

Investigating China's Maritime Military Exercises and Expansion: Challenges to Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

China's naval military drills and expansion have become an emblematic aspect of its neighbourhood policy, with significant consequences for Taiwan and the larger Indo-Pacific security situation. This essay analyzes China's development of naval capabilities, such as the PLAN modernization, its strategic objectives, and the consequences of its military drills in the Taiwan Strait. The enhanced intensity and sophistication of such exercises are a signal of China's desire to construct combat readiness, deter foreign intervention, and claim sovereignty over Taiwan. These exercises, when they are performed within the contexts of blockades and amphibious landings, constitute both military training and psychological coercion against Taiwan's government and citizens.

This specific study also attempts to account for Taiwan's security measures, e.g., its asymmetric defence policies, military modernization, and reliance on global alliance, particularly that of the United States. The regional security states and alliances such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) are also discussed in their role to counter China's expansion on the seas. The study examines how China's naval superiority threatens the rules-based international order, which is disrupting world trade, maritime law, and regional stability.

By analyzing China's strategic imperatives, Taiwan's counter-Measures, and international responses, this essay illuminates the broader geopolitical implications of Beijing's blue-water ambitions. It provides policy recommendations for de-escalating military tensions, building up Taiwan's resilience, and promoting regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINA AND TAIWAN

The complex relationship between China and Taiwan began early in the 20th century. Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, the Republic of China or just the ROC. The island was occupied by Japan, who were awarded the island by China in 1895 following the First Sino-Japanese War. Colonial power continued until Japan lost World War II in 1945 when Taiwan was recaptured by the Chinese.

The succeeding Chinese Civil War between the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) and Communist Party of China (CPC) led to the CPC victory and the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The KMT then moved to Taiwan, where it still maintained the Republic of China (ROC) government. Taiwan has since then remained an independent state, having developed its own political and economic structures. The PRC continues to regard Taiwan as a rebel province and has remained committed to the reunification theme, keeping for itself the threat of force

1.2 OVERVIEW OF CHINESE MILITARY EXPANSION

In the past few decades China has widened and developed its navy forces with the purpose to transform

the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) from being a coastal boundary force into being a blue-water navy capable of deployment in oceans around the world. Expansion encompasses building cutting-edge warships, aircraft carriers, submarines, and assault amphibious ships.

Notably, China for the first time in history performed so-called "dual carrier op" or "photo op" with both operational Chinese Navy carriers. CV-16 Liaoning and CV-17 Shandong moved as close to a coordinated formation as was possible in the South China Sea, covered from above by twelve J-15 carrier-based air fighters. Notably up to 15 catapult-capable J-15B fighter aircraft would have been included in this spectacle. In addition to the new J-15D electronic warfare variant, the latter also seems to have been embarked on Shandoong.

Along with the two carriers were three Type 055 DDG, 13,000-ton cruiser-sized guided missile destroyers. Other escorts included five Type 052D DDG and one Type 054A FFG. Surprisingly, both Type 901 fast combat supply ships were also part of this exercise. The Type 901 is a very large auxiliary design that was specifically intended to escort carrier strike groups. The PLAN has also invested in amphibious warfare, including major amphibious assault ships like the Type 075, which are crucial to potential operations around the Taiwan Strait. These developments are complemented by developments in missile systems, electronic warfare, and integrated command and control, enabling the PLAN to conduct sophisticated joint operations.

China's sea strategy is meant to project sovereignty claims, guarantee maritime trade routes, and improve its strategic depth. By acquiring control of strategic waterways and projecting power to areas such as the South China Sea, China challenges international rules-based order and raises the danger of military escalation.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF TAIWAN STRAIT IN GEOPOLITICS

The Taiwan Strait, 180 kilometres broad and dividing Taiwan from the mainland of China, is geopolitically important. It is an important shipping route for global shipping, with a significant proportion of world trade passing through the region. The strategic position of the strait makes it an important player in regional security politics, particularly in the context of the contentious relationship between China and Taiwan.

The People's Liberation Army military exercises within the Taiwan Strait have multiple objectives like to heighten operational levels of readiness, to issue a deterrence message, and to claim sovereignty on Taiwan. These exercises are typically followed by joint naval and air operations, mimicking blockade and amphibious assault, thus exerting pressure on the defense system of Taiwan. For example, in 2024, China's People's Liberation Army Eastern Theatre Command organized the "Joint Sword-2024" exercises, including joint operations inside the Taiwan Strait and nearby waters, showcasing China's military capabilities. And according to a senior Chinese Naval Officer Captain Li Xi, the spokesperson of the Theatre Command, said that the exercises were a "strong punishment for the separatist activities of 'Taiwan independence' forces and a stern warning against the interference and provocation by external forces."

