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Newsletter



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Institute for National Defense and Security Research



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The Institute for National Defense and Security Research (財團法人國防安全研究院) is dedicated to fueling knowledge-based policy analyses and strategic assessments on Taiwan's security.

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How to Increase Public Support for Defense Budget: An Observation from Survey

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Topic: Cross-Strait Situation

1. News Highlights

President Tsai Ing-wen announced on December 27, 2022 that the length of mandatory military service will be extended to one year, in order to strengthen Taiwan's national defense. As part of the extension policy, the training period for the conscripts will be prolonged, the salary of the conscripts will be increased, and conscription periods can also count towards pension. It is reported that this armed force restructuring will be implemented in 2024, and the national defense budget will see a NT\$16 billion

increase by 2029.¹ In recent years, the United States, the European Union, and Japan have all increased their defense budgets significantly to address the growing geopolitical threats and to defend their national security.² This does not mean Taiwan has to follow suit: besides facing different threat scenarios, in democracies government budgets are not only subject to public scrutiny but also depend on public support. In this analysis, we attempt to understand people's opinion on defense budget growth through survey and explore possible ways to gain

1. For related reports, see Yang Zhiqiang and Kong Delian, "Tsai Government Pushes Important National Defense Reform: One-year Military Service, Modular Training from US Military, Civil Defense First Included in National Defense System," *The Reporter*, December 27, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/kqbY8L>.

2. For more information on Europe and the US defense budget growth, see "Military Service Extension Strengthens National Defense and Shows Taiwan's Determination to Defend Itself," *Youth Daily News*, January 3, 2023, <https://www.ydn.com.tw/news/newsInsidePage?chapterID=1556909>.

public support for the defense budget.³

2. Security Implications

In the past, opinion polls on government budget adjustments tended to frame questions in ways that led to respondent ignorance of the “crowding-out effect” of the budget, thereby resulting in unrealistic survey results. In light of this, this survey drew its inspiration from the Pew Research Center and the Reagan National Defense Survey. In the beginning of the questions, we first presented Taiwan’s current total budget and its allocations, then asked respondents whether they would like to increase, decrease, or maintain the current budgets in each category. The questions in the survey are as follows:

“According to the Executive Yuan’s 2023 central government budgeting, out

of the total budget of NT\$2.7 trillion, defense spending accounts for 14.6%; education, science, and culture spendings account for 18.2%, economic development for 17.8%, and social welfare spending for 26.3%, while community development and environmental protection account for 1.1%. Will you choose to increase, decrease or maintain the status quo for each category if you can change the allocation among them?” The next question: “If the government’s financial income is limited, which category would you prefer to increase first?” Through the questions, we sought to learn about the public’s priorities for the government’s budgetary considerations.

2-1. A more of the public support a defense budget increase

After informing the respondents of

3. The survey was conducted by Pollcracy Lab, the election research center of National Chengchi University, commissioned by the INDSR. The interviews were conducted with the LimeSurvey online polling system. The survey was conducted from November 14 to 16, 2022, among adults aged 20 years or older in Taiwan, and a total of 1,250 successful samples were completed. The actual number of cases analyzed was 1,245 after excluding invalid samples. Although the interviewees come from the database of respondents gathered from the National Chengchi University election research center, conceptually, they can be regarded as “quasi-probability samples,” and the overall bias is smaller than that of all voluntary samples. For details, see Chen-Hua Yu, “Theory and Practice of Online Public Opinion Polls,” edited by Lu-Hui Chen, *New Theory of Public Opinion Polls* (Taipei: Wunan, 2013), pp. 89-110. However, participation in the online survey is still voluntary, so the characteristics of the sample are closer to those of the group of Internet users.

the current budget allocation percentages in the “national defense,” “education, science and culture,” “economic development,” “social welfare,” and “community development and environmental protection” categories, the survey results showed that about 44% of respondents favored increasing the defense budget, 39% favored maintaining the current figure, and 17% favored decreasing it (Figure 1). Compared to other budget categories, the percentage of those favoring increase in the defense budget is not only the highest, but it is also the only category in which people in favor of the budget increase are more than those who prefer maintaining the status quo. This indicates a certain degree of public expectation for increasing defense budget.

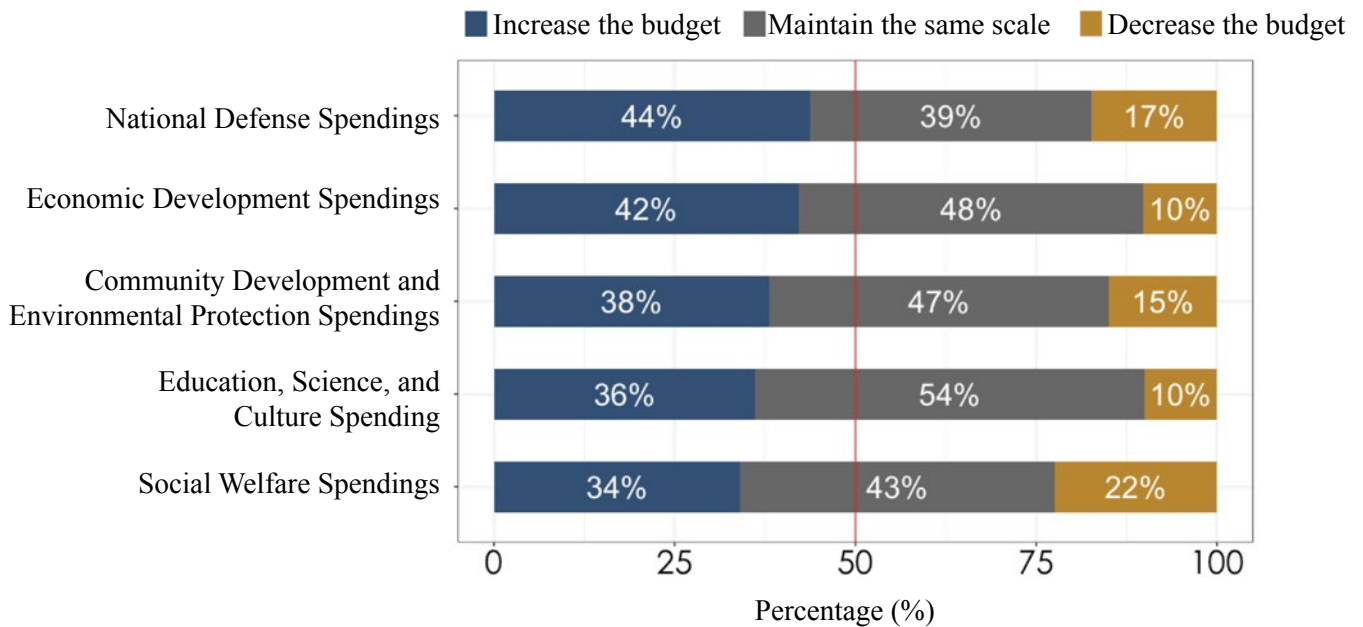
However, when further asked, “If the government has limited financial income, which budget category would you most prefer to increase?” 32% of respondents

