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Military Education and the New 12-month Conscription Program: An Imperative, Not a Choice

Richard Heraud

INTRODUCTION

In January 2024, Taiwan extended compulsory military training to 12 months. At first glance, this should be a much-improved conscription program compared to the previous version.¹ However, and notwithstanding the fact that the first cohort of conscripts is yet to graduate, the new program lacks a key element that has to do with the formation of quality reservists: military education. Asymmetric strategic defense cannot be achieved, when facing superior rival numbers, if these superior numbers are not matched by the superior quality of combat-readiness. As is the case with other countries in the same situation – most notably Israel – Taiwan has no choice but to match the PLA's superior numbers by introducing military education at the lowest level of warfighting combat formation: conscription. In this article, I will engage a series of questions concerning why military education needs to be introduced to the current conscription program if quality development of conscripts and reservists is to be achieved.

I will begin by looking at quality as a problematic. With asymmetric warfare always being a dynamic problem, nothing remains equal, which is to say, quality military training requires the ongoing development of one's strategic response to the challenge faced. I follow with a reflection on Col. John R. Boyd's thinking on

1. The new 12-month conscription program, which sits with the wider Armed Forces framework, is part of the All-Out Defense Mobilization program. See Ministry of National Defence, "Force Structure Adjustment of All-out Defense," *Ministry of National Defence*, January 10, 2023, <https://www.mnd.gov.tw/english/Publish.aspx?p=81181&title=important%20policy&SelectStyle=Force%20Structure%20Adjustment%20of%20All-out%20Defense>.

how people, ideas and technology should be addressed in relation to creating combat-readiness. I then highlight why intrinsic and extrinsic motivations need to be integrative in their relationship. This is followed by a discussion on why conscripts and reservists will not be protected from warfighting during combat. This later reality is then used to highlight the imperative that military education should be introduced to conscription, for reason that the battle fought must be thought at all levels, including by conscripts. Finally, I will conclude by offering some recommendations for how the problem of introducing military education could be approached.

Before beginning, we should highlight that military education here refers to acquisition skills in critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving.² The development of these leadership attributes is not currently part of Taiwan's conscription program, as they are in other militaries in small developed democracies facing much larger rivals.

QUALITY PREPARATION AS A PROBLEMATIC

The discussion begins by considering the fact that Taiwan's Armed Forces will never match the PLA in the numbers game. The only way to gain parity, when outnumbered, is to meet the superior numbers of one's rival with a force of superior quality. If Taiwan can train its conscripts to go toe-to-toe with the PLA, then the ratio could be reduced from 13:1³ to 2:1.⁴ However, this reduction in ratio is only possible if Taiwan's conscripts are trained like no other conscripts on Earth – meaning they are trained to their optimal potential and in a manner that recognises the specific situation of this theatre. Individual contribution in this setting will only be marked by quality if Taiwan's combatants have been trained with an accent on thinking for themselves; a quality that is acquired during military education. Anything less and Taiwan's Armed Forces will not achieve the strategic competitiveness required.⁵

2. Bar-Or, Col. A, and Col. H. Shay, "Military Education of Israel's Junior Officers: From 'A Platoon Commander-General' to A Professional Officer," *Militaire Spectator* 174, no. 3 (2005), 109-155.

3. This ratio refers to the number of active Regulars, excluding the possibility that the PLA is engaged on another front.

4. The Taiwan figure here comprises active Regulars plus Reserve Force components.

5. See Matt Pottinger (ed.), *The Boiling Moat: Urgent Steps to Defend Taiwan* (Stanford: Board of Trustees of Leland Stanford Junior University, 2024).

PEOPLE, IDEAS, TECHNOLOGY

It is important to consider how civil society is valued when committing conscripts to what this serious iteration of military training should look like. John R. Boyd believed that people should come first, then ideas, and then hardware.⁶ While not wanting to undermine the importance of firepower, re the value of military armaments, including those technologies used in the grey zone, prioritizing missile defense does not prepare conscripts and civil society for what happens next if the PLA outguns Taiwan's Armed Forces in any preliminary exchange Taiwan's civil society and military will then spontaneously understand that the hierarchy of importance, in peace, as in war, should always be 'people, ideas, technology' and not the other way around. Only people can create social cohesion, when the military and civil society need to fight together. And this is only possible (1) if conscription is a quality program and (2) if civil society believes, with absolute conviction, in the merit of this program. The onus is on the Ministry of National Defense (MND), as these above objectives are only achieved when the narrative that promotes the new conscription program portrays an experience of absolute relevance and authenticity. If Boyd's hierarchy of principles is reversed so as to privilege technology over ideas and ideas over people', then conscription will not produce the outcomes that society is counting on the MND to provide.

INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATIONS

A third consideration concerns the question of how large Taiwan's Reserve Force should be, and the idea that 'the will to fight' should come from (1) a relevant and authentic conscription program and (2) that this program should add value to the civil careers of conscripts.⁷ The Reserve Force should be able to be drawn from the total sum of conscript graduates. While the Reserve Force might currently be approximately 300,000 of a possible 800,000,⁸ the inability to use more of these 800,000 should not be explained away through use of cognitive dissonance. The

6. Robert Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2024), 382.

7. In an upcoming research project, the author will look at how Military Education increases the confidence of conscripts after they return to the workforce and how this increase in confidence benefits both society and the economy.

8. Huizhong Wu, "Military Reserves, Civil Defense Worry Taiwan as China Looms," *APNEWS*, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-taiwan-china-taipei-0ac81227d1fe37822b8a1d084119e248>.

lack of training facilities; lack of funding for reserve training; lack of weapons and ammunition etc. are not legitimate excuses. These issues, among others, can only be addressed if national defense and security are understood as involving optimal civil and military cooperation exercised in a democratic spirit.

