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SINGAPORE AND BIDEN'S INDO-PACIFIC POLICY
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By Bilveer Singh

INTRODUCTION

By definition, the room for maneuver for small states in international relations is immensely constrained. This is especially for Singapore, with a total land area of slightly more than 700 square kilometers and hemmed in between Malaysia to the north and Indonesia to the south, and lying at the southern end of the strategically important Straits of Malacca. Mainly due to these geo-political and geo-strategic constraints, worsened by its near-total dependence on international trade and resources, and being essentially a Chinese state in a 'Malay Sea', Singapore has historically been extremely sensitive to postures and policies of the great powers, both in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.¹ This was also evident from Singapore's response to Donald Trump's Indo-Pacific policy that was enunciated in November 2017 and since then, to Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific policy.

SINGAPORE AND TRUMP'S INDO PACIFIC POLICY

Singapore's response to Trump's Indo-Pacific policy was essentially determined by the fact that the republic had close ties with both the United States and China, and did not want to be placed in a position to choose sides to support or oppose one or the other. More fundamentally, since its inception as a sovereign state in August 1965, the

¹ See Lee Kuan Yew, "Basis of Singapore's Foreign Policy", The Mirror (Singapore), 14+ August 1965; Lee Hsien Loong, "Security Options for Small States", The Straits Times (Singapore), 6 November 1984; Obaid Ul Haq, "Foreign Policy", Jon S.T. Quah, Chan Heng Chee and Seah Chee Meow (eds.), Government and Politics of Singapore, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 280-285; G.G. Thompson, "Formative Factors in Shaping Singapore's Foreign Policy", in Singapore's International Relations, Radio Talks, Series 7, (Singapore: Lembaga Gerakan Pelajaran Dewasa, 1966), p.80; Rahim Ishak, "Foreign Policy Based on Sound Premises", The Mirror, 23 December 1968; S Dhanabalan, "Foreign Policy: Opportunities in the Margin of Possibilities", in Issues Facing Singapore in the Eighties, (Singapore: Information Division, Ministry of Culture, 1982), pp.1-28; Bilveer Singh, Singapore: Foreign Policy Imperatives of a Small State, (Singapore: Centre for Advanced Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, 1988; Bilveer Singh, The vulnerability of small states revisited: a study of Singapore's post-cold war foreign policy, (Jogjakarta, Indonesia: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1999).

fundamental *mantra* that has driven Singapore's foreign policy is the desire to ensure a balance of power in Southeast Asia and to promote the existence of as many great powers in the region. It is essentially to ensure that no single great power or a coalition of great powers dominate the region.

This has been consistently enunciated by various official pronouncements. In May 1975, Singapore's foreign minister, S. Rajaratnam stated that that "my Government believes that for us small countries, the more the big powers are around in this area [Southeast Asia] the better for us because our options are bigger".² On 28 June 1976, Rajaratnam stated, "we in Singapore accept the fact of great powers and the fact of great powers' rivalry in Southeast Asia".³

Adopting a 'balance of power' foreign policy, namely, trying to balance the interests of great powers in the region, Mr. Rahim Ishak, the Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs stated: "The best way to ensure that no single power or coalition of powers exercise hegemony over Southeast Asia is to have a multiplicity of external great powers involved in the region, balancing each other. With such a state of affairs there are better chances for a power equilibrium to emerge, allowing small states in Southeast Asia greater room for maneuver".4

Similarly, Rajaratnam reiterated in June 1976 "we accept the existence of great powers and their rivalries as an immutable fact of international life". ⁵ Using the metaphor of great powers as 'suns', he argued that "when there is a multiplicity of suns, the gravitational pulls of each is not only weakened but also by a judicious use of the pulls and counter-pulls of gravitational forces, the minor planets have greater freedom of navigation". ⁶

Hence, the *raison d'etre* of Singapore's foreign policy is to ensure, as many great powers are present in Southeast Asia and to resist any policy by any great power to gain dominance in the region. Equally pertinent, Singapore has resisted attempts by great powers to compel Singapore to take sides on issues, whether they are in the Southeast Asian region or beyond.

Prior to the onset of the Biden administration, in his annual National Day Rally, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong stated that the republic would resolutely adhere to its policy of maintaining good ties with both the US and China, especially since both powers were in conflict over an array of issues. The situation was particularly critical for Singapore, as over and above its close all-round ties with both great powers,

² The Straits Times (Singapore), 14 May 1975.

³ The Mirror (Singapore), Vol. 12, No. 28, 12 July 1976, p.1.

⁴ The Mirror, Vol. 9, No. 17, 23 April 1973, p.1.

⁵ Cited in Lee Khoon Choy, "Foreign Policy", in C.V. Devan Nair, (ed.), Socialism that Works...The Singapore Way, (Singapore: Federal Publishers, 1976), p.110.

⁶ Cited in Lee Khoon Choy, "Foreign Policy", p. 110.

it is also because Singapore is a Chinese-majority state and where Singapore's actions and words can be easily misunderstood and misinterpreted.⁷

In March 2021, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong reiterated the republic's long-standing foreign policy posture when he said that it will not be possible for Singapore to choose between the United States and China given the extensive ties Singapore has with both and that this was a position that Singapore was not alone: ""I do not think we are the only ones in this boat".8

Based on the above-mentioned foreign policy imperatives, it is easy to explain Singapore's discomfort and lack of support for Trump's Indo-Pacific concept and strategy. Trump first presented his vision of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' in November 2017. Trump's policy was aimed at replacing Obama's 'Pivot in Asia' policy even though as a conceptual framework it has been around for sometimes, including Hilary Clinton referring to it to cover the geo-political and geo-economic spaces from the Indian to the Pacific Ocean with the aim of strengthening the US's role in the region. Japan's prime minister Shinto Abe had also championed the concept in the past with other states such as India and Australia, which border the Indian and Pacific Oceans, supporting the concept even though for different reasons and in reality, the concept also meant different things to different states.

Countries such as China and Russia openly began criticizing Trump's Indo-Pacific policy as this was seen as a strategy to counter and contain the expansion of influence of great powers that were seen as rivals of the US. In this regard, increasingly Trump's policies came to be seen as a new American chapter in containing China and its fast expanding political, diplomatic, economic and even military influence in the region. For some, it was an American-manufactured counter to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that was helping to expand Chinese tentacles in the Indian and Pacific region through the continents of Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America. In short, Trump's Indo-Pacific concept came to be seen as an attempt to locate American interest, influence and position in the center of all things with supporters of Washington expected to 'tow' the line, especially in countering China.

The fact that Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy was premised on principles of commonality of political, economic, military and even ideological interest; it came to be seen as the precursor of a "New Cold War" in the region. This largely explained the discomfort of many states towards the concept, especially in Southeast Asia. The fact that the Trump administration championed the Quad, which involved the US, Japan, India and Australia, states which can be viewed as some form of hard and soft allies of

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⁷ Dewey Sim, "Singapore will continue not to take sides between US and China, says PM Lee Hsien Loong", South China Morning Post, 18 August 2019.

⁸ See Tham Yuen-C, "Not possible for S'pore, many countries, to choose between US and China, PM Lee tells BBC", The Straits Times, 14 March 2021.

the US, made it difficult for others to join the Trump-led Indo-Pacific bandwagon. The basic idea of American centrality in the new concept was something many found unpalatable in the new geo-political environment, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

Singapore's objections to the Trump-initiated Indo-Pacific policy was based on a number of considerations. First, Singapore, historically and from a time-tested policy and ideological position, did not want to take sides in any great power conflict. Second, as the Trump policy was seen as being anti-China and aimed at containing China, Singapore had no wish to be part of this policy. Many saw Trump's approach as being aimed at scuttling China's BRI and Singapore had no reason to back Washington as it saw many benefits in the Chinese initiative. Third, Singapore had abiding political, economic and even close social-cultural ties with China and was hence, in no position to adopt any kind of policy that was aimed at undermining and opposing China.

Finally, Singapore's non-acceptance of Trump's Indo-Pacific policy was also a direct result of ASEAN's opposition to the policy and ASEAN's unwillingness to join in a 'united front' to oppose China. ASEAN countries also feared that the 10-member organization would lose its 'centrality' in the region if it supported the American-minted Indo-Pacific concept that was essentially a call to arms against China. Singapore and its ASEAN partners had championed inclusive multilateralism and there was concern that Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy could force ASEAN member-states to side either China or the US and hence, divide the region once more as in the past.

ASEAN also prided itself as a multilateral forum that provided a framework for all key stakeholders to be involved in the region and it feared that the Trump's Indo-Pacific approach could hurt ASEAN and its future. In this regard, in June 2019, ASEAN member-states came up with their own version of an Indo-Pacific strategy called "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific" which emphasized the importance of 'ASEAN Centrality' in the light of geopolitical shifts and US-China competition, and the need to operate within existing ASEAN-led multilateral mechanisms and not to create new ones.⁹

Singapore's opposition to the Trump-led Indo-Pacific policy was openly enunciated in May 2018 by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore's foreign minister. Vivian argued that ASEAN must remain central to the regional security architecture, with the belief in the centrality of multilateralism and the rule of law. He made it clear that Trump's free and open Indo-Pacific structure was seen as not just a competitor to ASEAN but also an instrument to counter China's expansion. Vivian also stated that "if big powers are going to insist on settling things through bilateral

⁹ Premesha Saha, "ASEAN's Indo-Pacific outlook: An analysis", Raisina Debates (Observer Research Foundation), 28 June 2019. See https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/aseans-indo-pacific-outlook-an-analysis-52542/

negotiations, on what basis are you going to settle the outcome? Might is right? We want a rules-based multilateral system". 10

This was in part a reference to Trump's preference for bilateral deals, especially in trade over multilateral ones. Hence, while Singapore had close and deep political, economic, security and social-cultural ties with both the US and China, when it came to Trump's Indo-Pacific policy, it preferred to walk a tight rope of working closely with both great powers in the name of championing Singapore's interests that valued close ties with both extraneous powers.¹¹

SINGAPORE AND BIDEN'S INDO-PACIFIC POLICY

With Biden's accession to the White House in January 2021, many of Trump's policies were reversed but one area where this did not take place was with regard to the Indo-Pacific policy. Interestingly, during his presidential campaign and even Democratic Party platform, the term 'Indo-Pacific' was missing and Biden preferred to use the older term, 'Asia-Pacific'. Since January 2021, this has changed with Biden adopting a robust Indo-Pacific policy.