prioritized “economic development,” with 25% for “national defense” ranked second, followed by “education, science, and culture” (17%), “social welfare” (16%), and “community development and environmental protection” (10%). The results show that the public prefers to invest resources in “economic development,” given the priority of issues and the crowding-out effect of the budget. It is not uncommon for people of different countries to prioritize livelihood or economic issues in polls. For example, the Pew Research Center found that 71% of Americans believed revitalizing the economy was the most important issue for the President and Congress, while only about 37% said that the US military power should be further strengthened.⁴ Judging from our survey results, even though the support for higher defense budget was not as high as budget for economic development, this public opinion should not be ignored.

4. “Public’s Top Priority for 2022: Strengthening the Nation’s Economy,” *Pew Research Center*, February 16, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/02/16/publics-top-priority-for-2022-strengthening-the-nations-economy/>.

Figure 1: Distribution of public attitudes toward the increase or decrease of various government budget categories

If you could change the budget allocation for the above five categories, would you choose to increase, decrease or maintain the same scale?



Note: the figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

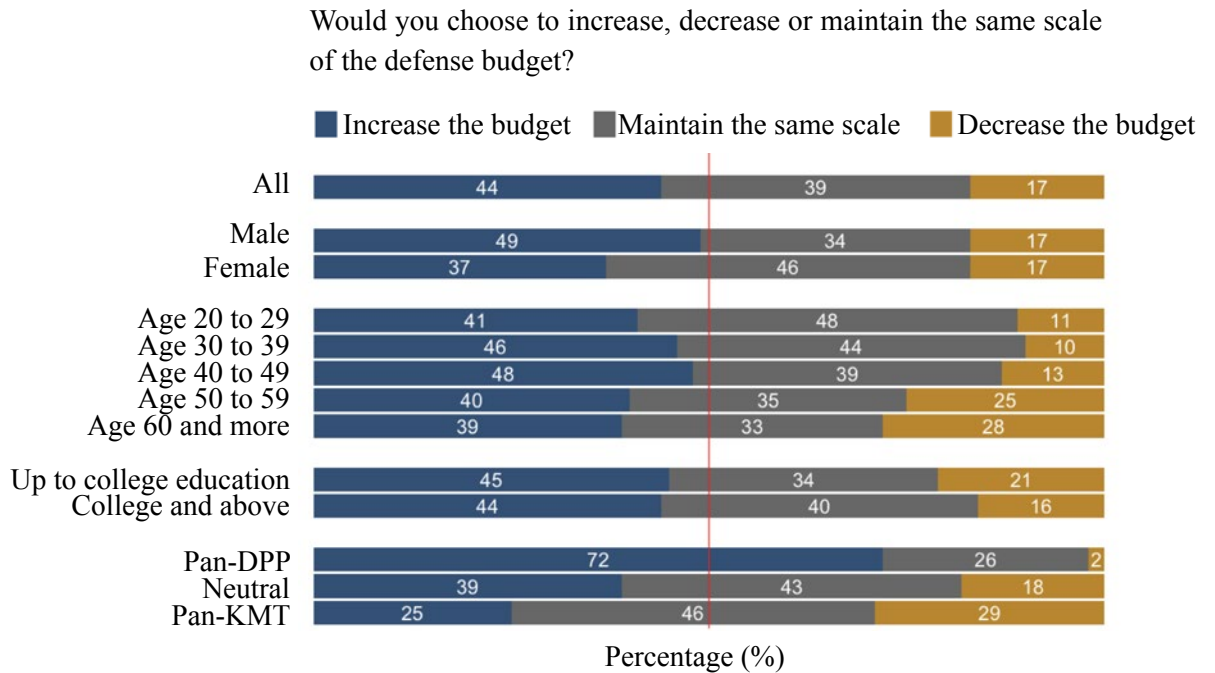
Source: Compiled by the author from the INSDR’s “Taiwan National Defense and Security Public Opinion Survey,” the fourth of the Year 2022.

2-2. The KMT-DPP political disagreement is the main cause affecting the support of the defense budget

In Figure 2, the attitudes of people from different backgrounds toward the defense budget are further analyzed. There are some differences in attitudes toward the support of the defense budget across gender and age groups. For example, about 49% of male respondents agreed with increasing the defense budget, but female supporters lagged behind at about 37%. Regarding the attitudes distributed in age groups, aged 40 to 49 showed the highest percentage of support for increase in defense budget (48%), followed by seniors aged 60 or older (39%). Although there are some slight differences in attitudes toward increasing the defense budget among different gender and age groups, the KMT-DPP political disagreement is the main factor

affecting the support for defense budget increase. Among the pan-DPP supporters, as many as 72% favor more defense budget, while only about 25% of pan-KMT supporters favor increasing it. As for those who are neutral without any specific political identification, the percentage supporting increased defense budget (39%) is also slightly lower than the average of all respondents (44%). Since more than 50% of all respondents chose to maintain the current allocation or reduce the defense budget (39% + 17%), and the main difference came from political identification, there is still no clear consensus on the growth of the budget. It is indeed difficult to cross the political gap between KMT and DPP. Yet, from the policy communication and persuasion perspective, it is still the government's inevitable responsibility to gain the majority of people's support for the defense budget.

