facilities on Canton Island, it would pose a direct threat to the US.

TABLE 1: China’s Aeronautical Projects in the South Pacific

Country/Year	Aeronautical Projects	Contractor
Micronesia/2004	Chuuk International Airport Terminal Renovation Project	China Railway Construction Corporation
Tonga/2004	Fua’amotu International Airport renovation project	China Civil Aviation Airport Construction Corporation
Kiribati/2021	Upgrading the Airstrip on Canton Island Airport	N/A
Vanuatu/2022	Upgrading Norsup Airport	China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation
Vanuatu/2022	Pekoa airport runway extension	China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation
Papua New Guinea/2018	Gurney Airport pavement upgrading and runway extension	Sinohydro Corporation
Papua New Guinea/2018	Wewak Airport pavement upgrading and new terminal	China Shenyang International
Papua New Guinea/2018	Vanimo Airport runway extension and new terminal	China Railway Construction Corporation
Papua New Guinea/2019	Tari Airport construction	China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation
Papua New Guinea/2020	Kavieng Airport runway extension and new terminal	China Railway Construction Corporation



²⁰ “US sanctions over South China Sea will not affect blacklisted Chinese construction giant CCCC, company says,” *South China Morning Post*, August 30, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3099526/us-sanctions-over-south-china-sea-will-not-affect-blacklisted>.

Papua New Guinea/2020	Momote Airport pavement upgrading and new terminal	China Harbour Engineering Corporation
Papua New Guinea/2022	Mendi Airport pavement upgrading and new terminal	Sinohydro Corporation

SOURCES:

“Chinese Government provides \$2.3 million grant — via ETCA — for Chuuk International Airport Terminal Renovation Project,” *AidData*, December 5, 2022, <https://china.aiddata.org/projects/40074/>;

“Chinese government provided technical assistance to Tonga for the upgrading of the Fua’amotu International Airport,” *AidData*, December 5, 2022, <https://china.aiddata.org/projects/65011/>;

“Kiribati says China-backed Pacific airstrip project for civilian use,” *Reuters*, May 13, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kiribati-says-china-backed-pacific-airstrip-project-civilian-use-2021-05-13/>; “Norsup Airport to accommodate ATR 72-600,” *Vanuatu Daily Post*, June 18, 2022, https://www.dailypost.vu/news/norsup-airport-to-accommodate-atr-72-600/article_3351b9ca-5f2b-52ff-b57e-f4197609331a.html;

“VT7B Pekoa Airport Runway Extension,” *Vanuatu Daily Post*, May 21, 2022, https://www.dailypost.vu/news/vt7b-pekoa-airport-runway-extension/article_4c5f0856-0b57-5009-badd-d30ad88477ab.html;

“Papua New Guinea: Civil Aviation Development Investment Program – Tranche 2 & 3,” *National Airports Corporation for the Asian Development Bank*, March 2021, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/43141/43141-043-43141-044-emr-en_3.pdf.

THE SECRETIVE ATTEMPT OF LEASING A PACIFIC ISLAND

China’s weaponization of BRI in the South Pacific also comes with a secretive attempt of signing a development deal with the local provincial government to lease a Pacific Island for more than seven decades. It is revealed that a state-owned China Sam Enterprise Group had signed an agreement with Solomon Islands’ Malaita province government on September 22, 2019 for a 75-year lease of the island of Tulagi.²¹ Though this deal was vetoed by the Solomon Islands government, Chinese companies are still continuing to look for investment opportunities on Tulagi.²²

The island of Tulagi is geographically significant. It was the capital of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate between 1897 and 1942.²³ Japan captured Tulagi during the Pacific War and took advantage of its natural deep water harbor for logistic support



²¹ “Solomon government says Chinese company's lease of island unlawful,” *Reuters*, October 25, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-china-solomonislands-idUKKBN1X400C>.

²² “Solomon Islands Officials: Chinese Companies Still See Opportunity in Tulagi,” *VOA*, September 5, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/solomon-islands-officials-chinese-companies-still-see-opportunity-in-tulagi/6729558.html>.

²³ “Tulagi,” *OAPEN*, 2022, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/24375>.

and naval base settlement.²⁴ The first U.S. amphibious operation during WWII took place in Tulagi and wrested control of the island from the Japanese.²⁵ With such strategic significance, China's development planning toward Tulagi is expected to be compatible with strategic deployment.