The idea that there are only 300,000 combat-ready reservists is one conditioned by a misjudgement relating to conscript capacity to learn how to learn. (1) If military education adds quality to conscription by adding the relevance and authenticity which conscripts are actually calling for, then the program itself will create willingness to fight across a larger cohort, giving the MND more reservists to draw on. (2) Thinking that ideas come before people must also be upended in relation to what conscripts take away from their conscription experience. We should be looking at how to motivate conscripts, through financial and professional incentivization, so that employers will reward conscript graduates for new knowledge and competencies they bring to civil employment.⁹ Once it becomes understood by young men, upon completing conscription, that they have added professional and commercial value to their career trajectories, then they will become motivated by the way their military and civil experiences weave together, creating a growth in individual and collective confidence. As a result, reserve training camps could be thought of as professional development sessions, where training benefitting both civil and military sectors. Such a development will empower the operability of both conscripts and reservists in the asymmetrical environment.¹⁰

RESPONSIBILITY IN THE THEATRE

The last consideration has to do with the relationship between (1) the leadership of the brigades in the Reserve Force, (2) reservist participation in strategic combat decision-making, and (3) the democratization of participation when using digital platforms. Before proceeding, we should engage with a couple of premises that may easily be overlooked.

Firstly, the demarcation that separates the roles of regulars and reservists – where regulars conduct strikes and reservists defend territory – will not apply once combat has begun. These peacetime semantics become merely theoretical in the theatre of war. The reality is that the Taiwan theatre will see a spontaneous

9. The MND could consider the work done in this area by the Singapore Ministry of Defense.

10. See Matt Pottinger (ed.), *The Boiling Moat: Urgent Steps to Defend Taiwan*.

conflation of roles. Taiwan's densely populated non-mountainous and urban landscape does not provide strategic depth, placing reservists in the action from the beginning. Young Taiwanese who are eligible for conscription surely intuit this, and are therefore logically concerned that their training should be both authentic and relevant.¹¹

Secondly, the Taiwan theatre will not be defined by a recognizable 'front'. With no visible front, reservists will find themselves in exposed positions, despite this not being the original intention and, as such, all reservists will need to be competent combatants in this theatre. If reservists are trained to replace regulars in positions where the responsibility is to strike, then the reservist needs to fulfil the role that the regular was trained to perform. Furthermore, regulars will have no time during combat to train reservists. Reservists will have to learn on their feet – something that is more achievable if conscripts learn how to learn during their military education while doing conscription.

So having made these two simple points, we return to my original consideration. I argue that if people are to be privileged over ideas, and ideas over technology, then the full potential of conscripts needs to be explored and developed during conscription, so as (1) to develop their leadership qualities, (2) to develop situational awareness, problem-solving etc., in order to participate in decision-making, and (3), to develop their understanding of how to collaborate in vertical hierarchies. While these attributes are fundamental to reservists integrating into regular combat units, they are also required if reservists are to be capable of operating in small autonomous units, in street and mountain warfighting.¹²

MILITARY EDUCATION: OPTION OR IMPERATIVE

Military education may be thought of as an option, but the MND has no choice but to introduce it, which is to say that the speed of competent action in the theatre makes military education imperative to the mission. To assume this responsibility now does not mean that program designers need to reinvent the wheel. There are numerous small developed democracies that incorporate military education into their conscription programs, including Singapore, Finland, Sweden, Norway and

11. See Jimmy Chien, "Conversations with the Taiwanese about Taiwan's Defense." *Global Taiwan Brief* 8, no. 20 (November 1 2023): 4-6, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/11/conversations-with-the-taiwanese-about-taiwans-defense/>.

12. David G Brown, "Reconceiving Taiwan's Reserve Forces," *Defense Security Brief* 9, no. 1 (June 22, 2020): 1-8, <https://indsr.org.tw/en/respublicationcon?uid=15&resid=46&pid=1494>.

Singapore; all countries that cannot defend themselves against larger rivals without preparing a superior quality Armed Force.¹³

In rounding out the discussion, I would like to use a couple of examples to highlight the importance of military education and especially in relation to the significance it should have for Taiwan's young democracy. The first example refers to how the value of military education potentiates the quality of Israel's military, while the second refers to the how an advanced understanding of democracy facilitates real-time participation of Ukraine's NCOs in that theatre.

With respect to the first example, the attributes of military education are developed in the Israel Defence Force (IDF) through the development of NCOs during their conscription program.¹⁴ At the outset of this program, more than 75 years ago, the IDF asked itself: "how could such a complex system of expectations [as that which we have outlined above] be applied to a junior officers' training program", when most conscripts are drafted for fairly short periods of compulsory training? Having already understood the hierarchy of importance that people must come before ideas and technology, the IDF understood that "the deployment of officer potential exists at all class levels",¹⁵ meaning officer potential is an a priori, and something that is independent of the soldier's point of entry into the Armed Forces. The IDF understood the limits of privileging 'the idea over people', where only commissioned officers would be capable of making strategic decisions. This led the IDF to conclude that they should potentiate critical thinking skills of conscripts in order to enable their combat capabilities in key actions and involve them in decision-making and leadership crucial to the mission. As such, the IDF understands that authority should be "delegated down to the lowest ranks" such that "the junior officer will be ... [able] to adapt himself to professional thinking from the start of his training"¹⁶ and to "think like a general who has to make critical decisions."¹⁷

13. There are countless examples in the history of warfare when a smaller number of quality soldiers have beaten in battle a larger number of soldiers who have not been trained to think for themselves to the same extent. One could begin with the Battle of Thermopylae, when Spartan warriors beat a much larger Persian army. There are a number of more recent examples, the highlight being the 1967 Six-Day War in the Middle East, when the Israel Defense Force fought an army nearly twice the size. Col. A. Bar-Or, and Col. H. Shay's 2005 article (referenced in this article) provide a detailed discussion on why quality conscripts contribute in the battlefield in a way that enables a smaller force to compete against superior numbers.

14. Bar-Or, Col. A, and Col. H. Shay, "Military Education of Israel's Junior Officers: From 'A Platoon Commander-General' to A Professional Officer," 109-155.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

The second example concerns how the liberal democratic values of “trust, individualism, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit”¹⁸ influence the participation of frontline soldiers in warfighting combat in the Ukrainian theatre. I am talking about mission command¹⁹ and how the use of weapons communication platforms suppose the need for participation of NCOs in real-time decision-making that would have traditionally been the exclusive responsibility of higher ranking officers. Without the participation of NCOs on the frontline, the quality of the decision-making (for example, when targeting rival weapon systems) cannot be ensured, as NCOs may be of the only soldiers able to put eyes on the target. Furthermore, the strategic value of speed will be lost.²⁰ The MND may feel that NCOs formed during conscription will not be qualified to participate in such real-time decision-making but this delegation of responsibility is exactly what Generation Z is asking for when they express their frustration in not having the means to defend the sovereignty of their country.²¹ This is a generation ready for democratization of the decision-making process in the Armed Forces; something that to Generation Z is logical, given their liberal formation and their valuing of “trust, individualism, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit.”²²

CONCLUSION

Change, in the form of extending conscription to 12 months, supposes the employment of a hypothesis that would always need further development. It is preferable to think of the 12-month conscription program as the first iteration of an innovation that will need to be modified through a continuous process of evolution, in accordance with the needs of the moment. Implicit in such a process is the need for a feedback loop that informs, through various sources, including that of US Observers, those aspects of the new program that will need further development.