Figure 2: Differences in attitudes toward defense budget adjustment from people of different political backgrounds



Note: the figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: Compiled by the author from the INSDR’s “Taiwan National Defense and Security Public Opinion Survey,” the fourth of the Year 2022.

3. Trend Observation

Past studies have shown that public perceptions of “threat” and “military strength” helped drive up defense budgets.⁵ In this section, we examine possible ways to gain cross-party support for the defense budget by inquiring about people’s threat and military strength

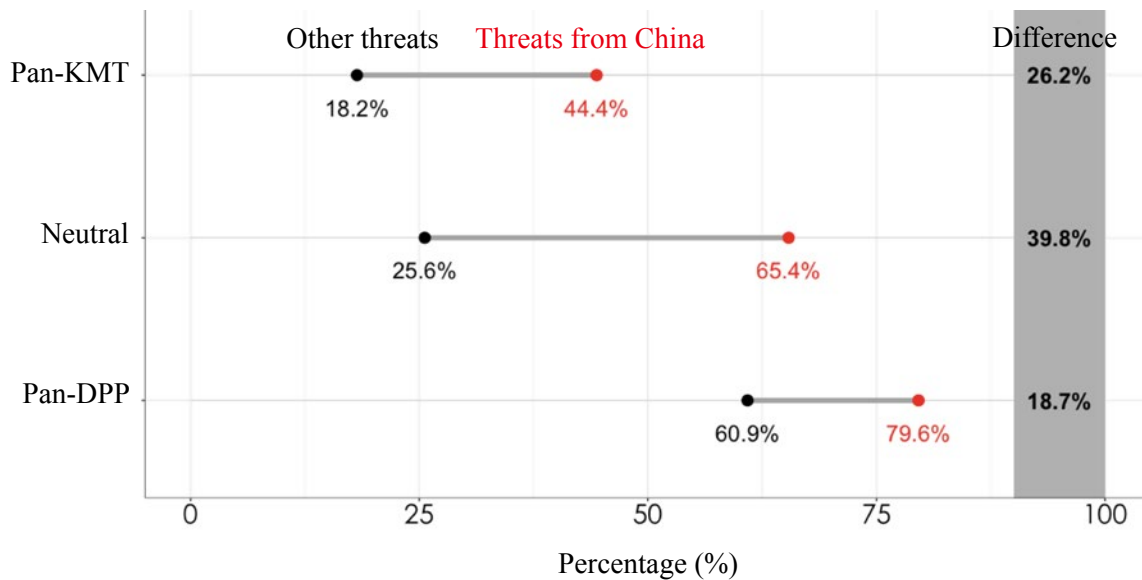
perceptions for the government’s reference.

3-1. Revealing hostile threats increases public support for defense budget

In terms of measuring “threat perception,” the survey asked respondents to identify the most serious threat to

Figure 3: Influence from “threat perception” on support for defense budget among supporters of different parties

Percentage of respondents who chose to support an increased defense budget:



Note: the figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: Compiled by the author from the INSDR’s “Taiwan National Defense and Security Public Opinion Survey,” the fourth of the Year 2022.

5. Erik M. Fay, “Individual and Contextual Influences on Public Support for Military Spending in NATO,” *Defence and Peace Economics*, Vol. 31, No. 7, September 2019, pp. 762-785.

Taiwan's national security in the next five years. 39%, the highest percentage, of the respondents said the threat was from China, followed by economic stagnation (22%), the dropping birth rate (20.5%), energy shortage (13.8%), and COVID-19 (4.4%).

In Figure 3, with respondents grouped by their political identifications, the effect of "threat perception" on public support for the defense budget is examined. Among pan-KMT respondents, when some considered the primary threat to be China (red dots), their support for an increased defense budget rose to 44.4%. Compared to the pan-KMT respondents whose perceived primary threat is something else (black dots), the difference in supporting the increased defense budget becomes 26.2%. To neutral respondents without specific political preferences, the effect of "threat perception" on supporting a higher defense budget is even more pronounced. When neutrals identify China as the primary threat to Taiwan's national security, 65.4% support an increase in the defense budget, compared to 25.6% for those who prioritize other threats, with a difference of about 40%. The result demonstrates the effect of "threat perception" on public support

for the defense budget. In the past, most Taiwanese national security agencies were reluctant to publicize the threat situation as they worried that such information would create panic among the public. This approach certainly makes some sense, but it seems too conservative and passive in today's environments of open and rapid information exchanges. Our analysis suggests that an enhanced awareness of the country's national security environment and threats helps boost public support for higher defense budget.

3-2. The "perceivable" military force improvement increases public support for defense budget

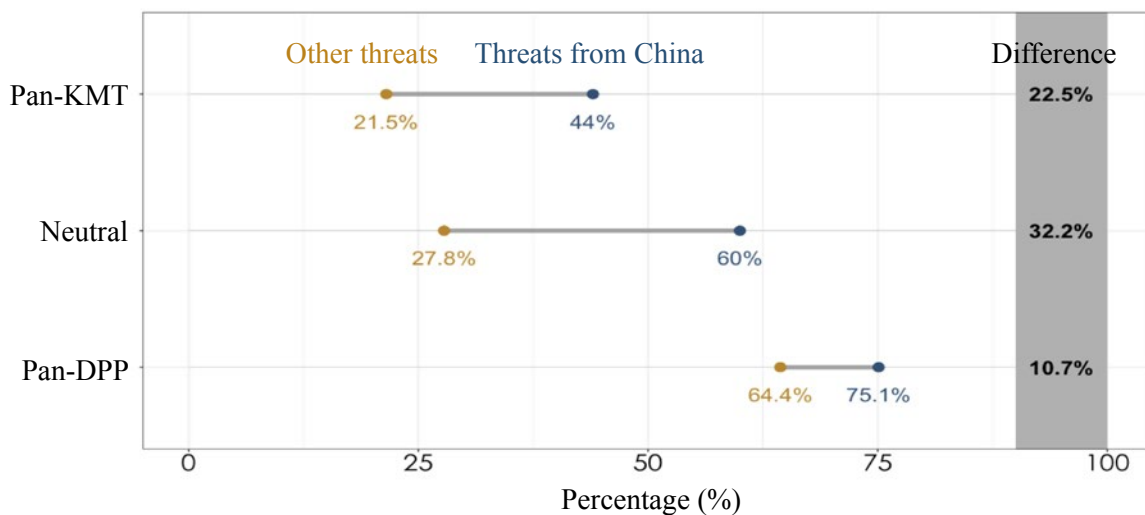
In terms of the "perceived strength of Taiwan's armed forces," this survey measured by asking the respondents, "do you think the overall strength of the armed force has become stronger than ever?" Figure 4 groups the respondents by political preferences and examines the effect of "perceived military strength" on their attitudes toward defense budget support. Similarly, we found that the "perceivable" military improvement boosts defense budget support. 44% of the pan-KMT respondents who considered Taiwan's military power had improved