The question then is - since Singapore's discomfort with Trump's Indo-Pacific was clearly enunciated based on the view that it was seen as being driven by Washington's anti-China policy, partly aimed at undermining the BRI, the need to organize the Asia-Pacific region in a new anti-China united front and where the US intended to place its political, economic, strategic, military and even ideological imprimatur in the region, and expected other states to follow suit - what has changed under Biden that Singapore would look anew at the Indo-Pacific policy of the new American administration.

May be one area where Singapore may be concessionary towards Biden would be the more conciliatory tone of Biden towards the Asian region even though America-first policies were now to be achieved through cooperation with friends and allies. While Biden continues to give premium to the Indo-Pacific region, he has stressed that his approach is somewhat different from Trump. He believes in 'competitive co-existence' with its rivals, including China and Russia. This was clearly laid out in the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* released in March 2021. For Biden, the Indo-Pacific remains the 'front and center' of US's diplomacy. This was evident in Biden's first major multilateral summit with Quad, with the leaders of India, Japan and South Korea. The US's Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State made their first foreign visits to India, Japan and South Korea even though there was also a frosty meeting with Chinese leaders in Alaska in March 2021. Following the 1 February 2021 coup in Myanmar,

¹⁰ Charrisa Yong, "Singapore will not join Indo-Pacific bloc for now: Vivian", The Straits Times, 15 May 2018.

Masayuki Yuda, "ASEAN seeks to steer middle path between US and China", Nikkei Asia, 23 June 2019; William Choong, 'How Long Can Singapore Walk the Tightrope between the U.S. and China?", The Strategist (Australian Strategic Policy Institute), 24 January 2020.

Washington has also placed sanctions on the country, just as it has on some Chinese officials for human rights abuses in Xinjiang, China.¹²

However, what will unsettle, even rattle ASEAN and especially Singapore, is Biden's continuation of Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy with China as the centerpiece of the game plan. While Biden appeared in wanting to restore the US in leading its friends and allies in the Asia-Pacific region, but by defining this policy in terms of safeguarding its allies and friends from China, including in the South China Sea, then it would be tantamount to adopting a Manichean approach to politics which Southeast Asian states such as Singapore are unlikely to support. While Biden had every right to call on Taiwan's President Tsai as part of his reassurance to allies in the region, this does not mean that ASEAN states would support Washington's bellicose policies in the region if these means taking on an anti-China posture. A 1947-type 'Truman Doctrine' by Biden is unlikely to find support in Southeast Asia and especially in Singapore as this type of black and white politics and foreign policy has no traction in the region and is against ASEAN's inclusionary culture and DNA. This is also against the basis of Singapore's foreign policy.

Clearly, while using the framework of 'Indo-Pacific', Biden's policy seems to focus on China as the centerpiece of his political, diplomatic, economic, military and even ideological thrust. Since assuming the presidency, some of Biden's China policies have been couched within the framework of the Indo-Pacific strategy, including expressing concerns about human rights in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong; criticizing Beijing for not condemning the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar; being prepared to defend Taiwan in the face of rising China's aggressiveness; and building a coherent Indo-Pacific strategy with the Quad at its core, focusing on ties with military allies such as Japan and Australia, and a strategic partner, India, all of whom have serious concerns with China's rising political, economic and military power and assertiveness. Biden's militaristic focus was evident in early February 2021 when he dispatched two carrier groups to hold drills in the South China Sea with a destroyer conducting a 'freedom of navigation operation' through the Taiwan Strait.

In this regard, Biden seems to be following Trump in wanting to contain China. Trump's China policy was made public when the secret *US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific*, written in 2018, was declassified in early January 2021. According to analysts, the strategy commits the US to "devise and implement a defense strategy capable of, but not limited to: (1) denying China sustained air and sea dominance inside the 'first island chain' in a conflict; (2) defending the first island chain nations, including Taiwan; and (3) dominating all domains outside the first island chain". For many, this

¹² Richard Maude, "Explainer: The Biden Administration and the Indo-Pacific", The Asia Society (Australia), 7 April 2021. See https://asiasociety.org/australia/explainer-biden-administration-and-indo-pacific

"is a very clear code for America holding its ground with Taiwan, with partners and allies in the South China Sea, with Japan, with Korea, really maintaining the integrity of those relationships and protecting them from Chinese assertiveness and Chinese aggression". China dismissed the document as it "purposefully distorted China's neighborhood policy" and sensationalized the "China threat" theory.

In a way, this harks back to the US's 'moment of glory', be it following the end of the Second World War in 1945 or the end of the Cold War in 1990. Following the end of the Cold War, Washington aimed to ensure that no rival power emerged so that it could maintain its 'unipolar' status. In short, global strategic primacy was the ultimate goal worldwide including in the Asia-Pacific region, now using the nomenclature of the Indo-Pacific region. The same policy seems to be pursued by Trump and among others, it also involved in countering China's authoritarian and illiberal influence while promoting American values, norms and mores in the region.

In short, the Trump's strategy was not just political, economic and military but also ideological. The Biden administration, by condemning China's human rights policies, seems to be pursuing the same strategy including its response to the Myanmar coup. This is because Biden does not want to be seen as weak compared to Trump. Biden's continuation of Trump's policies of condemning China for its human rights policies, especially China's policies in Xinjiang as 'genocide' is tantamount to weaponizing human rights as a political weapon. While Biden may make the US appear as a moral power yet in reality its own policies towards minorities, especially Blacks and continuing with the Guantanamo detention centre since 2001, represents the hallmark of its own human rights abuses and contradiction of what is championing abroad. Biden seems to be pursuing a policy of 'do what I say, not what I do", and this foreign policy hypocrisy is unlikely to win much support in Southeast Asia, especially in Singapore, especially if it couched within the Indo-Pacific policy.

CONCLUSION

From this perspective, if tensions and conflicts in US-China relations are not reduced and almost every major policy within the framework of the Indo-Pacific is centered on China, aimed at 'containing' Beijing's all-round expansion and assertiveness, it is unlikely Singapore, including its ASEAN partners, would support Biden's Indo-Pacific policy. While Singapore would strive to maintain its close political,

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¹³ Brahma Chellaney, "Biden follows Trump's footsteps in the Indo-Pacific", The Hill, 25 March 2021, see https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/544860-biden-follows-trumps-footsteps-in-the-indo-pacific; Lyle J. Goldstein, "The Indo-Pacific Strategy Is a Recipe for Disaster", Lawfare, 18 February 2021, see https://www.lawfareblog.com/indo-pacific-strategy-recipe-disaster; Laura Tingle, "Previously secret details of Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy revealed", ABC News, 12 January 2021, see https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-12/details-of-trump-administrations-indo-pacific-strategy-revealed/13052216

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

economic and even security ties with the US and China, Singapore is unlikely to join the US in condemning China or supporting China in opposing the US in the region as Singapore's strategy is to ensure that both powers should remain embedded in the region. How long Singapore's policy can be sustained remains to be seen but judging from its past postures, this is likely to be the course of Singapore's response to Biden's Indo-Pacific policy.

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THE FUTURE IS SMALL AND FAST: ASSESSING TAIWAN'S 2021 QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW AND U.S. DEFENSE POSTURE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

By Thomas J. Shattuck

Every four years, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense (MND) is required by law to conduct a defense review to provide overarching guidance for the Republic of China's Armed Forces and to set priorities for acquisition, research & development, and force posturing. In 2021, the Tsai Ing-wen administration released its second Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). Given the current state of U.S.-China relations, increasing bipartisan support for Taiwan in Washington and the growing assertiveness of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) against Taiwan since President Tsai took office in 2016, the 2021 QDR is perhaps the most important Taiwanese defense document produced since the end of the Cold War. In the first few months of 2021, U.S. President Joseph Biden and administration officials expressed strong support for Taiwan, concern for Chinese aggression, and willingness to increase partnership with regional allies over security issues in the Taiwan Strait. Certainly, the chances of greater and consistent U.S.-Taiwan defense cooperation have not been higher in the 21st century.

However, words must be backed up by actions, and doctrinal planning comes before action. Militarily, the most important way for two countries to work more closely is for some alignment in defense posture and hardware compatibility. If one country has completely different defense priorities and is planning for a different sort of conflict than another country, then cross-defense collaboration and integration would be more difficult to achieve. Such priorities are expressed in key defense-planning documents, such as the QDR for Taiwan. The United States has a plethora of defense-planning documents across the armed services and even within geographic regions. Regardless of the number of documents, the U.S. Department of Defense is planning for a contingency against a near-peer or peer-level adversary, specifically against the Russian Federation or People's Republic of China. The U.S. armed forces are changing their emphasis from countering violence extremism in the Middle East to countering revisionist powers and their tailored anti-access capabilities that seek to deny U.S. power projection forces.