18. “What is Mission Command?,” *The Economist*, July 25, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/07/25/what-is-mission-command>.

19. Yurii Piota, “Some Lessons from Command and Control (C2) in the Russian-Ukrainian War,” *guo fangqing shite kan* [國防情勢特刊 National Defense Situation Special Issue] 32 (October 2023): 24-37.

20. Robert Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*.

21. See Jimmy Chien, “Conversations with the Taiwanese about Taiwan’s defense,” 4-6.

22. See Richard Heraud, “The New 12-month Conscription Program in Taiwan as A Catalyst for the Transformation of Civil-military Relations: Military Education and Generation Z,” 2023 Taiwan Fellowship Report (English version with Traditional Chinese translation) (Taipei: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024), https://taiwanfellowship.ncl.edu.tw/eng/scholar_detail.aspx?sn=96764.

Such an improvement argued for here, is the need for military education to be made a key element of the current conscription program. This initiative will both optimize the performance of the Reserve Force and add value to the post-conscription professional performance of conscripts. Innovation is not a question of beginning with the already perfect model, but beginning with an imperfect model that can be indefinitely improved based on constant experimentation, with constant testing of the current hypothesis.²³ If the current conscription program is seen as a panacea rather than an ongoing experiment, its value will recede in relation the demands that the changing times require.

In drawing these conclusions, one might ask, by what process should the introduction of military education proceed. Here it is suggested that the following steps might be considered: (1) MND conscription designers should look at the value that military education brings to conscriptions programs in other countries (including, but not limited to, Singapore, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Israel). In particular, it should look at what military education during conscription achieves in terms of combat-readiness, the operability of reservists alongside regulars, and NCO leadership. (2) Work needs to be done on how military education should be integrated into the conscription program. This task is less daunting than might be thought, in that the introduction of military education is a solution, not a problem. This solution is more easily understood if we reverse-engineer our image of what the ideal reservist should look like, with the intention of understanding the training and education that this ideal reservist would require. (3) There will need to be professional development of existing teaching resources. First though, there will need to be an examination of how teaching staff in military education programs in other countries teach military education. The human resources to teach could come from the existing conscription instruction cohort, from civilian teachers who teach political warfare in universities, and from the instructor cohort used in Reserve Force training. (4) Finally, improvements in Reserve Force training will need to take into consideration the learning outcomes of the military education component of the conscription program. The congruence of learning outcomes in compulsory military training and reserve training will potentiate the quality of reservists and their capacity to add to the operability to regular combat warfighting in the Taiwan theatre.

23. See Michael Schrage, *The Innovator's Hypothesis: How Experiments are Worth More than Good Ideas* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014).

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RUSSIAN NEW GENERATION WARFARE OF CONTROLLED CHAOS

Leonid Davydenko

INTRODUCTION

The current era of globalization, the development of information technology and the revolution in management has been marked by substantial changes in the world and society, particularly in economic and military affairs. Military science is looking for new theories and concepts that reflect the new reality: unconventional wars of the 21st century are replacing the traditional armed conflicts of the 20th century.

Russian concept of “asymmetric”, “unconventional”, “non-linear” war is a new approach to the implementation of the theory of hybrid warfare. Having emerged as a counterbalance to the Western idea of hybrid warfare, it has been tested in the confrontation with Ukrainian troops during the annexation of Crimea and in the course of the current war.

The cornerstone of the concept of "New generation warfare" is the widely quoted formulation given by Russian General Valery Gerasimov in the article "The value of science in prediction": "In the 21st century there is a tendency to erase the distinction between the state of war and peace. Wars are not declared, and having started, they do not follow the pattern we are accustomed to".¹ Gerasimov estimates the ratio of non-military to military methods at four to one in new generation warfare, that is, a significant majority of actions in a hybrid war should be carried out without fighting. This concept is deliberately aimed at exploiting the weaknesses of a globalized world.

1. Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science in Prediction," in *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, July 6, 2014, <https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/>.

WAR WITHOUT LIMITS

In wide meaning, the Russian Doctrine of new generation warfare should be considered broadly as a complex phenomenon comprising of four main parts: military doctrine as an act of legislation;² Gerasimov's concept of non-linear war; Russia's foreign policy strategy, adopted in 2023, which identifies the "policy of the collective West" as the main risks to Russia's security,³ and doctrinal studies of military experts on the principles of "New Generation Warfare."⁴ Most often, it is defined by Russian military experts as the complex application of various methods, not only military but also economic, social, and political, to influence the enemy within the framework of interstate confrontation.⁵

In comparison to Russian approach, the NATO definition gives a more specific understanding of hybrid warfare as "broad, complex, adaptive, opportunistic and often integrated combinations of conventional and unconventional methods. These activities could be overt or covert, involving military, paramilitary, organized criminal networks and civilian actors across all elements of power."⁶ The EU explains the hybrid threats as a "mixture of coercive and subversive activity, conventional and nonconventional methods (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological), which can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific objectives while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare."⁷

Russian understanding of hybrid war is close to the P.R.C. concept of "unrestricted" war. High-ranking officers of the People's Liberation Army, Qiao Liang and Wang Xianxu, formulated it as a war "without rules" that "covers the

2. Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, Указ Президента РФ от 25.12.14 г. № 815 [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Order of the Russian President dated December 12, 2014 # 815], <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf>.

3. Ольга Лебедева and Александр Бобров, "Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации [Concept of Russia's Foreign Policy]," *Russian International Affairs Council*, May 2, 2023, <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytiks-and-comments/analytiks/kontseptsiya-vneshney-politiki-rossii-2023-strategiya-mnogopolyarnogo-mira/>.