supported an increase in defense budget (blue dots). In comparison, those who disagreed (yellow dots) had a 22.5% lower percentage of support for a higher defense budget. Similarly, the effect of “perceived military strength” is most obvious among those who claimed themselves neutral. 60% of the neutrals who believe the Taiwanese military has become stronger support an increase in the defense budget, while only 27.8% of

the neutrals who believe the military has not become stronger support an increase. In other words, the proper presentation of the military capability will help win public support for higher defense budget; that means the Taiwanese military should consider demonstrating its capability to the citizens through regular combat training and exercise since they are crucial to winning future budget.

Figure 4: Influence of the Taiwanese military capability on defense budget support from respondents with different political identifications

Percentage of respondents who chose to support an increased defense budget:



Note: the figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: Compiled by the author from the INSDR’s “Taiwan National Defense and Security Public Opinion Survey,” the fourth of the Year 2022.



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

Japan's Three Core Defense Documents and Defense of Southwest Islands

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Topics: Indo-Pacific Region, Cross-Strait Situation, International Situation

1. News Highlights

On December 16, 2022, Japan's Fumio Kishida administration announced a new version of the "National Security Strategy," the "National Defense Strategy" (formerly known as the "National Defense Program Guidelines), and the "Defense Buildup Program" (formerly known as the "Mid-Term Defense Program"). These documents will be collectively referred to as the "Three Defense Documents" in this article.¹ The three documents are all related to the outlying islands in the southwest region of Japan (later referred to as "Southwest Islands"), and the contents are summarized as follows:

1. The National Security Strategy focuses on the Southwest Islands, particularly the rapid evacuation of the area's residents before an armed attack (p. 25).
2. The National Defense Strategy emphasizes the protection of the lives and property of the residents of the outlying islands (p. 5); in peacetime, the police, the Coast Guard, and the Self-Defense Forces should conduct drills to respond to possible "gray zone" conflicts on the outlying islands (p. 11). Inter-ministerial collaboration should be enforced to improve the readiness of the Southwest Islands' airports and harbors (p. 12); the logistic capacity

1. "国家安全保障戦略について," *Japanese Ministry of Defense*, December 16, 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/pdf/security_strategy.pdf; "国家防衛戦略について," *Japanese Ministry of Defense*, December 16, 2022, <https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/strategy/pdf/strategy.pdf>; "防衛力整備計画について," *Japanese Ministry of Defense*, December 16, 2022, <https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/plan/pdf/plan.pdf>.

of the airports and harbors should be expanded for combat operations (p. 21).

In the area of medical care, emphasis should be placed on evacuating patients from the Southwest Islands frontlines and establishing local medical stations in the region (p. 28).

3. The “Defense Buildup Program” asserts that Japan should better plan for the acquisition of ships and aircraft for transportation to quickly project forces into the southwestern region (p. 8); the required military supplies should be stockpiled locally in the southwestern region to reduce the need for inbound transportation (p. 9). An integrated maritime transportation force should be established (p. 11), and the 15th Brigade of JGSDF should be expanded into a division-level unit to strengthen the region’s defense (p. 11). The force projection capability should be improved, and joint exercises involving police, Coast Guard, and firefighting agencies should be conducted to respond to the gray zone conflicts in the southwest region (p. 18). In addition, the capacity and bomb resistance of the SDF Naha Hospital in Okinawa should be expanded (p. 28).

2. Security Implications

2-1. New defense documents confirmed the importance of the Southwest Islands

Over the past decade, successive Japanese administrations have kept strengthening the defense and construction of the Southwest Islands. The Japanese Ministry of Defense’s annual white paper “Defense of Japan” has addressed the security situation of the Southwest Islands every year and explained Japan’s defense preparations for the islands to society.

The new contents of the Three Defense Documents released under this situation reaffirm the Japanese government’s determination to strengthen the defense of the Southwestern Islands and reinforce the related deployment of personnel and weapons. At the same time, perhaps because of the lessons learned from the US evacuation of Afghanistan, the documents also emphasize non-combatant evacuation plans under the category of “the Protection of the Japanese Nationals,” making the relevant strategy more pragmatic in the sense of “facing the regional situation”. Overall, the new version of the Three Defense Documents reflects that the Southwest Islands will

remain a top priority in Japan's defense planning for the next decade, and the Japanese government will focus on accelerating military preparation based on the policy direction epitomized by these documents.

2-2. Japan is facing up to rising pressure from China

China is undoubtedly the biggest factor behind Japan's continued efforts to strengthen the defense of the southwest region. It is well known that Beijing has always advocated that the Senkaku Islands (known as the Diaoyutai Islands in Taiwan and Diaoyu Island in China), over which Japan also claims sovereignty, as part of its territory, and has made it clear to Japan that the islands are a "core interest" of China.