Given the threat that Taiwan faces against China—principally preparing to repel

and stop an attempted invasion—the doctrinal changes announced by the U.S. Army and Marines in 2020 and 2021 are useful to compare against the QDR. The type of defense that Taiwan is preparing for matches the existing remit and portfolios of the U.S. Army and Marines: stopping an amphibious assault and potentially a land war. In the event of a PLA invasion of Taiwan and American involvement in the defense of Taiwan, the U.S. Army and Marines would play a key role in such a conflict.

This article seeks to analyze the procurement and posture priorities of the 2021 QDR, Marines' Force Design 2030, and Army Multi-Domain Transformation¹ and what their changes mean for a contingency against China. All three documents emphasize the need for larger numbers of small, fast, and cheap weapons and hardware.² They accept Chinese military strength and are seeking to adapt to the circumstances, which means an emphasis on agility and the use of missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). Gone are the days of large contingents since they'd make for easy targets as the Chinese military works to ensure the success of its anti-access aerial denial strategy. Is Taiwan—and are the U.S. Army and Marines—preparing for the same type of war that many predict is inevitable?

ACHIEVING A VIABLE DEFENSE IN TAIWAN

Similar to the 2017 QDR, the theme of the 2021 QDR is to achieve "resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence." Achieving this goal requires Taiwan's armed forces to "resist the enemy on the opposite shore, attack it at sea, destroy it in the littoral area, and annihilate it on the beachhead." The document also emphasizes the strength of having the Taiwan Strait as a natural barrier to help in Taiwan's defense. PLA naval forces are forced to make a perilous journey across the Strait before landing on Taiwan proper. Multi-domain deterrence is achieved through attacking PLA forces in assembly areas on Chinese territory in order to slow the invading forces. As the

¹ See, Quadrennial Defense Review, Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of China, March 2021, https://www.ustaiwandefense.com/tdnswp/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-Taiwan-Quadrennial-Defense-Review-QDR.pdf; James C. McConville, Army Multi-Domain Transformation: Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict, Department of the Army, March 16, 2021, https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/03/23/eeac3d01/20210319-csa-paper-1-signed-print-version.pdf; and David H. Berger, Force Design 2030, Department of the Navy, March 2020, https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/CMC38%20Force%20Design%202030%20Report%20Phase%20l%20and%20II.pdf?ver=2020-03-26-121328-460.

² T.X. Hammes discussed the implications of shifting to this type of hardware change in 2014, T.X. Hammes, "The Future of Warfare: Small, Many, Smart Vs. Few & Exquisite?," War on the Rocks, July 16, 2014, https://warontherocks.com/2014/07/the-future-of-warfare-small-many-smart-vs-few-exquisite/. See, also, his other writings on the topic, "Technologies Converge and Power Diffuses: The Evolution of Small, Smart, and Cheap Weapons," Cato Institute, January 27, 2016, https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/technologies-converge-power-diffuses-evolution-small-smart-cheap-weapons; "Cheap Technology Will Challenge U.S. Tactical Dominance," Joint Force Quarterly vol. 81, (March 29, 2016), https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/702039/cheap-technology-will-challenge-us-tactical-dominance/; and "In an Era of Cheap Drones, US Can't Afford Exquisite Weapons," Defense One, January 19, 2016, https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/01/cheap-drones-exquisite-weapons/125216/.

³ Quadrennial Defense Review, MND, p. 19.

invading forces begin their journey across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's armed forces again attacks them during the journey. Whatever forces get within Taiwan's coastal area—presumably fewer troops getting this far—are targeted, and then in the event that PLA forces reach Taiwan's shores, they would face a barrage from ROC and (likely) allied forces to keep them from moving off of the beachhead. This strategy makes sense for any country to defend itself from a coastal invasion. However, the question is what Taiwan's armed forces need to accomplish this goal.

The way to deter a Chinese invasion of Taiwan is to develop asymmetric capabilities because the PLA has such a sizeable manpower and resource advantage. They may also have a qualitative advantage in critical advanced warfare capabilities. The QDR acknowledges that the PLA "is capable of undermining [Taiwan's] air defense and sea control C2 systems."4 It also can initiate "a local blockade over [Taiwan's] vital ports and transportation routes" and strike any part of Taiwan with its missile. The PLA is also working on its ability to "quickly occupy [Taiwan's] vital ports and airports" to facilitate a full-scale invasion of Taiwan. In 2015, the PLA released a video in which it practiced raiding Taiwan's Presidential Office Building.⁶ In March 2021, the MND announced that Taiwan's armed forces would stop sending aircraft to respond to every PLA incursion into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) due to the immense cost; it would begin to track the PLA aircraft using ground-based missiles. As a result of the PLA comparative advantages and preparation, the QDR emphasizes Taiwan's procurement and development of long-range strike capabilities. It explicitly admits that "conventional warfare of attrition or arms race is not viable options for [Taiwan]."8 Having long-range missiles will extend Taiwan's defenses deeper into Chinese territory and perhaps deter or degrade a PRC attack. Striking PLA troops not only in Chinese territory and in the Taiwan Strait, but also being able to avoid PLA strikes and attacks is key to Taiwan's asymmetric capabilities. With this in mind, the QDR emphasizes acquiring "asymmetric capabilities that are small, numerous, smart, stealthy, mobile, and hard to be detected and countered."9 It is key for Taiwan's armed forces to be able to strike PLA forces on Chinese territory, in the Taiwan Strait, in Taiwan's coastal area, and on the beaches and then quickly change locations to avoid getting hit by a Chinese strike.

4 Quadrennial Defense Review, MND, p. 11.

⁵ Quadrennial Defense Review, MND, p. 12.

⁶ Emily Rauhala, "Watch: Chinese soldiers storm what looks like a replica of Taiwan's presidential palace," Washington Post, July 24, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/07/24/watch-chinese-soldiers-storm-what-looks-like-a-replica-of-taiwans-presidential-palace/.

⁷ Ben Blanchard, "Taiwan says tracks intruding Chinese aircraft with missiles, not always scrambling," Reuters, March 29, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-security/taiwan-says-tracks-intruding-chinese-aircraft-with-missiles-not-always-scrambling-idUSKBN2BL0JS.

⁸ Quadrennial Defense Review, MND, p. 26.

[•] The type of hardware that Taiwan's armed forces should acquire are: coastal mobile anti-ship missiles, light and rapid maritime forces, and advanced naval mines. Quadrennial Defense Review, MND, p. 26.

In 2021, Taiwan has begun to build and acquire military hardware that the QDR calls for. Minister of National Defense Chiu Kuo-cheng has announced that Taiwan is developing long-range missiles domestically, as well as three other types of missiles. The goal of the new missile is for it to be "long-range, accurate and mobile." Developing such a missile domestically would reduce Taiwanese reliance on American arms sales. However, Taiwan cannot meet all its defense needs through domestic production and relies on arms sales from the United States to bridge that gap. In March 2021, Taiwan's Air Force announced that it decided to upgrade its Patriot missile system. In 2025, it will start to receive Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) missiles. Many of the arms purchases announced during the Trump administration included a variety of missiles, launchers, and spare parts, as well as naval hardware. It is likely that such arms sales will continue under the leadership of President Joseph Biden, who has set his sights on countering China in the Indo-Pacific region.

While the United States has sold Taiwan billions of dollars of "defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability" as called for in the Taiwan Relations Act, 12 the greatest problem with arms sales is the time delay from the purchase to delivery and implementation. In the recent case of the Patriot system upgrade, Taiwan must wait four years before it begins to receive it. Making such purchases would improve Taiwan's defense and impose costs on PLA forces in a crisis, but there is a possibility that China could invade before these purchases ever make it to Taiwanese soil. Taiwan needs to upgrade its military capabilities today, not in 2025. The QDR's admission of China's advantages is clear-eyed and demonstrates that Taiwan's best hope is to instill doubt in Chinese decision-makers' minds about the quick success of an invasion: "The purpose is to make the PRC to face unacceptable consequences if it were to initiative a military conflict and thus deter its intention to wage a war." Slowing or preventing a quick fait accompli would create a deadly conflict for the PRC, and the slower an invasion occurs, the greater likelihood that help from another country, such as the United States or Japan, could arrive.

According to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission's 2020 Annual Report, the PRC currently lacks the capabilities to launch a

¹⁰ Ben Blanchard, "Taiwan says has begun mass production of long-range missile," Reuters, March 25, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-defence/taiwan-says-has-begun-mass-production-of-long-range-missile-idUSKBN2BH0IT.

¹¹ Yimou Lee, "Taiwan to buy new U.S. air defence missiles to guard against China," Reuters, March 31, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-defence-idUSKBN2BN1AA.

¹² Taiwan Relations Act, Public Law 96-8, 96th Congress, (1979), https://www.ait.org.tw/our-relationship/policy-history/key-u-s-foreign-policy-documents-region/taiwan-relations-act/.

¹³ Quadrennial Defense Review, MND, p. 26.

"large-scale amphibious operation" due to a shortage of certain equipment as well as the complexity of an invasion. Even if the PLA improves its amphibious operations capabilities, Taiwan's armed forces can still create doubt by fully embracing its asymmetric capabilities—hardware that is small, mobile, cheap, and numerous—to ensure a full-scale invasion is too costly to initiate.

MODERNIZING THE U.S. MARINES AND ARMY

Taiwan's 2021 QDR has emphasized continuing to develop the country's asymmetric capabilities to achieve "resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence," and changes announced by the U.S. Army and Marines appear to envision a similar conflict. The multi-domain operations for which the U.S. armed services are preparing will determine the types of weapons and hardware that they acquire, and they emphasize countering a near-peer or peer-level adversary between 2025 and 2050. 15 This type of warfare shifts from the past 20 years' focus on countering extremism in the Middle East. Army Multi-Domain Transformation seeks to modernize Army doctrine by preparing it to "maneuver and prevail from competition through conflict with a calibrated force posture of multi-domain capabilities that provide overmatch through speed and range at the point of need."¹⁶ Similarly, the U.S. Marines are changing its force posture to "possess littoral capabilities to include high-speed, long-range, lowsignature craft capable of maneuvering Marines for a variety of missions."¹⁷ These two high-level directives in the Army and Marines documents could be easily mistaken for having come from Taiwan's 2021 QDR. They all emphasize the same capabilities of having a long attack range and mobility.