4. A. Bartosh, "Вопросы теории гибридной войны [Issues of the Theory of Hybrid Warfare]," *Goryachaya liniya- Telecom* (2022), 24.

5. A. Bartosh, "Туман гибридной войны. Неопределенности и риски конфликтов XXI века [The Fog of Hybrid War. Uncertainties and Risks of Conflicts of the XXI Century Moscow: Goryachaya liniya]," *Hotline Telecom* (2022), 43.

6. "NATO Transformation Seminar," *Atlantic Council*, May 4, 2015, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/nato-transformation-seminar/>.

7. "Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats a European Union Response," *EUR-Lex*, April 6, 2016, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016JC0018>.

entire sphere of society: to achieve their goal, the actors of war can use any tools to protect national interests.”⁸ The concept of “unrestricted” war expands warfare to the extreme, which coincides with the Russian approach of weaponizing any possible tool in the course of war, including International Law.⁹ Both sides prefer the “combination method” of preemptive capital accumulation, financial and cyber attack, and an informational campaign designed to “cause the enemy nation to fall into social panic, street riots, and a political crisis.”¹⁰

The provisions of the Russian Military Doctrine have created a theoretical and normative basis to turn vulnerabilities of the globalized world into weapons of modern hybrid warfare. This doctrine has become an umbrella for illegitimate actions, illegal operations, irregular initiatives and other actions that corrupt the world without proper counteraction from the international community.

NEW GENERATION WAR OF CHAOS VS CONVENTIONAL WAR

Russian military doctrine is a product of the Postmodernist era. The philosophy of postmodernism explains that there is no clear division between reality and simulation, and no one appeals to the "real" object anymore with the entire world dominated by artificial models.¹¹ Postmodernist culture becomes "responsible" for virtually all aspects of society, including war. In traditional warfare, information and psychological confrontation accompany military operations, providing the appropriate motivation for fighting and justifying its necessity. In hybrid warfare, the emphasis is shifted to imposing one's own vision of reality and one's own model of world order and interstate relations. This makes it possible to carry out tough (forceful) operations under the cover of attractive slogans, to construct certain simulacra, introducing them into public consciousness to justify the need for further forced actions. War spreads to all spheres of public relations, becoming global, universal, permanent and endless.

8. Go Fenli, “Гибридная война в исследованиях ученых Китайской Народной Республики [Hybrid Warfare in the Studies of Scholars of the People's Republic of China],” *Истина ЦЭМИ РАН* 1, no. 23 (2022), 140-152.

9. Jyun-Yi Lee, “Chinese and Russian Lawfare and the Implications for Legal Resilience,” *Defense Security Brief* 12, no. 2 (2023), 9-18, <https://indsr.org.tw/uploads/enindsr/files/202312/9fe60331-f219-4d0c-87ac-661f9cf052a6.pdf>.

10. Nils Peterson, “The Chinese Communist Party's Theory of Hybrid Warfare,” *ISW*, November 21, 2023, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/chinese-communist-partys-theory-hybrid-warfare>.

11. Даниил Полулях, “Гибридная война сквозь призму постмодернизма и критических теорий [Hybrid war from the per-spective of postmodernism and critical theory],” *Academia*, https://www.academia.edu/12545860/Гибридная_война_сквозь_призму_постмодернизма_и_критических_теорий.

War is no longer an extreme situation and a tear in the fabric of ordinary social existence, it has become a quite stable form of public relations. Under the new conditions, Clausewitz's formula is turned inside out: war is no longer the continuation of politics by other means, but is war waged by other means; politics as one of the instruments, one of the embodiments of war. It is violence, passing through a phase shift from states to quasi-state actors, from the local to the global, from the public to the private, from the organized to the chaotic, and from the real to virtual.

A principal feature of controlled chaos warfare is a paradoxical logic: it is the situation of neither war nor peace. This is due to the fact that, unlike traditional wars, hybrid wars focus on creating a situation of uncertainty and chaos. A state of peace means the establishment of order, the development or restoration of one's ordered world.¹² The chaos of war is defeated by the new order of peace. But hybrid war in the Russian version does not need order - it is always an expanse of uncertainty, of chaos. The principal feature of the hybrid war of chaos is the action of paradoxical logic, when the state of war is at the same time a state of peace. At any given moment, war is not war in its pure form and peace is not peace. This is particularly evident in the Russo-Ukrainian war when, for example, missile strikes are launched across the territory of Ukraine but simultaneously Russian gas and oil are pumped to EU countries through pipelines on Ukrainian-controlled territory.¹³ Russian hybrid war is not declared and therefore neither has a beginning nor an end, while a peace agreement is impossible in the processes of war formation.

CENTER OF GRAVITY IN WAR OF CHAOS

Carl von Clausewitz, a 19th-century Prussian military theorist, is primarily known for his theoretical work on the nature of war. Clausewitz and his military theory are returning to the spotlight with the war in Ukraine. According to Clausewitz, the center of gravity in battle is always found where the mass is concentrated most densely. It presents the most effective target for a blow; furthermore, the heaviest blow is that struck by the center of gravity.¹⁴ The center of gravity of the hybrid war is shifting from its power component to the psychological one, with human

12. Carl Clausewitz, *On War* (Kharkiv: Vivat, 2018), 43.

13. Сергій Барбу, "Газ і нафта: чому Україна не зупиняє російського транзиту? [Gas and Oil: Why does Ukraine Not Stop Russian Transit?]," *LB*, November 16, 2023, https://lb.ua/economics/2023/11/16/584379_gaz_i_nafta_chomu_ukraina_zupinyaie.html.