Although Japan continues to maintain its administration of the Islands, China has kept sending Coast Guard vessels to the surrounding areas and occasionally entering the Japanese-claimed territorial waters, prompting protests from the

Japanese government. In the past three years, Chinese maritime police vessels have remained in the waters for more than 330 days: 333 days in 2020, 332 days in 2021, and 336 days in 2022, a record high since the Japanese government nationalized the islands in 2012.² The China Coast Guard vessels entered and remained in the aforementioned territorial waters even for a record-breaking duration of 72 hours and 45 minutes on December 26, 2022 (the last record was 64 hours and 17 minutes from July 5 to 7, 2022), which the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary called an "unacceptable" act.³

In addition, there have been many recent cases of Chinese vessels chasing or attempting to approach Japanese fishing boats operating in the above-mentioned waters. In early August 2022, the PLA conducted military exercises in the sea and airspace around Taiwan, with five of its ballistic missiles even landing in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claimed by Japan, triggering high tension among the Japanese government and citizens.

2. "中国当局の船、尖閣諸島周辺の接続水域での確認日数が2022年に336日で過去最多に," *TV Asahi News*, January 1, 2023, https://news.tv-asahi.co.jp/news_society/articles/000281938.html.

3. "尖閣沖 中国船が72時間余領海侵入 官房長官「受け入れられず」," *NHK*, December 26, 2022, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20221226/k10013934831000.html?utm_int=nsearch_contents_search-items_002.

Needless to say, the Japanese government has a heightened sense of crisis. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) even raised concerns at a party meeting in 2021 that China's plan to "annex" the Senkaku Islands was already in process.⁴ Such a high sense of crisis no doubt drove the Japanese government to strengthen the defense of the Southwest Islands, including the Senkakus. It also became an important force prompting the Japanese government to revise the three documents one year earlier than the originally-scheduled 2023.

3. Trend Observation

3-1. Japan will focus on the Southwest Islands in response to the gray-zone conflicts

Although the PLA's navy and air forces have been present in Japan's periphery from time to time in recent years, and its exercises have raised Japan's security concerns, the long-term presence of Chinese maritime police vessels in the

waters surrounding Senkaku Islands is more frequent and can actually influence the perception of the Japanese people.

In this regard, in addition to the aforementioned China Coast Guard vessels chasing Japanese fishing boats, forcing the Japanese Coast Guard patrol vessels to come forward to protect them, resulting in a standoff between the Chinese and Japanese maritime law enforcement forces, the Japanese government has not forgotten the lesson learned from the successful landing of Chinese protesters on the island.

Although the National Security Strategy does not specifically refer to the Southwest Islands, it does point out the threat of gray-zone conflicts; the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program both emphasize responsiveness to the gray-zone conflicts that could occur in the Southwest Islands, as mentioned above. Since the gray-zone conflicts are yet to reach the "war level" in nature, paramilitary units such as the police force and the Coast Guard will play an increasingly important role in response to

4. "尖閣諸島をはじめとする我が国の領土・領海・領空を断固守り抜くための緊急提言," *LDP Administrative Investigation Committee*, April 6, 2021, https://jimin.jp-east-2.storage.api.nifcloud.com/pdf/news/policy/201441_1.pdf.

such conflicts. As a result, the Japanese government will escalate the collaboration between the Self-Defense Forces and law enforcement agencies (mainly the police and the Coast Guard) in the future. The establishment of Japan's peacetime/wartime transition mechanism and the joint exercise involving military, police, and civilian units can become Taiwan's reference for building a similar system.

3-2. The Southwest Island residents' attitude is still an uncertain factor in Japan's military establishment

Although polls show that the Japanese public's sense of threat from China is rising rapidly, many Southwest Island residents are worrying that the risk of being involved in a war is also rising rapidly as the Japanese government strengthens the war preparations of the islands and the situation in Taiwan and China continues to be tense. In addition, the residents have been suffering from the influence of military bases and exercises (mainly the US military) for years, and negative factors such as the high density

of military facilities in Okinawa, the promotion of southwest defense may not be without resistance. The attitude can be observed from last year's Okinawa governor election result — Denny Tamaki, who opposed the US military presence in Okinawa, was elected.

At a press conference held at Ginowan City Hall in Okinawa Prefecture on December 4, 2022, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno Hirokazu said that “the strengthening of the southwest defense system is still under review and no decision has been made yet” in response to reports about the expansion of the 15th Brigade of JGSDF. On the eve of the upcoming announcement of the finalized defense policy, the Japanese government still kept silent about the details, showing that it was still concerned about the local opposition voices.⁵ Tamaki, the Okinawa Prefecture governor, immediately criticized the JGSDF expansion plan the next day, saying that the US military bases already constitute an excessive burden on Okinawa, and he opposed the expansion of JGSDF since it would be “more burden

5. “南西地域の防衛強化「現在検討中で、何ら決まっていない」 沖縄で松野官房長官,” *Okinawa Times*, December 4, 2022, <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/1067952>.

on the excessive burden”⁶

In this regard, the National Security Strategy emphasizes that self-defense force officers, Coast Guard officers, and police officers who courageously defend the country should be appropriately respected in Japanese society; the strategy also includes the idea as part of its “strengthening the foundations of society” section (p. 30). In the future, the possible opposition between the local people and the central government around “strengthening southwest defense” is critical for the smooth promotion of Japan’s southwest defense plan and also has security implications for the Taiwan Strait situation that should be paid attention to.

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

6. “玉城デニー知事「自衛隊を強化するなら、米軍の負担は減らすべきだ」 陸自の増強を受け、” *Okinawa Times*, December 6, 2022, <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/1068712>.

The Significance of Security in the ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report

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Keywords: Korean Peninsula, Korea (The ROK), Indo-Pacific Strategy

Park Jin, Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs, released the final version of the ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, titled *Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region* on December 28, 2022. The report illustrates the ROK's status and issues in the global situation and proposes its future direction. This is the ROK's first development strategy regarding the Indo-Pacific Region.