Reading the Army's future plans, it is quite clear that the branch is planning to fight a similar war as Taiwan. Like Taiwan's plan to fight Chinese forces from Chinese territory through the sea and coast to Taiwanese beaches, the U.S. Army "will sustain, enable, extend, and expand the reach of both defensive and offensive actions."18 And much of the envisioned future battlefield almost sounds like how a conflict over Taiwan would be. The Army seeks to prevent an enemy from achieving a fait accompli, and specifically in the Indo-Pacific region with "light multi-domain forces, capable of engaging in all domains . . . [that] will be prepositioned in parts of the first island chain and act as the linchpin of effective joint and combined defenses. Join and combined

¹⁴ United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2020 Annual Report, December 2020, p. 464-5, https://www.ustaiwandefense.com/tdnswp/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-Taiwan-Quadrennial-Defense-Review-QDR.pdf.

¹⁵ Andrew Feickert, "Defense Primer: Army Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)," Congressional Research Service, December 8, 2020, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF11409.pdf.

¹⁶ McConville, Army Multi-Domain Transformation: Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict, p. 1.

¹⁷ Berger, Force Design 2030, p. 4.

¹⁸ McConville, Army Multi-Domain Transformation: Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict, p. 6.

capabilities in the first island chain will mix anti-ship, anti-anticraft, and surface-to-surface missiles to threat early damage to adversary forces."¹⁹ The United States—if decides to come to Taiwan's defense—must have highly capable and modernized forces within the first island chain ready to move at a moment's notice.

Preventing a PLA invasion of Taiwan would require quick decision-making to prevent the *fait accompli* that the Chinese would seek to achieve. This type of planning mirrors that of Taiwan's QDR: slow down the invading force and inflict a high cost. The type of military hardware used in this type of envisioned battlefield also complements that of Taiwan's military: long-range missiles, missile defense, and quick combat vehicles. Slower and static legacy systems would be easy targets for Chinese missiles seeking to prevent the United States from coming to Taiwan's assistance. The U.S. Army is seeking to move beyond the days of large-signature forces that could be easily identified and targeted by an enemy force. The U.S. Army clearly thinks that the future of warfare in the Indo-Pacific will be won through speed and with low-signature forces that have a long reach.

Under the leadership of Commandant David Berger, the U.S. Marines are undergoing a fundamental shift in their operations and posture. The transformation of the Marines will require perhaps the starkest change of the U.S. armed services since it is shifting from being the nation's naval expeditionary force-in-readiness fighting terrorists on the ground in the Middle East to countering a near-peer or peer-level adversary on the ground and in the sea in the Indo-Pacific.²⁰ Such a shift will require changes in weapons and hardware priorities.²¹ Like the U.S. Army, the Marines are seeking to become a small force that uses long-range missiles and mobile, lowsignature vehicles. The battlefield that the Marines are preparing to fight on sounds like how the United States would fight to defend Taiwan: "The Marine Corps must be able to fight at sea, from the sea, and from the land to the sea; operate and persist within range of adversary long-range fire; maneuver across the seaward and landward portions of complex littorals; and sense, shoot and sustain while combining the physical and information domains to achieve desired outcomes."22 A conflict over Taiwan would be within China's missile range, so the Marines new force design would emphasize operating within the "weapons engagement zone" to attain a competitive advantage. 23 And combatting a Chinese invasion—or landing on Taiwan after its

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¹⁹ McConville, Army Multi-Domain Transformation: Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict, p. 22.

²⁰ For an in-depth analysis of Force Design 2030, see, Frank G. Hoffman, "Still the First to Fight: Shaping the 21st Century Marine Corps," Foreign Policy Research Institute, May 11, 2020, https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/05/still-first-to-fight-shaping-the-21st-century-marine-corps/.

²¹ For a critique of the proposed changes to the Marines, see, Jim Webb, "The Future of the U.S. Marine Corps," The National Interest, May 8, 2020, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/future-us-marine-corps-152606.

²² Berger, Force Design 2030, p. 3.

²³ Berger, Force Design 2030, p. 5.

beaches and ports fell to PLA forces—would require the Marines to "fight at sea, from the sea, and from the land to the sea."

As a result, the Marines—in order to achieve agility—are eliminating or reducing slower and more robust systems, such as tanks and cannon artillery batteries in favor of more mobile rocket artillery and UAVs. Tanks artillery batteries have higher signatures and could easily be targeted by PLA UAVs. As the Marines continue to study the effects of the proposed changes, one of its guiding principles will be to "focus on capabilities that create a competitive, asymmetric advantage in maritime gray zone operations globally."24 When it comes to preparing for gray zones operations in Asia, the U.S. Marines have much to learn from the Taiwanese, who are at the forefront of confronting Chinese gray zone tactics in the military, society, and government. While Force Design 2030 is part of an ongoing reform of the Marines, the basic tenets and changes expressed throughout the document show that Commandant Berger envisions fighting a similar war as Chief of Staff McConville. Both the U.S. Army and Marines are responding to the same strategic direction called for the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS).²⁵ As the NDS names China a "strategic competitor" that "will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future,"26 McConville and Berger are consistent when they both name China as a threat to global security and as an adversary that can and will challenge U.S. power around the globe. However, what goes unsaid is where a potential conflict with China would actually occur. The most likely places are the South China Sea or Taiwan, which are both well within China's range of attack.

READY FOR A CONFLICT WITH CHINA?

Reviewing the key defense-planning documents of Taiwan and the U.S. Army and Marines is instructive because they all show how different countries and armed services view the future of warfare. Taiwan continues to prepare to deter a Chinese invasion or incur costs to a military escalation. The U.S. Army and Marines are both planning for a future conflict with a near-peer adversary, most likely in the Indo-Pacific. What all three documents agree on is that the future of warfare will require mobile, small, and long-range capabilities to enhance asymmetric advantages. The Marines' proposed elimination of the tank shows how bulky hardware may not have a future in a fast-paced conflict in the Indo-Pacific. The way in which the Army and Marines discuss the envisioned battlefield points to Taiwan as being a likely theater of war. They are preparing to fight within an adversary's missile range,

²⁴ Berger, Force Design 2030, p. 12.

²⁵ James Mattis, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge," Department of Defense, 2018, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

²⁶ Mattis, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy," p. 2.

forcing them to reduce their footprint and invest in faster vehicles to avoid detection and counterattack.

More broadly, the U.S. military is working towards reprioritizing and investing more substantially in the Indo-Pacific theater. Through the Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI), Washington hopes to reinvigorate the American military presence in the region to increase its ability to deter an adversary from escalating tensions to conflict. The PDI is meant to "to carry out prioritized activities to enhance the United States deterrence and defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region, assure allies and partners, and increase capability and readiness in the Indo-Pacific region."27 The obvious purpose for PDI is to deter China.28 And one cannot have a conversation about deterring Chinese aggression without bringing up Taiwan. The existing PDI documents do not explicitly discuss enhancing support for Taiwan, but by working to deter China, the PDI is fulfilling that objective without ever mentioning it. The PDI, like the U.S. Army and Marines doctrinal changes, says certain things without explicitly saying them. However, as the PDI obtains additional funding, it would behoove Congress to include earmarks and goals for working to enhance Taiwan's defense. After all, if Taiwan is ever "lost," then the PDI's main goal will be much harder to achieve as China would be able to easily push beyond the first island chain from Taiwan's east coast, destroying any potential for successful deterrence.

Outside of the PDI, the U.S. Army, Marines, and other service branches should work towards enhancing cooperation and collaboration with their Taiwanese counterparts. The 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) calls for "conducting practical training and military exercises with Taiwan that enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability" and "increasing exchanges between senior defense officials and general officers of the United States and Taiwan at the strategic, policy, and functional levels . . . especially for the purposes of enhancing cooperation on defense planning; [and] improving the interoperability of the military forces of the United States and Taiwan."²⁹ Considering that the QDR matches the defense posture changes of the U.S. Army and Marines, it would be helpful for high-level officials and general officers to more frequently meet to discuss how they envision the role of their respective service in a Chinese contingency. Inviting Taiwan's armed forces to participate in the 2022 Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) would receive immense bipartisan support in Washington and would follow the "sense of Congress" in the

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Section 1251, Public Law 116-283, 116th Congress, (2021) https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6395/text.

^{**}Mallory Shelbourne, "U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Wants \$4.68B for New Pacific Deterrence Initiative," USNI News, March 5, 2021, https://news.usni.org/2021/03/02/u-s-indo-pacific-command-wants-4-68b-for-new-pacific-deterrence-initiative; Tom Bowman, "Pentagon Pushes For Bigger Effort To Deter China's Growing Military Might," NPR, March 16, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/03/16/977987292/pentagon-pushes-for-bigger-effort-to-deter-chinas-growing-military-might; and Mark Montgomery and Bradley Bowman, "Listen to America's Top Commander in the Indo-Pacific and Fund the Pacific Deterrence Initiative," War on the Rocks, March 31, 2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/03/listen-to-americas-top-commander-in-the-indo-pacific-and-fund-the-pacific-deterrence-initiative/.

²⁹ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Section 1260.

2021 NDAA. The two country's militaries cannot improve "interoperability" without the two conducting bilateral and multilateral exercises.