China Sam Enterprise Group is a Chinese state-owned defense enterprise that has close ties with the PLA.²⁶ Its activities range from oil and gas exploration to the production of chemical products for national defense, the export of arms and weapons and logistic network development. China Sam Enterprise Group's development projects are perfect vehicles serving dual-use purposes of commerce and PLA's strategic interests. Despite the fact that the lease of Tulagi was a failed attempt, such behavior exposes China's ambition to use development projects as an instrument to extend China's strategic outposts in the South Pacific region.

CONCLUSION

This manuscript provides a preliminary exploration on the weaponization of China's BRI in the South Pacific region. There are three features mapping out the weaponization of BRI. First, China is using the outward overseas development projects as a vehicle to expand its strategic and security interests. Second, the PLA's operation has been highly diversified and actively engaged with China's overseas development projects. Thirdly, China's civil-military fusion policy is making most of the civilian projects containing a dual purpose of serving both civilian and military applications.

The author also finds four traits proving that the BRI has been weaponized as an instrument to enhance China's strategic interests. First, China has not taken the South Pacific region seriously for economic development. It is the geostrategic importance that draws the BRI's projects. Second, in contrast to the inactive economic relation, China's military aid toward South Pacific Island countries seems to be leading the way. Third, the author has found 12 Chinese financed and constructed aeronautical projects in Micronesia, Tonga, Kiribati, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea functioning as aeronautical pivots to enhance China's strategic advantages. Lastly, the case of Tulagi



²⁴ "Building the Navy's Bases in World War II," *HyperWar Foundation*, 2022, https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Building_Bases/index.html#contents2.

²⁵ "First Hell in the Pacific: The Battle for Tulagi," *Warfare History Network*, 2013, <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/article/first-hell-in-the-pacific-the-battle-for-tulagi/>.

²⁶ "China Sam Enterprise Group," *RWR*, January 17, 2020, <https://www.rwradvisory.com/rwr-risk-profile-china-sam-enterprise-group/>.

leasing indicates that China has the tendency to secretly take over a Pacific Island as a foothold or outpost in the Pacific Ocean.

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RECONSIDER TAIWAN'S DEFENSE STRATEGY – LESSON FROM UKRAINE WAR

Tzuli Wu

I. DETERRENCE UNDER UNBALANCED MILITARY POWER

The purpose of deterrence is to influence the hostile decision process and the goal is to dispel or change his decision that is not in the defender's interest. It cannot be denied that military capability is the key element that influences a regime's decision, but not the only one. The final decision comes from a comprehensive measurement of the pros and cons of multiple criteria and the resulting optimal solution for his goal that satisfies the constraints of criteria.

The aggressor needs to consider internal criteria such as social, political, economic, and cultural factors that affect the stability of the regime, as well as external criteria such as geopolitics, global economy, and diplomacy, depending on the connotation of the overall interests he pursued. On the other side, the defender measures the key criteria that affect the outcome of the aggressor's decision and take corresponding actions, to convince the aggressor to divert or cancel his operations accordingly, thus achieving the purpose of deterrence.

Ukraine is confronting a neighbor with superior economic and military power and is ruled by an aggressive leader. Russia's invasion declared the ineffectiveness of deterrence, Ukraine was held accountable, and so did the western democratic allies. In the so-called strategy of deterrence, whether it is punishment, denial, or extension, the result remains the ultimate will of the aggressor. While one expects successful deterrence, he should also anticipate the risks of failed deterrence. Together with Ukraine, the international community is now sharing the cost of deterrence failure.

II. LESSONS FROM UKRAINE WAR

Since Russia invaded Crimea in 2014, NATO's collective defense policy has strengthened its security posture in the eastern rim, hence impacting the three small Baltic states' security and defense strategies. Most NATO documents and their officials have revealed that NATO's post-2014 security strategy in the Baltic Sea region is deterrent through punishment. NATO's deterrence strategy is an expanded form of deterrence based on solidarity among member states, with the United States playing a key role.¹

A. PERCEPTION OF THE THREE BALTIC STATES' DEFENSE STRATEGY

A study of the Baltic states' defense strategy tendencies shows that given NATO's collective defense strategy, it has been found that Estonia tended to be in denial, Lithuania emphasizes denial rather than punishment, and Latvia thinks it is a punishment. On the other hand, the perception of their national defense strategies is that both Estonia and Latvia are inclined to be in denial, and Lithuania shows a clear denial. A common feature of their strategic thinking is to invest the government's overall resources in comprehensive defense.²

A study that modeled denial and punishment deterrence strategies by exploring the interplay between defenders and aggressors, found that minimizing the risk of war with the deployment of denial or punishment ability depends on the balance of military capabilities of the defender and the aggressor. That is, if defenders cannot compete with aggressors in conventional combat, such as North Korea and terrorist organizations, all resources should be used for punishment ability. If the defenders can maintain a partial balance with the aggressors, such as Germany and Japan, they should focus on the ability to deny. Only when defenders have considerable resource advantages, such as the five permanent members of the United Nations, should they have the ability to develop denial and punishing capacities simultaneously.³



¹ Jörg Noll, Osman Bojang, Sebastiaan Rietjens, "Deterrence by Punishment or Denial? The eFP Case," *NL ARMS Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies 2020*, December 4, 2020, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6265-419-8_7.