The ROK is going to facilitate international cooperation and exchanges as a Global Pivotal State

The Korean version of the report¹ released this time consists of 33 pages and is divided into four chapters. The

first chapter is the introduction, narrating the ROK's strategic status in the world, and the significance and the challenge of the Indo-Pacific region to the ROK. The second chapter narrates the ROK's vision and principles when formulating its Indo-Pacific strategies, and proposes its cooperation plans and vision with major areas of the world as a Global Pivotal State. The third chapter focuses on national security, the economy, counter-terrorism, and anti-nuclearism, proposing the ROK's perspective and possible areas for future cooperation with other major countries. The fourth chapter gives the conclusion and stresses the importance of maintaining global order and stability, and the ROK is going to play a key role

1. “자유, 평화, 번영의 인도 - 태평양전략,” 외교부, December 28, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/zrkYXk>.

in the Indo-Pacific region as a Global Pivotal State and will prepare detailed plans for future cooperation step by step. The report also believes the ROK can adopt concepts similar to the “Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative” to establish regional cooperation policies, increase the consistency of the ROK’s diplomatic policies, and expands joint cooperation in the region.

The phrase “Global Pivotal State” appears five times in this report, stressing the ROK is going to start cooperation on the 9 Core Lines of Effort. The 9 Core Lines of Effort in order are: build regional order based on norms and rules, cooperate to promote rule of law and human rights, strengthen non-proliferation and counter-terrorism efforts across the region, expand comprehensive security cooperation, build economic security networks, strengthen cooperation in critical domains of science and technology and close digital gap, lead regional cooperation on climate change and energy security, engage in “contributive diplomacy” through tailored development cooperation partnerships, and promote mutual understanding and exchanges.

As mentioned in the report’s conclusion, policy initiatives of the 9 Core

Lines of Effort will be formulated in detail and adjusted according to the situation. The ROK has been implementing some of the foreign policies mentioned in the report for a long time, such as aid diplomacy, human rights cooperation, and reducing regional inequality and the resource gap. The key point of this Indo-Pacific Strategy Report lies in the ROK’s strategic perspective on the region and its aim to serve as a hub for cooperation networks in the Indo-Pacific.

Also, the report has stressed the importance of security multiple times and proposed focuses such as national security, economic security, non-traditional security, cyber security, multilateral security, health security, and regional security.

It is worth noticing that in the security section, it is said that apart from addressing North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats, expanding the current Japan-ROK-U.S. Security Agreement, and developing to safeguard peace, the ROK is also going to partner up with the U.S. and Australia to address supply chain disruptions, cyber-security issues, key minerals, and emerging technologies for shared values, and strengthen NATO’s cooperation with the four partners (The

ROK, Japan, Australia, New Zealand) in the Asia-Pacific region, and shows high hopes for multilateral and regional security between the ROK and ASEAN.

Regional cooperation based on the ROK-U.S. Alliance

The ROK believes a diverse approach is needed when addressing the complicated security challenge. First, it is crucial to strengthen maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, protect sea routes and fight against pirates to ensure the security and prosperity of the South China Sea. The report also reaffirms the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, which is closely connected to the security of the Korean Peninsula and the prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.

In the latter half of Chapter 3, the report dives into the narration of North Korea's nuclear threats, non-proliferation, and denuclearization. The term "ROK-U.S. Alliance" is mentioned three times, "America" three times, "Japan" three times, and "North Korea" ten times. The

ROK believes the ROK-U.S. Alliance is the linchpin for peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula over the last 70 years and will continue to strengthen its alliance with the United States, not just on military defense but also on the economy and supply chains. The ROK and the U.S. will continue to work together to address North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and potential military provocation. From some parts of the report, its core values echo the "ROK-U.S. comprehensive strategic alliance"² mentioned at the Biden-Yoon summit in May 2022, and the "linchpin for stability and prosperity" in the ROK-U.S. Leaders' Joint Statement published at that time, supporting common values and strengthening the ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral cooperation.³ Apart from the ROK-U.S. cooperation, the ROK also seeks to improve relations with Japan. The report mentions, "With our closest neighbor, Japan, we will seek a forward-looking partnership that supports our common interests and values", and the ROK will continue its diplomatic

2. 이상현, "한미 정상회담 성과와 '글로벌 포괄적 전략동맹' 발전을 위한 협력과제," *ROK Angle* (제 251 호), June 3, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/VRov86>; "미한 정상 '글로벌 포괄적 전략동맹' 선언 ... 인터넷 자유, 사이버 범죄 대응은 북한도 적용 대상," *미국의 소리*, May 21, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/ROolk6>.

3. "[전문] 한·미 정상 공동성명," *대한민국 정책브리핑*, May 21, 2022, <https://reurl.cc/EXvdbR>.

efforts to restore mutual trust and advance relations. This section is probably based on the ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral cooperation led by the U.S., which aims to resolve tensions between South Korea and Japan and address the current regional security issues.

Attempts to improve ROK-China relations with “harmony in diversity”

The ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report stresses “regional cooperation with partners pursuing common values”. The report first talks about the universal values of freedom, democracy, and human rights, and the importance of regional cooperation. The report specifically points out that the ROK will continue its efforts to maintain regional peace, prevent disputes and armed conflicts, and develop relations with nations that represent diverse political systems through competition and cooperation in a peaceful way.

The ROK believes China is a main partner for achieving prosperity and peace in the Indo-Pacific region and it will nurture a sounder and more mature relationship as it pursues shared interests based on mutual respect and reciprocity,

guided by international norms and rules.

This section involves the position difference between the ROK and China in economic cooperation and the North Korean issue. While the ROK-U.S. relations mainly determine the ROK's policies to address the North Korean issue, according to the past situations encountered by successive Korean governments, the ROK-China relations will eventually be an unavoidable key player and involve the ROK-DPRK-China relations. Even though North Korea and South Korea have become two parallel lines, South Korea must continue to maintain a high degree of cooperation and partnership with China due to its geopolitical influence. In the ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, “China” and “ROK-China relations” are only mentioned once, showing the ROK's discretion on this matter. Considering the evolution of ROK-China relations from “seeking common ground” to the current “harmony in diversity” and the overall content of the report, the essence of the ROK's Indo-Pacific strategy is probably taking a middle course between the two powers, and this “Pro-US, but not Anti-China” approach has indeed received positive responses from the U.S. and

China.⁴

However, there is growing anti-China sentiment in South Korea. Nearly 81% of South Koreans, especially the MZ Generation (20 to 30-year-olds),⁵ view China unfavorably. The recent, alleged presence of a secret Chinese police station in Seoul only compounds this sentiment. It seems the negative impression is not going to change in a short time.⁶ Besides, China's passive attitude towards the North Korean nuclear issue, interference with the THAAD missile system using the Korean restriction order, and the long-term, unresolved historical, cultural, and environmental disputes all add more uncertainties to the future of ROK-China relations.