Now, it is unclear whether the United States would come to Taiwan's defense in the event of a Chinese invasion. While the Biden administration seems to be continuing the decades-old policy of "strategic ambiguity" when it comes to the defense of Taiwan, there is an ongoing debate within the United States about whether or not remove the "ambiguity" in favor of "strategic clarity." In this sense, "strategic clarity" means a definitive statement by President Biden that the United States would, in fact, come to Taiwan's defense in the event of a Chinese invasion. The belief is that such a statement would put Beijing on notice and perhaps reduce the military threat that Taiwan faces. Fighting the United States over Taiwan would risk escalating what could be a quick invasion into a massive war that if Beijing loses would destroy the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party. Before "strategic clarity" is achieved, an intermediary step would be to achieve "strategic cooperation or collaboration" by increasing contact between American and Taiwanese military officers and working towards achieving better interoperability. This could include the Green Berets or Navy SEALS conducting regular trainings in Taiwan or an annual bilateral military exercise simulating an invasion scenario or post-invasion tactics. Practicing such an operation would send a clear message about the U.S. intent without the president formally changing U.S. policy. The one thing that will not change or stop is the continuation of arms sales. The Biden administration might consider enhancing the menu of options that the Taiwanese military can purchase. However unlikely, Washington should consider the possibility for Taipei to join the F-35 fighter program. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (TSMC) manufactures critical chips for the F-35, so if the U.S. military relies on Taiwanese expertise to make the jet, then it stands to reason that Taipei should be able to purchase them if it so desires. Opening up the arms sales menu would give Taiwan more cutting-edge weapons and hardware to more capably defense itself. After all, one must ask what purpose interoperability achieves if not for the two countries' military to work together—to stop a Chinese military invasion of Taiwan.

Reviewing the U.S. Army and Marines' vision of the future is one way to determine if the United States would assist Taiwan. The two reviewed U.S. documents describe planning for a Taiwan-like conflict. Such a decision would need to be made quickly in order for the Marines and Army to respond effectively. A commonality between the two services' planning is acting quickly and decisively to prevent a *fait accompli*. There are very few "fait accompli" discussions in Asia that do not include Taiwan. To stop such a scenario in Taiwan, the President of the United States would need to already know how he or she would respond

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³⁰ For more on this debate, see, Richard Haass and David Sacks, "American Support for Taiwan Must Be Unambiguous," Foreign Affairs, September 2, 2020, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/american-support-taiwan-must-be-unambiguous; and Bonnie S. Glaser; Michael J. Mazarr; Michael J. Glennon; Richard Haass and David Sacks, "Dire Straits: Should American Support for Taiwan Be Ambiguous?," Foreign Affairs, September 24, 2020, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-09-24/dire-straits.

when the day comes that the PRC attacks Taiwan. President Biden and his administration have expressed that Taiwan is a critical U.S. partner and that Taiwan's security is critical for regional and American security.³¹ However, no official has yet to move beyond the historical statements about helping Taiwan have the means to defense itself. What is clear is that Taiwan and the U.S. Army and Marines are planning for a China contingency. They're now developing additional tactics to address the challenge and acquiring the weapons and hardware that they think will be useful in such a conflict. Those seeking "strategic clarity" over Taiwan should review these doctrinal changes and initiatives and read between the lines.

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Thomas J. Shattuck, "Biden Faced His First Taiwan Test. Now What?," Foreign Policy Research Institute, January 27, 2021; Anthony Blinken, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken With Chuck Todd of NBC's Meet the Press," Department of State, April 11, 2021, https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-with-chuck-todd-of-nbcs-meet-the-press/.

CHINA'S UNMANNED UNDERWATER VEHICLES IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN: THREATS AND SOLUTIONS

By Jung-Ming Chang

INTRODUCTION

The world has in recent years witnessed the emergence of Chinese unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) in the South China Sea. These UUVs were "captured" by fishermen once in Vietnam and four times in Indonesia during the 2016-2020 period. One explanation for the emergence of these UUVs is that they were deployed for the purpose of collecting hydrological data as well as conducting surveillance after South China Sea became a flashpoint. Arguably, the Pacific Ocean will become another South China Sea and we shall witness China-made underwater drones in it. This situation should be of interest to Taiwan and like-minded countries, and the underlying question is how do we deal with it.

WHEREABOUTS OF CHINESE UUVS

In 2019, China deployed 12 *Haiyi* [海翼 or Sea Wing] UUVs in the Indian Ocean and claimed that all 12 of them were recovered. However, the original plan was to deploy 14 UUVs.² Since five *Haiyi* underwater drones have been captured in the region of South China Sea from 2016 to 2000 (see Figure 1), the inference is that Chinese UUVs have been deployed prior to 2019 and that an unknown number of UUVs have been deployed by China from 2017 to 2000. Currently, most UUVs are designed to surface after the depletion of power. Even though it is time and money consuming to retrieve these UUVs near the surface, it is a prevalent practice. There could be two critical reasons: one is to prevent them from falling into enemy's hands to prevent reverse engineering; the other is to prevent an adversary from discovering the information UUVs gathered during active duty.

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¹ H I Sutton, "Underwater Drone Incidents Point to China's Expanding Intelligence Gathering," January 15, 2021, Royal United Services Institute, https://rusi.org/commentary/underwater-drone-incidents-point-china-expanding-intelligence-gathering.

² H I Sutton, "China Deployed 12 Underwater Drones In Indian Ocean," Forbes, March 22, 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/03/22/china-deployed-underwater-drones-in-indian-ocean/?sh=3a22aa976693.

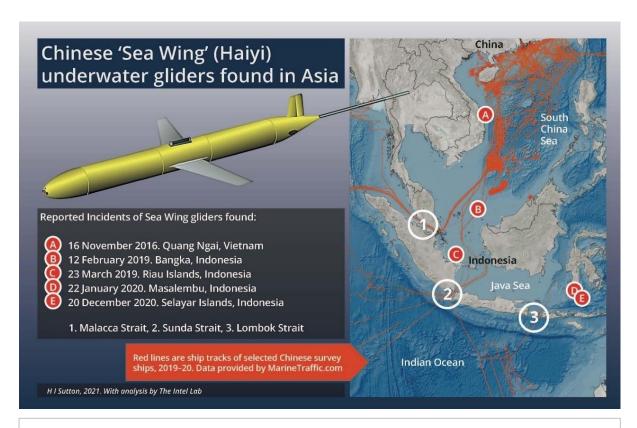


FIGURE 1: China's Unmanned Underwater Vehicles Found Since 2016

(Source: H I Sutton, "Underwater Drone Incidents Point to China's Expanding Intelligence Gathering," January 15, 2021, Royal United Services Institute, https://rusi.org/commentary/underwater-drone-incidents-point-china-expanding-intelligence-gathering.)

In most cases, scientific research vessels are responsible for the recovery of UUVs. For example, a U.S. UUV was seized by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) of China when USNS Bowditch oceanographic survey ship was about to retrieve it in the South China Sea.³ The situation of China is no different. China's scientific research vessels are used to deploy and recover Haiyi UUVs. Logically, during the deployment phase, we should be able to observe the occurrence of survey vessels before UUVs. That is to say, survey vessels are followed by UUVs in the case of China. During the recovering phase, the sequence is just the opposite. One thing to note is that Haiyi UUVs, equivalent to Slocum G3 gliders, are small in size and could be deployed and recovered by means other than survey vessels.⁴

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³ "China 'seizes US vessel' in S China Sea," BBC, December 16, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-38347221.

⁴ "Slocum G3 Glider Operators Manual," Teledyne Webb Research, December 2017, http://gliderfs2.coas.oregonstate.edu/gliderweb/docs/slocum_manuals/Slocum_G3_Operator_Manual_20171219.pdf.

A report released by Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in April 2020 shows the footprints of various countries' survey vessels in the Indo-Pacific. As shown on Figure 2, China's survey vessels are more clustered in the West Pacific, north of the equator. These survey vessels also visited the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, but less intensively. Since China's survey vessels deploy and recover UUVs, there is reason to believe that China has already deployed UUVs in the Pacific Ocean. While 17 China's scientific research ships conducted surveys in 32 locations in the Pacific Ocean, only two ships of the same kind explored one location each in the South China Sea. Presumably, as the number of scientific research vessel increases, the quantity of UUVs also rises. Similarly, the more UUVs deployed, the more would become "missing in action." If that is the case, then the UUVs found in Indonesia on January 22, 2020 and December 20, 2020, respectively, could have been deployed originally in the West Pacific Ocean and brought ashore by the North Equatorial Current.

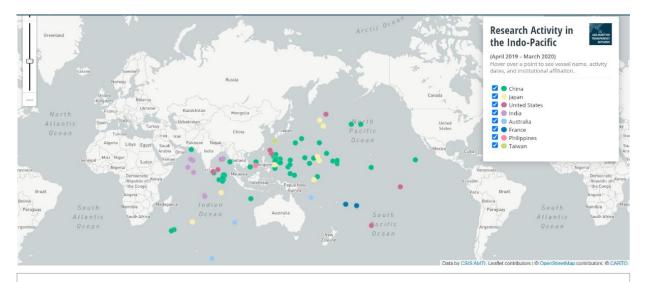


FIGURE 2: Research Activity in the Indo-Pacific

(Source: "A Survey of Marine Research Vessels in the Indo-Pacific," April 16, 2020, Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, Center for Strategic and International Studies, https://amti.csis.org/a-survey-of-marine-research-vessels-in-the-indo-pacific/.)

OBJECTIVES OF UUVS

One main objective of UUVs is to survey the underwater world. In the context of the South China Sea dispute, UUVs are possibly used to explore appropriate hiding places for submarines, in addition to collecting hydrological data and performing the function of intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR). In order to achieve anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) for China, anti-ship missiles and

⁵ "A Survey of Marine Research Vessels in the Indo-Pacific," CSIS, April 16, 2020, https://amti.csis.org/a-survey-of-marine-research-vessels-in-the-indo-pacific/.