14. Carl Clausewitz, *On War* (Kharkiv: Vivat, 2018), 233.

consciousness as the battlefield. In the information sphere, there are invisible but fierce battles for the possession of information. The global world space is narrowed by intensive communication and the denser nature of the interactions between peoples contributes to the growth of contradictions between them. To achieve information advantage, Russia has established several so-called “troll factories” that use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram under the guise of Ukrainian identities to criticize the authorities and spread rumors designed to cause panic.¹⁵ This space of social media engenders the formation of a mass consciousness, according to certain ideological clichés, to tune the population to the desired emotional state. Aggressive actions of the hybrid type are always of a disguised nature, and the true purpose of the war in Ukraine was and is the destruction of the state, the seizure of territory,¹⁶ and the extermination of Ukrainian national identity and language.¹⁷

WAR OF CHAOS TECHNOLOGY

Clausewitz defines war as a chameleon, easily changing its appearance with environmental changes.¹⁸ He also mentions the uncertainties of war. Nonetheless, two hundred years ago, there were no vulnerabilities such as nuclear or hydroelectric power plants, telecommunication cables that connect billions, social communication networks, pipeline networks, or space technologies. Hybrid warfare of 21st century is always an expanse of uncertainty and chaos. Russia uses resources that are not weapons as such but can be weapons with a real destructive effect. The special character of the Russo-Ukrainian war is that the factor of chaos has increased substantially. Russia aims to control and moderate, not overcome, chaos – this is the instance of war of “controlled chaos.” Since the level of chaos was far from being advanced everywhere, chaos had to be artificially provoked.

15. Александр Надельнюк, “Как российская «Фабрика троллей» пыталась влиять на повестку дня в Украине. Исследование 755 000 твитов [How the Russian “Troll Factory” Tried to Influence the Agenda in Ukraine. Study of 755,000 Tweets],” VOX UKRAINE, <https://voxukraine.org/longreads/twitter-database/index-ru.html>.

16. Clara Apt, “Russia’s Eliminationist Rhetoric Against Ukraine: A Collection, *Just security*, April 18, 2024, <https://www.justsecurity.org/81789/russias-eliminationist-rhetoric-against-ukraine-a-collection/>.

17. “Stop linguocide Issue 13,” *State Language Protection Commissioner*, June 23, 2023, <https://mova-ombudsman.gov.ua/en/news/stop-linguocide-issue-13>.

18. Carl Clausewitz, *Природа війни [On war]*, 48.

“Controlled chaos” should be regarded not as a strategy but as a technology. One of the chaos instruments is privatization of the war. The traditional two sides of a military conflict are joined by other actors – criminal gangs and other armed formations of an irregular type. Acting independently, these formations actively contribute to the additional escalation of chaos and confusion and lead to unjustified casualties among civilians and other war victims. Such formations are often called "warriors" rather than soldiers.¹⁹ The difference between “warriors” and soldiers lies in their lifestyle and activities. “Warriors” are characterized by disregard for the oath, the transition from one “master” to another, the habit of cruelty and the complete neglect of civil order. Unlike soldiers, “warriors” follow no rules other than their own; they do not obey any orders they do not like. It was reported that over 100,000 Russian murderers, looters, and rapists were released from Russian prisons in exchange for participating in the war as “warriors” as members of the so-called “Wagner” private military company.²⁰ “Wagner” played a key role in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as in Russian operations in Syria and African countries, including Libya and Mali. However, as the legal status of private military companies is not defined in Russian law, their involvement in international armed conflict using all kinds of armament, except air forces, should be regarded as privatization of war by illegal warriors.²¹ The Wagner “warriors” have been accused of various crimes, including killing and torturing Ukrainian citizens. The mercenary organization was proscribed as a terrorist organization by the UK government on September 15, 2023.²² Eight months prior, the U.S. Department of Treasury sanctioned the Wagner Group as a transnational criminal organization on January 26, 2023.²³

19. Jake Russell, “Asymmetric Warfare - the New Face of Warfare in the 21st Century,” in David Potts, ed., *The Big Issue: Command and Combat in the Information Age* (CCRP, February 2003), 243-266, http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Potts_Big_Issue.pdf.

20. Isabel van Brugen, “Exclusive: Russia Has Recruited Over 100,000 Convicts Since Ukraine War Began,” *Newsweek*, December 5, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-recruited-prisoners-convicts-ukraine-war-1849292>.

21. “Wagner's Legal Status Needs Reviewing, Kremlin Says,” *Reuters*, July 14, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/kremlin-says-wagners-legal-status-needs-be-considered-2023-07-14/>.

22. “Wagner Group Proscribed,” *GOV.UK*, September 15, 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/wagner-group-proscribed#:~:text=This%20order%20comes%20into%20force,in%20place%20of%20a%20fine>.

23. “Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization,” *U.S. Department of the Treasury*, January 26, 2023, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1220>.

Despite old history's concept of false flag operations, they still have widely used in Russo-Ukrainian war. Russians spread disinformation in cynical attempts to blame Ukraine for their own war crimes. In February 2022, they committed several acts of provocation in occupied Eastern Ukraine to create a pretext to invade Ukraine;²⁴ later Russian state media falsely accused Ukraine, the United States, and NATO of plotting a chemical or radiological attack on Russia or Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory.²⁵

As the current war has shown, in the kinetic phase Russia is waging warfare according to classical standards of the last century, responding to network-centric challenges in a reactive and defensive manner. The Russian military reflects a historic Russian phobia toward decentralized decision making. Military organization in Russia is a self-limited centralized hierarchical system based on subordination to directives from above. In the Russian army, the decision-making instances are separated from executors by numerous formal stages.²⁶ When Russia's military leadership realized that Russian forces were losing in mobile warfare, they demonstrated their preference for more conventional methods. Russian infantry tactics shifted from trying to deploy separate "tactically independent" Battalion Tactical Groups as combined arms units of action to large units, such as divisions and armies. Their strategy now is frontal attack warfare, for which minimal training is necessary.

Unable to wage modern warfare, Russia, in the course of its invasion, has extensively used the entire arsenal of weapons available, ignoring the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law. Missile strikes on power plants, water supply, and heating systems in peaceful cities and villages are intended to return society to the dark ages.²⁷ The goal is to force civilians into an atmosphere of total fear to put pressure on the political authorities in Ukraine to stop resistance.

24. Ярослава Вольвач, "How Russian Proxy Forces are Attempting to Provoke the Ukrainian Army and are Lying about a New Ukrainian Offensive," *The New Voice of Ukraine*, February 18, 2022, <https://english.nv.ua/nation/how-russian-proxies-are-attempting-to-provoke-the-ukrainian-army-lying-about-a-ukrainian-offensive-50218033.html>.

25. Katherine Lawlor and Katheryna Stepanenko, "Warning Update: Russia May Conduct a Chemical or Radiological False-Flag Attack as a Pretext for Greater Aggression against Ukraine," *Institute for the Study of War*, March 9, 2022, <https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Radiological%20Chemical%20False%20Flag%20Warning.pdf>.