The United States and its allies have responded by strengthening their military presence in the area and conducting freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) to push back against China's claims. Joint presence in the area by the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) of the United States, Japan, India, and Australia is aimed at pushing back against China's dominance and ensuring an open and free Indo-Pacific area.

Overall, the geopolitical importance of the Taiwan Strait depends on its strategic positioning, the disputed China-Taiwan relationship, and the broader regional and global security implications.

2. EVOLUTION OF CHINESE MARITIME STRATEGY AND MILITARY EXPANSION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

China's maritime policy and naval development have witnessed stunning changes in the past few decades, transforming the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) into a blue-water naval power from a predominantly coast-based defense force. This has been driven by China's rapidly growing economy, expanding security interests, and ambitious geopolitical aspirations, especially in the Indo-Pacific.

The PLAN modernization process best describes Beijing's strategic objectives, which are the safeguarding of maritime trade routes, the assertion of territorial claims, and the weakening of U.S. naval dominance in Asia. This section analyses the most significant phases of China's naval expansion, the technological advancements in its fleet, and the far-reaching implications of its maritime policy.

2.2 THE CHINESE MARITIME STRATEGY: A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

During most of the 20th century, China's military strategy was continental, and the focus was on land-based military forces rather than naval expansion. During the Cold War, China's naval strategy was defensive in nature, with a focus on protecting China's coasts to ensure the sovereignty of China. The PLAN was a "green-water" navy, i.e., restricted to operating in China's coastal waters.

But with economic reforms in the late 20th century and rising international trade interests, China began to shift towards a more assertive maritime policy. Under Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s, China realized the importance of maritime power for economic security and regional hegemony. This led to the PLAN modernizing over time, with investment in naval infrastructure, shipyards, and training.

The watershed era was during the 1990s and the early 2000s when China started investing in naval build-up to safeguard its economic interests, i.e., maritime trade lines. This was primarily driven by:

The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis that revealed China's weaknesses in its naval force when the U.S. sent aircraft carriers close to Taiwan. Increased concerns over the U.S. military presence in the Indo-Pacific and the chances of being involved in territorial disputes with China. To protect sea lines of communication (SLOCs) for China's energy imports and exports.

2.3 Modernization and Expansion of the PLAN

Chinese naval expansion significantly gained pace in the 2010s and 2020s, with emphasis on the construction of an advanced and technologically equipped navy. The major elements of this expansion are:

2.3.1. Aircraft Carrier Evolution

China commissioned its first aircraft carrier, Liaoning, in 2012, a landmark moment in naval modernization. The second carrier, Shandong, was commissioned in 2019, which demonstrated China's ability to build and operate its own carriers.

A third carrier, Fujian, launched in 2022, features a more sophisticated electromagnetic catapult system, which is taking China closer to U.S. carrier capabilities.

2.3.2. Increase in Surface and Submarine Fleet Forces

PLAN has commissioned a fleet of Type 055 guided-missile destroyers, among the world's most advanced warships, capable of conducting anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare. Recent advancements in submarines include the Type 094 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), which enhance China's second-strike nuclear deterrence considerably.

The Type 075 assault ships boost the Chinese expeditionary warfare and amphibious operation capacities, primarily regarding Taiwan.

2.3.3. Naval bases and marine structures

China have built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea, thus claiming its territorial sovereignty and establishing strategic naval bases. The "String of Pearls" strategy entails building sea and logistics facilities in nations such as Pakistan (Gwadar), Sri Lanka (Hambantota), and Djibouti, thereby enhancing China's ability to reach vital maritime chokepoints.

2.3.4. High-Tech Weapons and Equipment

China has also invested in hypersonic missiles such as the DF-21D "carrier killer" missile, which is said to attack U.S. aircraft carriers. The emergence of unmanned sea systems, cyber warfare technology, and space-based surveillance significantly enhances China's naval military capacity.

3. CHINA'S MARITIME STRATEGY: OBJECTIVES & IMPLICATIONS

China's naval modernization is consistent with its strategic maritime goals, which are:

3.1. Control of Taiwan

Taiwan is at the center of China's maritime strategy, and PLAN exercises are regularly practicing blockades, amphibious attacks, and missile bombardments against the island. Beijing seeks to dissuade external interference while simultaneously demonstrating its military prowess to exert pressure on Taiwan's administration. China's nine-dash line assertion encompasses huge ocean areas asserted by other countries. With island and reef militarization, China has created a defensive maritime buffer that is defying freedom of navigation.

3.2 Against U.S. and Allied Presence

The United States maintains a strong naval presence in the Indo-Pacific theater, conducting freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) to challenge China's claims of territorial rights. China's oceanic military expansion is aimed at countering U.S. power, namely by developing anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities.