The Korean version of the ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report avoids sensitive wording, and many policies may be adjusted in detail. For example, *the Defense White Paper*, expected to be published at the beginning of 2023, and

the White Paper on Korean Unification are still waiting for the Yoon administration's release. However, considering the current situation of the peninsula, the 2023 national defense budget and items, the U.S. army drills, the development of the ROK-U.S. alliance, and the U.S.-China standoff, it is still fairly uncertain if the ROK can succeed as a Global Pivotal State.

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4. “美, 韓 인태전략에 ‘평화 · 안보 증진 환영’... 中 ‘한중관계 촉진 기대’,” 뉴스핌, December 29, 2022, <https://www.newspim.com/news/view/20221229000299>.

5. “‘한국인 81%가 중국에 부정적 ...56개국중 반중정서 가장 강해’,” 연합뉴스, December 27, 2022, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20221227147600009>.

6. “‘비밀경찰서’ 의혹 중식당 대표 "사망 · 부상 중국인 귀국 지원" (종합),” 연합뉴스, December 31, 2022, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20221231034251004>.

The Significance of Security in the ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report



The Implications Revealed in the Military Simulations Conducted by the US Think Tank CSIS

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The implications of CSIS simulations

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a US think tank, released its “The First Battle of the Next War” military simulation report on January 10, 2023.¹

The CSIS report concludes that the simulations of 24 “conventional” amphibious invasions of Taiwan by China will be defeated by the joint force of the US, Taiwan, and Japan. The results maintain Taiwan's sovereignty but at a very high cost to the US and its allies, with the loss of dozens of ships, hundreds of combat aircraft, and tens of thousands of casualties. This loss would damage the

global status of the US for many years, but China would also suffer enormous losses and fail to occupy Taiwan, which is detrimental to the CCP leadership. That means victory alone is not enough for the US; it must have its deterrence power intensified immediately.

The report begins by stating that while the CCP's invasion plans are still unclear, military action cannot be ruled out, and it would be China's “most dangerous solution” to the Taiwan issue; this makes the topic of invading Taiwan a natural focus of discussion among senior US officials and experts. The report argues that if US intervention can deter an invasion under specific conditions with

1. Mark F. Cancian, Matthew Cancian, Eric Heginbotham, “The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan,” *CSIS*, January 9, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/first-battle-next-war-wargaming-chinese-invasion-taiwan>.

certain capabilities, it should develop policies accordingly.

CSIS notes that its report is not suggesting that war in the Taiwan Strait is inevitable or bound to occur as the CCP leaders may take strategies such as diplomatic isolation, gray zone pressure, or economic coercion. Dan Grazier, a senior defense policy researcher, believes that China will try to avoid conflict since it would cause the Chinese economy to collapse, so the CCP will tend to use its industrial and economic prowess to challenge the US. In the CCP's 20th Congress, Xi Jinping also said he would strive for "peaceful reunification". However, he still warned that China would not commit to renouncing the use of force, and it still retains the option to take all necessary measures.

There is also concern about how the CCP views the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. At the beginning of the conflict, there was concern that a successful Russian campaign might encourage China to take action against

Taiwan. Still, the recent Russian defeat and strong international reaction may also dissuade China from taking the possible risk. And the Russian invasion is a reminder that US deterrence may fail and that these countries may retain their claimed authority to act.

The report also mentions that the US provides Taiwan with the means to defend itself under the Taiwan Relations Act; the recent National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) also requires the US to help modernize Taiwan's military — a strong sign of long-standing support for Taiwan from both US parties. Although the US claims its "One China" policy has been unchanged, Joe Biden has more than once stated that the US will defend Taiwan if China launches an invasion.²

CSIS believes publicized military simulations will test the necessary conditions for successful deterrence. If the US is to meet the recommendations of the CSIS report, it needs to take action as soon as possible. The actions include strengthening missile defense

2. "War Game Suggests Chinese Invasion of Taiwan would Fail at A Huge Cost to US, Chinese and Taiwanese Militaries," *CNN*, January 9, 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/09/politics/taiwan-invasion-war-game-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>.

capabilities at Japan and Guam bases, switching to smaller, more survivable Navy ships, deploying submarines and long-range bombers (the US Air Force has just unveiled the new B-21 bomber with better long-range deployment capabilities), producing cheaper fighters, and encouraging Taiwan to adopt a similar strategy of defending itself with simpler weapon platforms.

Five assumptions and 24 scenarios of the simulations

The simulation is modeled by historical factors taken from past wars and the Probability of Kill (Pks), which is the effectiveness of weapon systems, to simulate the results of future wars. The CSIS simulation included 24 operational scenarios grouped into five assumptions: “Base”, “Pessimistic”, “Optimistic”, “Taiwan Stands Alone”, and “Ragnarök”. These assumptions are mainly based on the Pks approach, which could lead to the overestimation of the PLA’s speed of the amphibious invasion in the non-public simulations conducted by the US Department of Defense and other institutions. From the historical experience of amphibious operations, Taiwan will be a particularly difficult target. The

successful Allies landing in 1943 resulted from years of preparation and combat experience, which the PLA did not have.

In the “Basic” assumption, the PLA was quickly defeated due to the destruction of ships by US, Taiwanese, and Japanese anti-ship missiles; the “Optimistic” assumption produced the same result, but faster and with fewer casualties. The “Pessimistic” assumption favors the PLA, and the battle lasts longer; in the worst “Taiwan Isolated” assumption, the PLA achieves the ultimate victory. In the “Ragnarök” assumption, the US could not use its bases in Japan as Japan remains neutral.