26. Mikhael Kofman and Rob Lee, "Not Built for Purpose: The Russian Military's Ill-failed Force Design," *War on the Rocks*, June 2, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/06/not-built-for-purpose-the-russian-militarys-ill-fated-force-design/>.

27. "Ukraine: Russian attacks on critical energy infrastructure amount to war crimes," *Amnesty International*, October 20, 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/ukraine-russian-attacks-on-critical-energy-infrastructure-amount-to-war-crimes/>.

According to UN statistics, in the course of the war, European countries have received and sheltered almost 6 million Ukrainians.²⁸ Refugees have become a factor in the domestic political life in Central European EU countries. Kremlin propaganda has made discrediting Ukrainian refugees in the EU one of the main areas of its external information operation track since the beginning of the full-scale invasion using European pro-Russian media activists, experts, and individual political forces.²⁹

After failing to occupy Ukraine and capture Kyiv in three days, the Russian leadership began to look for new strategies to create chaos. One of these was to exploit the dependence of European countries on Russian energy resources. Unlike Russian oil and coal, natural gas has been exempted from any formal sanctions; however, Russia stopped supplying gas to the EU through the Nord Stream pipeline to hurt the bloc for its overwhelming support for Ukraine.³⁰ Rapid reduction of supplies was aimed at freezing the EU in the winter of 2022/2023 but failed.

Nuclear blackmail and the threat to unleash World War III was successfully used by Russia a long time ago. Russia received a very mild international reaction to the annexation of Crimea and the unleashing of war in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Since the beginning of the war, Russian officials have voiced more than fifty nuclear “warnings.”³¹ Moscow irresponsibly brandished the threat of nuclear fire to try to force Ukraine to capitulate to its demands and dissuade NATO countries from aiding Kyiv.³² Putin likes to repeat successful practices, and, in the current conflict, the Russian approach has not changed: if conventional forces cannot win it, the threat of nuclear weapons can be used.

28. “United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees / Refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe,” *Operational Data Portal*, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

29. Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group, “Ukrainian Refugees in Europe: A Target of Russian Propaganda,” *Ukraine Crisis Media Center*, December 30, 2023. <https://uacrisis.org/en/ukrayinski-bizhentsi-v-yes-u-fokusi-rosijskoyi-propagandy>.

30. Ashutosh Pandey, “EU Gas supply: When Russia Went into Self-destruct Mode,” *DW*, August 31, 2023, <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-gas-russia-nord-stream-crisis/a-66668256>.

31. Читати українською, “Сколько раз в месяц Медведев угрожает ядерным оружием – исследование [How Many Times A Month Medvedev Threatens Nuclear Weapons - Study],” *Слово і Діло*, July 5, 2023, <https://ru.slovoidilo.ua/2023/07/05/infografika/obshhestvo/skolko-raz-mesyacz-medvedev-ugrozhaet-yadernym-oruzhiem-issledovanie>.

32. Pierre Goldschmidt, “Why is the UN Secretary-general So Worried about Gaza but not Ukraine?,” *Atlantic Council*, January 4, 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/why-is-the-un-secretary-general-so-worried-about-gaza-but-not-ukraine/>.

CONCLUSION

Hybrid (non-linear) war is the main idea of doctrine, but it is a broad, “frame” concept. The Russian version of war may be called a hybrid war of controlled chaos. This term is not strictly an academic or professional but rather a layman’s term, emphasizing the characteristic essence of a new type of war – creation of global chaos. Russian Military Doctrine, in its actual, not declared, content is not about military technology – it is a collection of covert special operations. Ironically, the biggest war in Europe after WWII is officially called in Russia a “special military operation,” not war.

The war against Ukraine has shown that Russia failed to implement new warfare technologies on the battlefield and used many controlled chaos operations against Ukraine and the world. However, the chaos tools cease to work when the target begins to understand the degree of threat, the goals, and the mechanism of such threats. The war has shown that chaos technologies also have vulnerabilities. They are highly dependent on initial conditions: any minor change in the initial state leads to disproportionately divergent negative consequences, and chaos becomes a boomerang. In June 2023, the “Wagner” rebellion of thousands of pardoned criminals seriously affected the stability of Putin’s regime. In this war, Ukrainians’ ability to fight was clearly underestimated; on the other hand, Russia’s own ability to perform a complex military operation was overestimated.

However, the danger the doctrine still poses should not be underestimated. Instead of seeking constructive ways to resolve crises as a nuclear-armed country and permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia, under the threat of destruction, is only picking at the painful boils of the international community. Here lies the true power of hybrid warfare: resisting an adversary you cannot predict is very difficult. Russian hybrid war has shown how easily vulnerabilities can be transformed into weapons of hybrid warfare. In this war everything can be a weapon: civil population, social media, corrupt political elite, refugees, criminals, natural gas, nuclear blackmail.

Each historical period is pregnant with its own military theory. Russian “New Generation Warfare” provides no ethical or legal constraints. The extant regulatory framework of International Law, based on 20th-century military theories, cannot protect global security. Privatizing war and other hybrid threats cannot ensure International Humanitarian Law principles, which only provide binding obligations for state actors. Therefore, the international community should develop common approaches and innovative international principles and norms to address these new hybrid challenges.

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WHY DOES THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KINMEN-XIAMEN BRIDGE THREATEN TAIWAN'S SECURITY?

Kuan-chen Lee and Shan-son Kung

INTRODUCTION

Recently, an unfortunate incident occurred in the waters near Kinmen, where a Taiwan Coast Guard vessel collided with a mainland fishing boat, resulting in the tragic death of two mainland fishermen. This incident garnered attention and sparked tensions across the Taiwan Strait, underscoring the significance of Kinmen as a pivotal point for cross-Strait relations and maritime disputes. In fact, Kinmen, once a frontline of Taiwan, is coveted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as a model for cross-strait integration and peaceful reunification. On September 12, 2023, the State Council of China issued 21 measures, which included plans for the construction of a bridge connecting Kinmen and Xiamen, as part of efforts to establish Fujian Province as a demonstration zone for integrated development across the Taiwan Strait.¹ Aligning with central government policy, Fujian Provincial Government confirmed that construction had commenced on the Xiamen side of the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge.² There are growing concerns that Kinmen

1. "China to Set Up Cross-Strait Integrated Development Demonstration Zone," The State Council of The People's Republic of China, September 12, 2023, https://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202309/12/content_WS65004bc9c6d0868f4e8df605.html.