² Ibid.

³ Nakao, Keisuke, "Modeling Deterrence by Denial and by Punishment," *MPRA Paper No. 95100*, University of Hawaii at Hilo, July 6, 2019, <https://reurl.cc/5ppWmz>.

purpose of forcefully occupying Taiwan. In the same context, Taiwan can also build an area denial capability capable of responding to and successfully defending Taiwan against the threat of PRC military aggression.

The denial area may be located, not limited, around or in either of Taiwan's east, west, north, and south, and Taiwan needs to have the ability to defeat the enemy in these areas. The integrated denial capability is a joint combat capability that requires highly effective operational interoperability among the services and arms in the region. It requires unobstructed ISR capability to construct a common operational picture (COP) and therefore maximizes the effectiveness of battlefield command and control (C2).

The building of resilient and capable defense needs strong budget support, and the people of Taiwan have shown unified support for the defense budget increase in recent years. With resources limited in mind, the government still needs to perform a proper assessment to ensure the most cost-effective military capability to be acquired. Building an integrated area denial capability should fit this requirement.

REGIONAL CONTROL THROUGH INTEGRATED AREA DENIAL CAPABILITY

In addition to destroying the adversary's aggression activities, these integrated denial capabilities can also gain control of the region. This regional control will effectively open and secure the sea line of communication (SLOC), as well as the air corridor for military and civilian supplies delivered from international space to Taiwan's ports, thus supporting people's will of people to resist the enemy and strengthening national resilience.

CONCLUSION

Do not rely on the enemy not coming, rely on our readiness and waiting for him to come (勿恃敵之不來, 恃吾有以待之).

The launching of war is not necessarily the result of rational decision-making, no one can fully grasp the factors that start a war. The focus of defense is not to hope that the war will not occur, but to be prepared for the coming of war. After the outbreak of the Ukraine War, Ukraine still has to rely on its military and civilian forces to resist the invasion.

Given the unbalanced military power across the Taiwan Strait, to acquire effective deterrence, the use of an integrated approach emphasizes interoperability across domains, with partners, and across the whole government and like-minded countries is essential. With the continuous and firm substantive support of

international like-minded friends, Taiwan is building an armed force and social resilience capable of regional denial capabilities. With a strong belief in democracy and freedom, and the will to resist PRC's aggression, Taiwan can have a strong and lasting resilient power, so can have a substantial impact on the PRC's decision of invading Taiwan by force, resulting in a substantial deterrent effect.

Taiwan's national defense strategy focuses on building a modernized military with asymmetry capability that can successfully deny the adversary's gray zone or invasion activities. This strategy is defensive, just denial of the invasion, not conquest, dismembering China, or changing its regime. Timely and early assistance to Taiwan to obtain and build an area denial ability capable of resisting the PRC's military invasion is a reasonable action that all like-minded countries have to take, to maintain peace, security, and international order in the Indo-Pacific region. The strengthening of operational interoperability with like-minded countries in these areas, especially in the defense of Taiwan, is the key to the urgent need for Taiwan and these countries to work together to make breakthroughs.

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THE EXPANSION OF CHINA'S NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS IN THE ARCTIC

Alice Chang-Jung Yang & Wen-Chung Chai

INTRODUCTION

In January 2018, the State Council of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) released the *White Paper on China's Arctic Policy*, the first official document revealing Beijing's Arctic policy objectives and positions. The release of this document signifies that Arctic affairs is now officially part of Beijing's national security agenda and has become an important issue that must be addressed in Beijing's contemporary national security arena. As Beijing's involvement in the Arctic deepens, abutting nations are increasingly concerned about its intentions, and attracting scholars of international relations and strategic studies to conduct extensive research on related issues. However, most of these studies focus on Arctic governance, resource development, trade and navigation, climate change, and environmental protection, while less attention has been paid to the PLA's naval strategy and its growing presence in the Arctic.