In all assumptions, losses were high on both sides. The US could only avoid carrier losses in the “Optimistic” assumption since it pushed the fleet forward as a deterrent signal before the conflict began. All sides suffered significant air force losses, but the PLA’s losses differed in various combat situations, as the US only attacked PLA air bases in the “Pessimistic” assumption. The ground force losses depended on the duration of the battle and the number of troops that landed in Taiwan.

The CSIS report states that in its 24 simulated scenarios, it was discovered that

there were four conditions necessary to defeat the Chinese invasion:

1. Taiwanese troops must hold the line of defense

Taiwan's ground forces must be strengthened. Although Taiwan will face serious naval and air losses, so will China. However, there are still chances that some PLA troops could land successfully, and Taiwan's ground forces must be able to contain beachhead positions with powerful counterattacks. The CSIS report believes there are serious flaws in Taiwan's ground forces, and the troops must be better fortified and trained to become the core of the defense.

2. The Ukraine model is not applicable to Taiwan

The US and NATO can keep delivering weapons to Ukraine, which the Russian military cannot stop, but China could isolate Taiwan for more than a few weeks. The report argues that Taiwan must be able to fight instantly with everything it needs, so the US must work together with Taiwan to provide the weapons the island needs in peacetime; if the US decides to assist Taiwan in wartime, it must quickly engage in direct combat.

3. The US must use its bases in Japan to fight

Taiwan must strengthen its military and diplomatic relations with Japan. While other allies such as Korea and Australia are important in the broader regional conflicts and may also play a role in defending Taiwan, Japan is the most prominent since US combat aircraft cannot function effectively in wartime without access to its bases in Japan.

4. The US needs to strike the PLA Navy quickly and intensively from outside the Chinese defense circle

The US needs more long-range anti-shiping cruise missiles and bombers that can carry such weapons to reduce its military losses effectively. The US Navy needs smaller ships, and so does the Taiwan Navy.

The report also hints that both the US and Taiwan should be prepared for possible military action by China. Taking the Russia-Ukraine war as an example, the report by the British think tank RUSI points out that the Ukrainian army has long taken the Russian invasion into account, so their war plans to military exercises all take the Russian invasion as an assumption.

The same is true for Taiwan. Although war is not inevitable, the accelerated pace of China's military buildup may increase its chances of success in its ventures. The CCP is indeed increasing its military pressure on Taiwan through gray-zone operations. Taiwan's elevation of its military preparation would at least deter China's ambitions and send a message to the CCP that its military attempts would be significantly more costly and the results unpredictable, thus reducing its intentions to launch military actions.

The simulations suggest the US and Taiwanese forces to improve survivability

The purpose of the simulations is to provide a reference for US policymakers. The report points out that the simulations have different purposes, not just for testing the "highly likely" situations. They also staged "fictional scenarios" to see if the US forces could utilize other available military means to help evaluate relevant weapons capabilities and the structure of military units. The simulations can also put innovative combat concepts to the stress test. RAND senior analyst David Ochmanek also pointed out that even

if a simulation results in a US failure, it does not necessarily reflect the real-world war situation but is intended to assess the vulnerability of the US forces. Even the most pessimistic assumptions do not constitute the most likely outcome. The simulations are designed to educate participants and allow US officers to understand the potential for future conflicts as the US military is used to enjoy the advantage on the battlefield.

The CSIS also advised the US government not only to update and complete its arsenal but also to strengthen combat capabilities and deployment. The report found that the US Air Force is facing a dilemma: being too far from Taiwan won't be effective, but being too close would expose itself to the threat of Chinese missiles. The Anderson Air Force Base in Guam is about 2,800 kilometers from Taiwan, too far for multiple sorties in a short period; it cannot substitute the Japanese bases and does not have fortified hangers and other defensive facilities.

CSIS also believes that the US Navy should use smaller, more stealthy ships, deploy expendable unmanned drones to accompany carrier strike groups and act as decoys, and build more submarines; the US Air Force should maintain its bomber

fleet, such as the B-1, for a possible US-China conflict by 2030, and ensure that all aircraft types are equipped with AGM-158C long-range anti-shiping missiles. If the Air Force fleet can launch long-range weapons outside the war zone, stealthiness will become less relevant, making producing more low-cost fighters possible. Since the next-generation fighters cost hundreds of millions of dollars each, it makes no sense if most of them would be destroyed on the ground.

Many Washington military simulation results have also offered recommendations about the US military deployments in the Pacific. For example, a simulation conducted by the US Air Force in 2021 about the possible conflict in the Taiwan Strait in 2030 concluded that it's necessary to deploy unmanned "loyal wingmen", a large number of small drones, and bombers with long-range weapons to adopt "agile combat employment" (ACE) in order to reinforce remote island airports, spread out fighters deployed, and stockpile supplies in advance. Clint

Hinote, Deputy Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, believes that the next war can only be prevented if it can be won.³

The CSIS report also reiterated that Taiwan should adopt the "Porcupine Strategy" that focuses on agile, concealable weapons and invest more in easily portable weapons such as Javelin and Stinger missiles. In addition, shore-based anti-ship missiles for coastal defense, missile boats, and minelayers are also recommended for their survivability against Chinese air attacks and ability to counter Chinese surface ships effectively. The mobile anti-air missiles are effective against aircraft, and their survivability is also desirable.

The report argues that Taiwan can maintain strong naval and air power to counter China's efforts to challenge Taiwan's sovereignty in peacetime. Still, as the PLA's naval, air, and missile forces keep growing, it's impractical for Taiwan to maintain a military power with a comparable scale. The report also mentions that China may use gray-zone

3. "A US Air Force War Game Shows What the Service Needs to Hold Off — or Win Against — China in 2030," *DefenseNews*, April 12, 2021, <https://www.defensenews.com/training-sim/2021/04/12/a-us-air-force-war-game-shows-what-the-service-needs-to-hold-off-or-win-against-china-in-2030/>.

pressure and other methods; even if it chooses to use force against Taiwan, it could be for a blockade, which is not in the conjecture of CSIS or other think tanks. In response to China's gray zone operations, it is still necessary for Taiwan to have naval and air forces with certain capabilities and to adopt flexible combat doctrines to deal with the disturbance by the Chinese military aircraft and warships.

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