2. "fu jian tui dong yu jin ma 'xiao si tong ' lu pu sha jin da qiao dong gong xin jin zhan" [福建推動與金馬「小四通」陸曝廈金大橋動工新進展 Fujian Province Promotes 'Mini Four Links' with Kinmen and Matsuo; Mainland Reveals New Progress in the Commencement of Construction of Xiamen-Kinmen Bridge], *lian he xin wen wang* [聯合新聞網 UDN news], November 29, 2023, <https://udn.com/news/story/7332/7607660>.

could potentially become the next Crimea.³ By analyzing Kinmen's strategic significance and security concerns, this article argues that the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge may have a serious negative impact on Taiwan's national security. Once constructed, the bridge could be the final straw in pushing Kinmen towards a Crimean-style scenario.

THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF KINMEN

Kinmen is located on the western side of the Taiwan Strait and has served as a frontline for military standoff between the two sides since the division of political regimes in 1949. It has witnessed numerous military conflicts, including the Battle of Gunningtou, the Battle of Dadan Island, the August 23 Artillery Bombardment, and others. From a historical perspective, Kinmen's strategic significance in cross-strait military affairs is undeniable. Despite adjustments to Kinmen's military value in accordance with the evolution of Taiwan's defense posture—from a peak of 100,000 troops to the current presence of 3,000 troops—Kinmen retains three key strategic significances:

1. Kinmen Holds Strategic Significance in Terms of Morale and Spirit

Situated as a frontline island in the Taiwan Strait, Kinmen has long played a crucial role, particularly in the face of political and military pressures from across the strait. While Kinmen itself may not be at the core of Taiwan's defense, its geographical location and historical significance in countering external threats make it a symbol of crucial importance for the morale for the Taiwanese people.

During the mid-20th century, Kinmen experienced tense cross-strait relations and the threat of war, notably during the Kinmen Artillery Bombardment from the 1950s to the 1970s. Despite facing formidable adversaries and daunting challenges, Kinmen's residents demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination in defending their land and beliefs.⁴

3. Amber Lin, "Will Kinmen, Taiwan's Frontline, Become the Next Crimea?" *The Commonwealth Magazine*, December 17, 2019, <https://english.cw.com.tw/article/article.action?id=2612>.

4. Maochun Miles Yu, "The Battle of Quemoy: The Amphibious Assault That Held the Postwar Military Balance in the Taiwan Strait," *Naval War College Review* 69, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 91-107.

This spirit served as an example for the people of Taiwan during difficult times and continues to influence Taiwan's defense and societal development.

Furthermore, Kinmen's strategic importance extends beyond territorial integrity. It serves as a symbol of Taiwan's commitment to defending its sovereignty and protecting its people. The historical significance of Kinmen as a bastion of resilience against external threats cannot be understated. Therefore, Kinmen is not just a geographical location but a symbol representing the steadfast belief of the Taiwanese people in freedom and democracy, as well as their resilient will to resist external threats. In this regard, the strategic significance of Kinmen extends far beyond its geographical location and is more prominently manifested in its morale and spiritual symbolism.

2. Kinmen, As the “Eye of the Frontline,” Helps with Early Warning

Kinmen's proximity to the coastal areas of Fujian Province enables it to serve as a critical observation point for monitoring activities across the Taiwan Strait. Its strategic geographical position allows for early detection of potential threats or incursions from Mainland China. The island's surveillance capabilities, coupled with its advanced communication infrastructure, provide valuable intelligence to Taiwan's defense forces.

Moreover, the presence of vigilant surveillance and early warning systems in Kinmen can act as a deterrent against potential aggressions or provocations from across the strait. The knowledge that any hostile action would be swiftly detected and met with a robust response serves to enhance Taiwan's security and deter escalation of tensions. As Taiwan continues to navigate complex geopolitical dynamics, Kinmen remains a crucial asset in safeguarding Taiwan's security interests.

3. Kinmen Raises the Cost of PLA Military Actions against Taiwan

If the People's Liberation Army (PLA) were to invade Taiwan, it could opt for a gradual strategy by first occupying outlying islands before advancing toward Taiwan's main island. Alternatively, to avoid international intervention, it might choose a swift and decisive approach by bypassing the outlying

islands and directly targeting Taiwan's main island.⁵ However, regardless of the approach taken, Kinmen has the capability to act as a restraining force.

In the envisioned scenario where the PLA initiates an attack on Taiwan's outlying islands, Kinmen assumes a crucial role as an independent defender. By employing a strategy of independent defense, Kinmen can effectively delay the PLA's efforts to seize control of the outlying islands. This delay is significant as it provides Taiwan with essential time to bolster its defenses, mobilize resources, and coordinate response measures.

In the second scenario, where the PLA launches an amphibious invasion of Taiwan's main island, Kinmen assumes a pivotal role as a strategic deterrent and hindrance to enemy advance. For instance, as the PLA attempts to consolidate its forces and launch the cross-sea assault, Kinmen's forces can disrupt enemy logistics, delay troop movements, and complicate the PLA's operational timeline. Thus, Kinmen's presence looms as a significant obstacle, causing the enemy forces to proceed with caution at every stage of their operation.

THE IMPACT OF BUILDING THE KINMEN-XIAMEN BRIDGE ON TAIWAN'S DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Based on the strategic importance of Kinmen mentioned above, the construction of the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge is inferred to have the following negative impacts on Taiwan's national security.

1. Undermining the Morale of Both Military and Civilians

The "21 Measures" from China's State Council primarily target Kinmen and Matsu regions. They support integration between Xiamen and Kinmen, provide Kinmen residents with benefits like those in Xiamen, establish a "one-

5. The two possible scenarios were mentioned in Pentagon's 2023 report on China's military power. Please see "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023," Department of Defense (October 19, 2023), 140-142, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/19/2003323409/-1/-1/1/2023-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF>. For other discussions please refer to Frederik Kelter, "Taiwan's Outlying Islands Are at Risk: Chinese Domestic Instability Could Encourage the CCP to Attack the Taiwanese Archipelagos of Kinmen and Matsu," *Foreign Policy*, January 16, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/16/taiwan-kinmen-matsu-outlying-islands-china-war-risk/>.

city lifestyle circle” between Xiamen and Kinmen, and expedite connectivity projects like electricity, gas, bridges, and a shared new airport. Ironically, just a day before the document was issued (September 11), the PLA conducted extensive maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait, involving 20 Chinese vessels operating in the vicinity. The PLA aircraft carrier “Shandong” sailed eastward through the Bashi Channel into the Western Pacific, approximately 60 nautical miles from Taiwan’s Eluanbi on its southern tip.