In essence, the PLA's naval strategy and its Arctic presence reflects two different aspects: intention and capability. The former relates to *why* the PLA's navy conducts demonstrations in the Arctic, which is closely related to Beijing's view of national security and strategic changes in the navy. The latter relates to *how* the PLA's navy conducts the Arctic demonstration, with two crucial points: the choice of access point and the establishment of a supporting structure. Without the ability to support the operation, the strongest intentions will only become lip service and will not pose a real threat to potential opponents. Even if the PLA's navy was sufficiently capable, the special maritime geography of the Arctic Ocean and the potential resistance of the Arctic nations will place a considerable constraint on the PLA's Arctic missions. This article will provide an analysis and draw preliminary inferences on Beijing's Arctic

strategy as well as the limitations and challenges Beijing might face when developing its Arctic policy.

THE EXPANSION OF BEIJING’S NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT

It is not surprising that Beijing has a growing interest in the Arctic. Often, it is suggested that the main reason for Beijing's active involvement in Arctic affairs in recent years is that the Arctic region is rich in natural resources and its huge navigational interests, both can provide a sufficient material basis for Beijing's future sustainable development. However, it is to be noted that Beijing's involvement in the Arctic is not simply a matter of economic security, or a deliberate challenge to U.S. strategic interests in the Arctic but is inextricably linked to the evolution of its view of national security.

In theoretical terms, national security approaches are States subjective understanding of national security, which includes but not limited to the assessment of the security environment, the judgment of the security environment faced, and the overall understanding of national security interests. States formulate a security strategy, determine security objectives, and carry out activities related to national security based on these subjective ideas. Since national security is a subjective perception, and the environment in which the State operates changes frequently, the approach of national security must be adjusted accordingly. Professor Kaibin ZHONG (鍾開斌) of the Central Party School divides the evolution of Beijing's national security approaches into three different stages: the first generation - “traditional approach to national security” (from the establishment of the CCP to the reform and opening), the second generation - “transitional approach to national security” (from the reform and opening to the 18th National Congress of the CCP [中共十八大]), and the third generation - “holistic approach to national security” [總體國家安全觀] (after the 18th National Congress). These three approaches of national security cover different situations, security threats as well as security maintenance, and their evolutionary trends have shifted from focusing on unitary to systematic construction, while the role of national security has changed from a mere participant to a leading one.¹

The main feature of the current third generation of national security approach adopted Beijing is the expansion of the theme of the era from “peace and development”



¹ Chen, Jinghui, “Zhongguo guojia anquanguan de yanhua yu zhanwang [The Evolution of China's National Security Concept],” Dangzheng luntan, June 2018, pp. 22-24.

to “security and development”. Thus, the non-traditional security of peacetime has been incorporated and refined into the “holistic approach to national security”, which was included in the 19th National Congress[十九大] as the basic strategy for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era and written into the Party Constitution. In July 2015, the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress passed and promulgated *The National Security Law of the People's Republic of China* [中共國家安全法], which is an important action to realize Beijing's “holistic approach to national security” from idea to policy.

Of particular importance is the fact that various issues of Beijing's national security are intertwined and overlapped to a significant degree, such as the close relationship between climate change and food security, and the boundaries between these issues are becoming increasingly blurred as they permeate each other. Among the non-traditional security issues which Beijing is facing and probably will matter more in the future, polar security is one of the most complex issues, and its outreach includes economic security, climate change, food security, ecological security, resource and energy security, and security of overseas interests, etc. Therefore, Beijing's recent active planning and involvement in Arctic affairs has its practical considerations. It is very like that Beijing will focus more on coordinating national resources to prevent the potential impact which Arctic issues might have on its national security. The provisions of the National Security Law already provide a solid legal basis for such actions.²

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE PLA'S ARCTIC STRATEGY

Although Beijing is now actively involved in Arctic affairs and has acquired observer status at the Arctic Council, it has adopted a “low political” approach in Arctic affairs to avoid overreaching and arousing the wariness of Arctic states. Given the growing importance of the Arctic to Beijing's national security, it is reasonable to argue that the PLA's has a strategic need for a military presence in the Arctic. In the foreseeable future, it is very likely that the PLA will deploy forces in the Arctic Ocean to conduct military demonstrations in order to maintain its political and economic interests in the region. However, even if the PLA is willing and able to conduct an Arctic military mission, it still has to overcome various challenges, such as the collective resistance from Arctic states, constraints in the maritime geography, and lack of awareness of the maritime environment, all of which are considerable challenges to the PLA's naval strategy in the Arctic.



² See Article 18 of the National Security Law.

the Arctic Ocean, making the Arctic another potential hot spot of conflict in the bilateral relationship between the United States and China.

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