⁶ This was done using the information provided by the interactive map on the CSIS website.

surface vessels are certainly necessary. Submarines, however, are even more needed for their stealth and "phantom-like" function. Not knowing whether adversarial submarines are deployed, a fleet cannot rest assured of its safety; knowing that adversarial submarines are deployed, a fleet must keep on high alert during its tour. UUVs are, hence, used to survey appropriate hideouts for submarines to take out adversarial surface targets. One thing to note is that the PLAN has not equipped with offensive UUVs that could fire torpedoes or carry out attacks, such as Russia's Poseidon⁷, the offensive capability is neglected temporarily.

The other purpose is to gain support from the island states in the south Pacific. One feature of the Pacific Island states is that these countries are by definition surrounded by the sea. Moreover, these island states have at least one good harbor. Therefore, these island states are appropriate for China to deploy UUVs. In the long run, Pacific Island states that are closely associated with China can also provide supply and maintenance services for UUVs. As China continues the Belt and Road Initiative, there are plans from China to lease or invest in ports from these island states. For example, China's state-controlled Fujian Zhonghong Fishery Company has signed a \$200 million deal with Papua New Guinea to build a "comprehensive multifunctional fishery industrial park" in the Daru Port. The superficial meaning of the investment is to construct a major fishery plant. However, since the company was controlled by the Chinese government, the investment could be turned from business purposes into military ones.

Similar cases are abundant. For example, a secret deal was signed in September 2019 between China and the Solomon Islands to lease the Tulagi island and its surroundings. In 2018, after Chinese investments flowed into the Solomon Islands to construct an airport, aircraft maintenance facilities, and a shopping district on the island of Guadalcanal, there were concerns that China might turn this strategically important hub into military use. Not to mention the preliminary talks between China

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⁷ Xavier Vavasseur, "Russia's Poseidon Nuclear Torpedo Base To Be Ready By Summer 2022," Naval News, January 27, 2021, https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/01/russias-poseidon-nuclear-torpedo-base-to-be-ready-by-summer-2022/

⁸ Jamie Seidel, "China's bold new fishing plan on Australia's doorstep increases tensions," news.com.au, December 16, 2020, https://www.news.com.au/technology/innovation/military/chinas-bold-new-fishing-plan-on-australias-doorstep-increases-tensions/news-story/a27224ce439fe490a93a7be81efb6148.

⁹ Damien Cave, "China Is Leasing an Entire Pacific Island. Its Residents Are Shocked," The New York Times, October 17, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/16/world/australia/china-tulagi-solomon-islands-pacific.html.

¹⁰ Bernard Lagan, "Australia fears China's military might on Pacific isle," The Sunday Times, May 1, 2018, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/australia-fears-china-s-military-might-on-pacific-isle-cdh36vl9z; Christopher Woody, "A World War II battleground is now another flash point in China's influence campaign in the Pacific," Business Insider, July 24, 2018, https://www.businessinsider.com/growing-chinese-influence-in-guadalcanal-worrying-the-us-and-australia-2018-7.

and Vanuatu to build permanent military facilities in the island nation.¹¹

It will be convenient for the PLAN to retrieve UUVs after having access to the ports in the Oceania. If China could finally use ports in the Pacific Island states, it is not urgent to conduct "scientific research" in waters adjacent to these island states for the time being. This could well be the reason why Chinese scientific research vessels were sent to other parts of the Pacific Ocean to conduct research of the seafloor in a "lawnmowing" fashion.

After making an inroad into the First Island Chain and the Second Island Chain and expanding its influence in the Pacific islands, China's sphere of influence will collide with that of the United States in the Pacific Ocean. As China continues to secure its position in world stage there could be an armed conflict with the United States. For now, it is too early to determine when the conflict would erupt. But, if a war between the two countries is unavoidable in the near future, what will that war look like could be of interest to the people and countries in the Pacific region as a whole. The significance of the Pacific Ocean differs from that of the South China Sea and Indian Ocean since JL-2 intercontinental-range submarine-launched ballistic missiles launched from China's 094-type nuclear submarines could reach the United States.

A SHRINKING PACIFIC OCEAN FOR MANEUVER

From Figure 2, it is clear that China's scientific research vessels appear more in the region between the First Island Chain and Second Island Chain; some of the vessels' footprints even go beyond the Second Island Chain. For other parts of the Pacific Ocean, Chinese vessels' footprints are scarce. Footprint of China's research vessels even never showed in South Pacific. This does not mean South Pacific Island states are of no interest to China.

Since the early days of the Cold War, three curvilinear chains of islands in the Pacific Ocean have been serving as three lines of defense for the United States. However, a new island chain has now emerged between the Second and Third Island Chains that could be used to challenge U.S. security interests in the Pacific. This emerging island chain starts from Papua Guinea, going eastbound to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, and ends in Kiribati.

During peacetime, this emerging island chain is considered a political and economic attraction by other countries in the region, making China more advantaged than the existing regional and global powers, namely Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. During wartime or an armed conflict, the chain could serve supply and maintenance purposes. A majority of China's allies in the chain have deep-water ports,

¹¹ David Wroe, "China eyes Vanuatu military base in plan with global ramifications," The Sydney Morning Herald, April 9, 2018, https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/china-eyes-vanuatu-military-base-in-plan-with-global-ramifications-20180409-p4z8j9.html.

such as the Port of Malau, Port-Vila, the Port of Nuku'alofa, the Port of Neiafu, and the Port of Alofi, which could support PLAN operations in the region. In other words, if the PLAN does not control deep-water ports in the region, regional countries can rest assured that the South Pacific would remain as peaceful as always. As mentioned earlier, China might be using a different way to utilize this island chain that has emerged among the island chains in the South Pacific.

Building upon the emergence of the new island chain, China could make the most out of the Pacific Island states through various means, such as leasing or investing in part of the territories. Commercial use of the ports in Pacific islands states could be the first step, then turn these ports into military use to prepare for a future contingency against the United States. After the PLAN constructs military facilities at the ports of the new island chain, the high seas south of the equator in the Pacific Ocean could likely be under the PLAN's control. Then there comes two implications: 1) Australia will be isolated from the two flashpoints in the Pacific Ocean, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. The emerging island chain could serve the function of keeping Australia out of East Asian affairs by deploying anti-air and anti-ship missile systems on those islands and threatening the regional traffic. Should it happen, not only will Australia lose its strategic importance but also some 1,600 U.S. Marines currently deployed on Manus Island will be refrained from coming to the aid of U.S. allies and partners. 2) The routes for the U.S. Navy vessels are likely to be limited. For maintenance and supply purposes, it is reasonable for the U.S. Navy to utilize the route in the South Pacific. If, however, the route is occupied by the PLAN and becomes hostile, the U.S. Navy will have to abandon using this route. One would argue that the Pacific Ocean is vast and expansive and there should be numerous routes for the U.S. Navy to use. Suppose, however, the flashpoint is in the South China Sea, not being able to use the route close to the emerging island chain could delay the rescue mission dramatically.

SOLUTIONS

Due to the global recognized doctrine of freedom of navigation on the high seas, there is no way to restrict China's scientific research vessels from sailing in the Pacific Ocean. More importantly, UUVs can be deployed through means other than scientific research vessels. Then, is there any solution?

One way to prevent the PLAN from utilizing UUVs in the Pacific Ocean is to keep China from gaining access to Pacific Island states. Since the military perspectives have been inefficient in resolving this issue, diplomatic means that are both time and budget efficient must be better utilized.

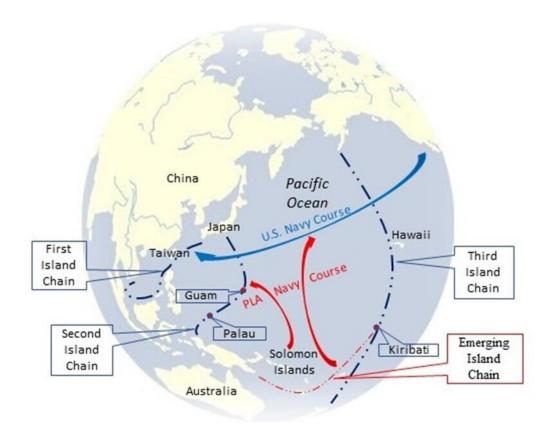


FIGURE 3: Island Chains in the Pacific Ocean

(Source: Jung-Ming Chang, "Strategic Implications of China's Investment in Papua New Guinea's Daru Port," *Defense Security Bi-weekly*, January 29, 2021, https://reurl.cc/NXm4bq)

In October 2020, the U.S. Department of States announced more than \$200 million USD in new funding to the Pacific Islands as part of the Pacific Pledge. Additionally, the U.S. government could coordinate with donor countries, including Taiwan, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, or even France, to allocate and distribute donations more efficiently. Establishing more air traffic routes to connect Pacific Islands is another possible way to win the hearts and minds of Pacific islanders. And It would create a stronger bond between South Pacific countries and other nations at the same.

This is, especially, the case after Palau, Federal States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Kiribati announced on February 4, 2021, in a joint statement to withdraw their membership from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). One of the consequences was that the PIF became porous and vulnerable to China's money diplomacy. The United States alone cannot deal with this situation in the South Pacific. It takes collaboration with like-minded countries, such as Taiwan, to tackle the expansion of China's influence in the Pacific region. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Australia, New Zealand,

and the Pacific Islands, Sandra Oudkirk remarked on April 16, 2021, that the United States and Taiwan could cooperate further on the Global Cooperation and Training Framework. Oudkirk is correct in this regard.¹²

CONCLUSION

After Chinese Haiyi UUVs were caught by fishermen in Vietnam and Indonesia, the world hence was aware of China's deployment of underwater gliders for the purpose of ISTAR. Even though the Pacific Ocean has not become a flashpoint, compared to the South China Sea, a large number of Chinese scientific research vessels' footprints in the West Pacific have been recorded. Since scientific research vessels have been a major means of deploying and recovering UUVs, these footprints demonstrate China's attempt to survey the Pacific Ocean in preparation for submarine warfare. What makes submarine warfare in the Pacific Ocean different, and worse, is the possibility of Chinese submarines firing strategic weapons below the surface.