In fact, the preferential measures offered by the CCP to Taiwan’s outlying islands are part of its strategy of united front tactics, aiming to impose pressure on Taiwan through a combination of political, military, economic, psychological, and social approaches, coercing Taiwan into unification. The construction of the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge represents the first phase of this strategy, aimed at blurring the lines between friend and foe and weakening the morale of both military and civilian populations to facilitate peaceful unification. While the construction of the bridge does not necessarily imply that people will accept unification, it may still increase Kinmen residents’ reliance on Fujian, potentially diminishing their resistance to China’s influence and fostering a stronger sense of Chinese identity.

2. Opening a Convenient Gateway for Special Operations

Despite Kinmen’s proximity to Xiamen, the two areas remain physically separated by water, forming a natural barrier. In other words, if the PLA were to conduct special operations targeting key military facilities in Kinmen, they would need to cross the sea using vehicles, thereby increasing the difficulty and risk of the operation. However, once the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge is completed, the natural barrier will disappear, opening a convenient gateway for PLA special operations. For example, PLA special operations personnel can disguise themselves in civilian vehicles, infiltrating Kinmen in large groups on land transportation routes. Due to the convenience of land transportation, it is easier to transport cutters, weapons, and other equipment to Kinmen Island. With the assistance of infiltrated agents, launching special operations on Kinmen becomes more feasible.

The incident of Hamas attacks on Israel further highlights the vulnerability caused by lack of natural barriers. Due to the lack of natural barriers, Hamas militants easily seized control of poorly defended checkpoints. They used bulldozers or common tools to dismantle barbed wire fences and proceeded

to abduct hostages deep within Israeli territory.⁶ Therefore, from a security standpoint, connecting Kinmen and Xiamen via the bridge does not enhance safety; instead, it provides adversaries with more diverse and flexible means of attack, while simultaneously lowering costs and risks.

3. Turning Kinmen into a forward base for the PLA's invasion of Taiwan

During the operational phase, the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge can also facilitate rapid movement of troops and armored vehicles. Once control is seized by the other side, it will result in swifter deployment of forces from the adversary.

A notable example is the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. Russian President Putin led the construction of the Crimean Bridge, which links the Crimean Peninsula with Russia. Completed in 2019, the bridge encompasses both road and rail infrastructure. Following the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2022, the Crimean Bridge emerged as a crucial supply route for Russian military operations. It was targeted and subjected to attacks resulting in explosions by Ukrainian forces in both October 2022 and July 2023.⁷

The example of the Crimean Bridge indicates that, should a conflict erupt in the Taiwan Strait, the completed Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge would serve as a vital logistical supply route for the PLA. Moreover, Kinmen's ports and airport may be at risk of becoming forward bases for the PLA's assault on Taiwan. In other words, Kinmen aspires to avoid becoming a battleground by constructing the bridge. However, if the CCP were to invade Taiwan, the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge, as an existing transportation conduit, might ironically increase the likelihood of Kinmen becoming a forward base.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

By analyzing Kinmen's strategic importance and the potential usage of the bridge during wartime, this article contends that the construction of the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge will not only undermine the morale and spirit of

6. Sean Seddon and Daniele Palumbo, "How Hamas Staged Israel Lightning Assault No-one Thought Possible," *BBC*, October 8, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67046750>.

7. "Crimea Bridge Attack: What Happened, Why is the Bridge Important?" *Aljazeera*, July 17, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/17/crimea-bridge-attack-what-happened-why-is-the-bridge-important>.

Taiwanese society but also pose a significant threat to the security of both Kinmen and the main island of Taiwan. Taiwanese government and society should carefully assess the risks of the Kinmen-Xiamen Bridge from the perspective of national defense. They should also offer professional opinions on the security concerns related to the bridge in a public referendum, allowing the public to consider these factors when making decisions.

However, given the close ties between Kinmen and Xiamen, it's essential to recognize and address the potential for increased demands and interactions between the two places. To effectively manage these growing demands, the government could propose the establishment of a comprehensive system aimed at facilitating cooperation, communication, and coordination. We propose the following recommendations for policymakers to consider:

1. Bilateral Coordination Mechanism

The government could create a formal bilateral coordination mechanism between Kinmen and Xiamen authorities. This mechanism would serve as a platform for regular dialogue and collaboration on various issues, including transportation, trade, tourism, and cultural exchange. Through structured meetings and working groups, officials from both sides could discuss common challenges, share information, and coordinate policy responses.

2. Cross-Strait Communication Channels

Establishing effective communication channels between Kinmen and Xiamen residents could facilitate better understanding and cooperation between the two communities. This could involve initiatives such as cultural exchange programs, youth exchanges, and academic collaborations. By fostering people-to-people connections and promoting cultural exchange, Kinmen and Xiamen can build trust and goodwill, laying the foundation for closer cooperation in the future.

3. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Inevitably, conflicts or disputes may arise between Kinmen and Xiamen due to increased interactions. To address these issues, the government could set up conflict resolution mechanisms to facilitate peaceful resolution through

dialogue and negotiation. This could involve establishing arbitration panels, mediation services, or community-based dispute resolution processes to address grievances and maintain harmony between the two sides.

4. Preventing CCP Propaganda

Finally, if the bridge were to be built, the Taiwanese government must prevent it from becoming a platform for CCP pro-unification propaganda. The government could highlight the bridge as an achievement of Taiwan, aimed at enhancing cross-Strait peace and promoting cooperation. This could involve proactive communication strategies to emphasize Taiwan's commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity across the strait in framing the bridge's construction. By controlling the narrative surrounding the significance of the bridge, Taiwan can mitigate the risk of it being exploited for political purposes by external actors, thus maintaining its sovereignty and autonomy in cross-Strait relations.

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