One way to deal with the situation is to harden relations with island states in the South Pacific in order to keep China's influence out of these countries. To rely on the United States alone is inadequate, more like-minded countries should cooperate on the matter.

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¹² "MOFA, State Department take part in virtual on Taiwan-US cooperation in Pacific islands," Taiwan Today, April 19, 2021, https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2&post=198302.

BIDEN'S TAIWAN POLICY UNDER THE MOUNTING CHINA'S THREAT

By Shao-cheng (Michael) Sun

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 2020, cross-Strait tensions have mounted as China has increased its military aggression on Taiwan. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) said that their exercises aimed to send a warning to Taiwan that they would not give in on its "sovereignty." On March 10, 2021, Admiral Phil Davidson, the former commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, stated that China's threat against Taiwan will manifest in the next six years.² On April 12, U.S. President Joe Biden sent a delegation to Taiwan led by former Senator Chris Dodd, a close friend of Biden's. The White House called this visit as a "personal signal" of the Biden's solid commitment to Taiwan.³ In response, China dispatched 25 warplanes intruding on Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ). The Taiwan Affairs Office of China commented that the PLA's response was an "actual combat" exercise aimed to curb "Taiwan-U.S. collusion." Since the PLA warplanes' intrusion have become frequent, the Taiwan's Ministry of Defense said jet pilots would no longer scramble to encounter the PLA aircraft each time and would instead track them with ground-to-air missiles.⁵ With the rising cross-Strait tension, The Economist labeled Taiwan as "the most dangerous place on earth." This paper examines what the Chinese government has done to increase its threat against Taiwan and what the Biden administration's response has been to deescalate the crisis and ensure Taiwan's security.

Associated Press, "Taiwan Will Fight 'to the Very Last Day' If China Attacks," The Diplomat, April 8, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/taiwan-will-fight-to-the-very-last-day-if-china-attacks/.

² Chip Gregson, Russell Hsiao, and Stephen Young, "How the Biden Administration Can Support Taiwan," The Diplomat, April 30, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/how-the-biden-administration-can-support-taiwan/.

³ Reuters, "As Biden's emissaries go to Taiwan, China terms exercises 'combat drills'," Reuters, April 14, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-says-its-taiwan-strait-military-drills-necessary-address-security-2021-04-14/. Yimou Lee and Ben Blanchard, "Taiwan says China bolstering ability to attack, blockade island," Reuters, March 19, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-defence/taiwan-says-china-bolstering-ability-to-attack-blockade-island-idUSKBN2BB16V.

⁴ Reuters, ibid.

⁵ Erin Hale, "Is China really about to invade Taiwan?" Aljazeera, April 14, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/14/is-there-really-a-risk-that-china-will-go-to-war-with-taiwan.

⁶ Justin Metz, "The most dangerous place on Earth," The Economist, May 1, 2021, https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/05/01/the-most-dangerous-place-on-earth.

II. CHINA'S RISING THREAT

Since 2016, when Tsai Ing-wen won the presidential election, Taiwan policy under Xi Jinping has become aggressive. In 2019, Xi stated that China did not promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option to use all necessary measures. Xi's administration has framed reunification with Taiwan as a requirement for achieving the China Dream. With the strong rhetoric and increased military activities, the PLA has taken steps to enhance its capabilities to conquer Taiwan.

1) STRONG RHETORIC AGAINST TAIWAN'S LEADER

Since President Tsai was re-elected in 2020, Beijing has intensified their rhetoric against her administration. Their criticisms include the following:

First, Taiwan's moves toward independence. The Chinese government asserts that the escalating cross-Strait tension is attributed to Tsia's administration refusal to accept the "1992 consensus." In March 2021, Premier Li Keqiang said that China would deter any separatist activity seeking Taiwan's independence. China's Ministry of Defense claimed that Taiwan's separatist forces remained the gravest threat to peace in the Taiwan Strait. They threatened, "Taiwan independence means war." 10

Second, Taiwan's push for de-Sinicization. China claimed that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has pushed for "de-Sinicization" in all fields of Taiwan. For example, a high school history curriculum passed by Taiwan's Ministry of Education made Chinese history part of East Asian history. The China's Taiwan Affairs Office warned that pushing de-sinicization in education would poison the younger generation in Taiwan.¹¹

Third, Taiwan's pursuit of international recognition. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan donated millions of masks and medical supplies to its diplomatic allies and close countries including the U.S. and European countries. Taiwan's efforts in fighting COVID-19 and assisting other countries have dwarfed the Chinese image of intervention on Hong Kong protests, and aggressive territorial expansion in the South China Sea. However, Taiwan's efforts for being a responsible stakeholder of global public health has been interpreted by China as an attempt to disrupt the cross-Strait status quo.

⁷ Alex Ward, "How China could force Biden's hand on defending Taiwan," VOX, May 5, 2021, https://www.vox.com/22405553/taiwan-china-war-joe-biden-strategic-ambiguity.

⁸ John Culver and Ryan Hass, "Understanding Beijing's motives regarding Taiwan, and America's role: A 35-year CIA officer's view," Brookings, March 30, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/understanding-beijings-motives-regarding-taiwan-and-americas-role/.

⁹ Yimou Lee and Ben Blanchard, ibid.

¹⁰ Joshua Keating, "How Long Can the Biden Administration Stall a Crisis in Taiwan?" Slate, February 2, 2021, https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/02/biden-taiwan-china-crisis.html.

¹¹ "Beijing criticizes Taiwan's de-sinicization act," CGTN, April 15, 2018, https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d774d7941544e79457a6333566d54/share_p.html.

Fourth, Taiwan's collusion with the U.S. After President Tsai took office, U.S. and Taiwan relations have improved. For example, the U.S. Congress passed the Taipei Act in 2019, which committed the U.S. government to help Taiwan improve its international standing. President Trump started to dispatch cabinet members to Taiwan. The visits enraged Chinese leaders, who view the U.S. as violating China's domestic affairs. More importantly, the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan have increased. Since May to October 2020, the U.S. approved five billion dollars in arms sales. China retaliated by sanctioning U.S. companies selling weapons to Taiwan. Chinese media also threatened Taiwan that they would pay a heavy price for it. 13

China believed that Taiwan not only pushed for de-Sinicization, but also colluded with the U.S. against China. To prevent this trend, the Beijing regime and their official mouthpiece have threatened the Tsai's administration that the PLA has prepared to take Taiwan by force.

2) THE MILITARY THREAT

China is preparing for military means against Taiwan. Their military threats are listed below.

To begin with, the PLA intrudes Taiwan's ADIZ. Since September 2020, the PLA's warplanes have been flying across the median line of the Taiwan Strait and flying around Taiwan almost daily. On April 12, twenty-five PLA aircraft entered Taiwan's ADIZ, the largest number of warplanes ever recorded. There are several purposes for the PLA's warplanes intrusion including intimidating Taiwan's government and people, wearing out Taiwan's Air Force, testing Taiwan's military response, and preparing for a future invasion.

In addition, China began taking steps to prevent a U.S. intervention. The PLA is deploying long-range missiles along the Southeast coastal areas of Mainland China. Their pilots are conducting long distance flight training to prevent U.S.'s military intervention in cross-Strait conflict. ¹⁶ As further proof, the PLA released a video displaying H-6 bombers making a simulated strike against Anderson Air Force Base in Guam to deter the U.S. intervention. ¹⁷

¹² Gabriel Crossley and Ben Blanchard, "China threatens retaliation over new U.S. arms sales to Taiwan," Reuters, October 22, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-taiwan-arms/china-threatens-retaliation-over-new-u-s-arms-sales-to-taiwan-idUSKBN2770C6.

¹³ Global Times editorial, "Tsai's soft rhetoric cannot fool world on 'one China," Global Times, October 11, 2020, https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1203125.shtml.

¹⁴ Yimou Lee, Ben Blanchard, ibid.

¹⁵ Zhang Han and Liu Xuanzun, "1st reported Taiwan arms sales under Biden admin come early, further strain situation," Global Times, April 20, 2021, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202104/1221502.shtml.

¹⁶ Yimou Lee, Ben Blanchard, ibid.

¹⁷ Alex Ward, ibid.

Finally, the PLA has conducted exercises simulating the invasion Taiwan. On October 10, 2020, Taiwan's National Day, China staged an island invasion military exercise. The Chinese media disclosed the entire process of a staged military landing in Taiwan. On April 5, 2021, the PLA Navy announced that the Liaoning aircraft carrier was conducting exercises near Taiwan. China claimed that these exercises could improve their ability to prevent Taiwan from seeking independence.

The Chinese government believes that the most effective way to prevent Taiwan from separation of the "motherland" is using military coercion. Therefore, they are using the verbal warnings and military preparations to achieve their political and military goals.

III. BIDEN'S TAIWAN POLICY

Amid arm sales and high-level official visits to Taiwan under the Trump's administration seems to be continuing under President Biden.²⁰ The Biden team has shown a hardline approach toward China. Biden said China was the U.S.'s most serious competitor. Kathleen Hicks, Deputy Secretary of Defense, commented that the U.S. commitment to Taiwan must be "crystal clear" under the rising China threat.²¹ Under Biden, the U.S. will likely provide the following supports.

1) THE POLITICAL SUPPORT

The U.S.'s and China's growing rivalry increases Taiwan's attraction to the U.S. government to confront China. ²² As containing China becomes the U.S. policy, Taiwan's geographic location has turned to be more important to the U.S.'s interests. Biden seems to be tough on China while demonstrating commitment to Taiwan. When the PLA's warplanes approached Taiwan, the State Department urged China to cease its military pressure by affirming that the U.S.'s commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid. ²³ On April 16, 2021, Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Suga had a summit on the recent cross-Strait tension. Both leaders "underscore the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. ²⁴ Maintaining the status quo is the priority for the Biden's administration. High-ranking U.S. officials also show support for Taiwan. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan called for the U.S. to invest in capabilities that would

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¹⁸ Alex Ward, ibid.

¹⁹ Zhang Han and Liu Xuanzun, ibid.

²⁰ "Tabletop Han Kuang games begin," Taipei Times, April 25, p.3.

²¹ Derek Grossman, "Biden doubles-down on Trump's Taiwan policy, but will it last?" February 6, 2021, Nikkei Asia, https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Biden-doubles-down-on-Trump-s-Taiwan-policy-but-will-it-last.

²² John Culver and Ryan Hass, ibid.

²³ Joshua Keating, ibid.

²⁴ Ralph Jennings, "US-Japan Statement Raises Issue of Taiwan Defense Against China," VOA, April 24, 2021, https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/us-japan-statement-raises-issue-taiwan-defense-against-china.

bolster deterrence in the Taiwan Strait. Secretary of State Blinken ensured that the U.S. will provide Taiwan with the capabilities it needs to defend itself.²⁵

2) THE DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT

Beijing has shown hostility toward Taiwan by working to exclude Taipei's international participation. In response, the Biden administration is supportive of enhancing U.S. and Taiwan relations, and facilitating Taiwan's participation in the international organizations. First, the U.S. government has strengthened relations with Taiwan. In January 2021, Biden became the first President since 1978 to host Taiwan's envoy at his inauguration. ²⁶ The State Department announced a new policy to encourage engagement of bilateral government officials. ²⁷ Second, the U.S. assists Taiwan's contributions in meaningful international organizations. The Biden team supports the Taipei Act and encourages governments and international organizations to increase their relations with Taiwan. Blinken also affirmed U.S.'s support for Taiwan's membership in the World Health Organization. ²⁸

3) THE MILITARY SUPPORT

As China's fighter jets and carrier group harasses Taiwan, the military support under Biden's administration increased. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin responded, "He would make sure that the U.S. are living up to its commitments to support Taiwan's ability to defend itself." ²⁹ There is some military support under the Biden's administration. First, military deterrence. The guided missile destroyer conducted a transit of the Taiwan Strait on March 3, 2021. The U.S. commented this transit demonstrated its commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. ³⁰ Second, arm sales. In March 2021, the American Institute in Taiwan informed the Tsai's administration that an arm sale that include 40 M109A6 "Paladin" self-propelled howitzers, with delivery expected between 2023 and 2025. ³¹ Third, self-defense capabilities. On April 15, Chris Dodd led a delegation to Taiwan at the Biden's request to reaffirm the U.S.-Taiwan

David Sacks, "Biden Administration Sends Important Signals for the Future of U.S.-Taiwan Ties," Council on the Foreign Relations, January 28, 2021, https://www.cfr.org/blog/biden-administration-sends-important-signals-future-us-taiwanties.

²⁶ Peter Beinart, "Biden's Taiwan Policy Is Truly, Deeply Reckless," The New York Times, May 5, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/05/opinion/biden-taiwan-china.html.

²⁷ Robert Delaney, "US announces new policy encouraging government ties with Taiwan officials," South Morning Post, April, 10, 2021, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3129013/us-announces-new-policy-encouraging-government-ties-taiwan

²⁸ Derek Grossman, ibid.

²⁹ David Sacks, ibid.

³⁰ "U.S. Warship Transits Taiwan Strait Amid China Tensions," Reuters, April 7, 2021, https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-04-07/us-warship-transits-taiwan-strait-amid-china-tensions

³¹ John Feng, "Joe Biden Set To Approve First Arms Sale to Taiwan Amid China Threat," Newsweek, April 20, 2021, https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-set-approve-first-arms-sale-taiwan-amid-china-threat-1584931.

partnership, which he described as "stronger than ever." Dodd added that Biden would support Taiwan military investments in self-defense.³²

Under Biden, the U.S. will continue to maintain its security commitments as outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances by providing arms sales, carrying out freedom of navigation exercises in the Taiwan Strait, advocating for Taiwan's international participation, and sending U.S. officials to Taiwan.³³

IV. TAIWAN'S RESPONSES

President Tsai has sought to bolster Taiwan's defense by raising the defense budget, reforming the reserves, and purchasing weapons. Her administration has also pushed to revive Taiwan's domestic weapons manufacturing, including submarines, armored vehicles, and aircraft.³⁴

1) SHOWING RESOLVE TO DEFEND TAIWAN

To show Taiwan's resolution of defending their homeland, Foreign Minister Joseph Wu stated that the defense of Taiwan is the responsibility of Taiwanese people. Tsai's government will effortlessly improve defense capability. Taiwanese people will defend themselves to the very last day.³⁵ In March 2021, the Taiwan Defense Minister said that "I always tell my peers to stop asking, 'how many days we need to hold out?' The question is, 'how many days does China want to fight?' We'll keep them company for as many days as they want to fight."³⁶ Taiwan attempted to send a clear message to the international society that their military have the resolve to defend Taiwan and will not take advantage of the U.S. security commitment.

2) INCREASING DEFENSE BUDGET

In 2021, President Tsai's administration has increased its military budget 10 percent, to about \$15 billion a year. The acquisitions of weapons include two main sources. First, Taiwan has purchased upgraded warplanes, howitzers, missiles, and other military hardware from the U.S. Second, with China firmly opposing Taiwan's weaponry acquisition from foreign countries, Tsai administration has actively pushed to revive Taiwan's domestic weapons manufacturing, including submarines, armored

³² John Feng, ibid.

Bonnie Glaser, "Biden to adopt policy of 'doing no harm' to Taiwan: Bonnie Glaser," January 22, 2021, Focus Taiwan, https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/202101220009.

³⁴ Erin Hale, ibid.

³⁵ Associated Press, ibid.

Ryan Pickrell, "Taiwan warns it will fight to 'the very last day' if attacked as China steps up its military activity nearby," Insider, April 7, 2021, https://www.businessinsider.com/taiwan-warns-fight-to-end-conflict-with-china-2021-4.

³⁷ Michael E. O'Hanlon, "An asymmetric defense of Taiwan," Brookings, April 28, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/04/28/an-asymmetric-defense-of-taiwan/.

³⁸ Associated Press, ibid.

vehicles, and military aircraft.39

3) REQUESTING THE U.S.'S SUPPORT

The Biden administration prevents China from coercing democratic Taiwan. The U.S. and Taiwan governments have taken steps to enhance their bilateral relations that would be consistent with the sprits of the Taiwan Relations Act, the Taiwan Travel Act, and the Taipei Act. The Tsai's administration has acknowledged that its cooperation with the U.S. is essential in resisting China's military threat. Taiwan has requested the U.S. government can have a greater clarity and assurance of U.S. commitments to defend Taiwan because it is critical for the purposes of deterrence. 41

4) IMPROVING DEFENSE CAPABILITY

The Han Kuang military exercises are held annually in two stages: the tabletop drills and live-fire drills. The "tabletop" stage of the 2021 took place from April 23 to 30 to test Taiwan's defense against a simulated attack by China.⁴² With China's escalating military aggression, the 2021 tabletop drills lasted for eight days, the longest in the history of the exercises. The live-fire component of the exercises is scheduled from July 12 to 16.⁴³ The drills are designed based on the toughest enemy threats, simulating all possible scenarios on an enemy invasion on Taiwan.⁴⁴

V. CONCLUSION

As China's threats against Taiwan have mounted, the U.S. strategists have been debating whether it is time for shifting U.S. security commitment to Taiwan from "strategic ambiguity" to "strategic clarity." The U.S. polling suggests that while foreign policy elites endorse going to war for Taiwan, ordinary Americans are skeptical. A 2021 report by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found that while 85 percent of Republican leaders support sending U.S. troops to defend Taiwan, only 43 percent of Republicans among the public agree. As a senator, President Biden voted in favor of the TRA. However, Biden wrote a Washington Post opinion article in 2001 arguing that the TRA did not require the U.S. to come to Taiwan's defense. It is likely that the Biden's administration will continue to implement strategic ambiguity.

- 39 Erin Hale, ibid.
- 40 Chip Gregson, Russell Hsiao, and Stephen Young, ibid.
- 41 Chip Gregson, Russell Hsiao, and Stephen Young, ibid.
- ⁴² "Tabletop Han Kuang games begin," Taipei Times, April 25, p.3.
- 43 "Tabletop Han Kuang games begin," ibid.
- 44 Ben Blanchard and Yimou Lee, ibid.
- 45 Michael E. O'Hanlon, ibid.
- **46** Peter Beinart, ibid.
- 47 Alex Ward, ibid.

Polling indicates that most Taiwanese do not feel very threatened and are not worried about imminent attack.⁴⁸ Since it is difficult to predict whether the U.S. will come to defend Taiwan if China attacks Taiwan, Tsai's administration has the responsibility to inform the public that the war is possible. The Taiwanese people need to be actively preparing for the worst-case scenario. The ruling party of Taiwan should also do all means to prevent the war from happening.

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⁴⁸ John Culver and Ryan Hass, ibid.

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