Protecting Global Trade Routes - China's prosperity is based on seaborne trade, and the control of sea lanes in the Indian Ocean, Strait of Malacca, and South China Sea is a matter of strategic necessity. China's overseas port and naval base investments are for the defense of shipping lanes against possible interruption.

Global and Regional Responses - China's ocean expansion has been accompanied by rising tensions with regional and international powers, such as:

3.3 United States & Allies

The U.S. has intensified defense alliances with Japan, South Korea, and Australia to counterbalance China. The Quad alliance (Australia, India, Japan, U.S.) fosters Indo-Pacific maritime security. More arms sales to Taiwan are meant to strengthen its defense against China. Southeast Asian Countries: The Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia have all objected to China's claims in the South China Sea. ASEAN countries want a Code of Conduct (COC) agreement to resolve disputes peacefully.

3.4 India & European Powers

India has upgraded its naval surveillance operations in the Indian Ocean to monitor Chinese activity. The UK, Germany, and France have conducted Indo-Pacific naval operations, a demonstration of intensifying European engagement in the region.

3.5 Strategic Intentions of Chinese Maritime Military Exercises

China's strategy to project naval power, assert its territorial claims, and get ready for future conflicts—especially with regard to Taiwan—now heavily relies on maritime military drills. The frequency and

extent of the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN) maritime exercises in the Western Pacific, South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait have been greatly increased. Combat readiness, power projection, deterrence, and psychological pressure on opponents are some of the many goals of these drills. Analysing regional security dynamics and the wider ramifications for global stability requires an understanding of the strategic goals underlying China's maritime exercises.

This section examines the nature of China's maritime military drills, their strategic objectives, and their effects on Taiwan, regional players, and superpowers.

3.6 Objectives Of Chinese Maritime Military Exercises

Strengthening Combat Preparedness and The Effectiveness of Operations

- The PLAN carries out regular joint exercises in the air and at sea to enhance the naval and air force's teamwork and coordination.
- Drills feature live fire training, simulated amphibious assaults, and anti-ship combat exercises. These activities provide China with real time combat situations to evaluate new weapons systems, control arrangements, and strategic plans with minimal restrictions.
- *Proving Naval Domination and The Ability to Project Power*
- With integrated maritime operations, China intends to showcase its expanding naval might within the region and to other world powers.
- The activity of aircraft carrier groups with destroyers and nuclear powered submarines in peacetime exercises indicates that China has the capability to project power far from the national coastline.

Deterrence of Taiwan and the U.S.

Regular military exercises off Taiwan are intended to intimidate the island into submission and deter actions towards independence. Mock blockades and invasion manoeuvres are used to deter U.S. military action and isolate Taiwan diplomatically.

Asserting Sovereignty Over Disputed Waters

China's exercises in the South China Sea reaffirm its sovereignty over disputed islands and reefs. Maritime exercises are a signal to regional players, including the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia, that defy China's claims.

Psychological Warfare and Political Messaging

Large-scale naval activities off Taiwan and U.S.-aligned waters transmit a psychological message of China's increasing military self-assurance.

State media boosts the effect of these exercises by depicting China as an unbeatable naval power.

Maritime Military Exercises Carried Out by China

China carries out various maritime military exercises to prepare for various combat environments. These exercises differ in magnitude, sophistication, and geopolitical objectives.

Carrier Strike Group Exercises

PLAN carrier groups, commanded by the Liaoning and Shandong, engage in open-sea exercises to mimic power projection. These exercises emphasize carrier-based air operations, anti-ship warfare, and naval logistics.

Amphibious Assault and Island Seizure Drills

Drills such as "Joint Sword" and "Eastern Theatre Command" rehearse Taiwan invasion situations. Troops conduct beachhead attacks, seaborne landings, and city battles, signaling mobilization for an eventual cross-strait war.

Live-Fire Missile Tests and Anti-Ship Warfare

The PLAN conducts live-fire tests for anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) such as the DF-21D "carrier killer" and DF-26 missiles. These live exercises are intended to counter U.S. naval superiority and challenge aircraft carrier strike groups in the Pacific.

Submarine Operations and Undersea Warfare

Chinese nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) are practicing stealth drills to enhance undersea warfare skills. PLAN anti-submarine warfare (ASW) drills against U.S. and Japanese submarines in disputed seas indicate the latter's anxiety.

Joint Naval Drills with Allies

China has been carrying out joint naval exercises with Russia and Iran, a sign of strategic alliances to thwart Western coalitions. The exercises emphasize anti-piracy, search and rescue, and joint combat operations.

Key Areas of China's Maritime Military Drills

China strategically chooses areas for its military exercises in terms of geopolitical importance.

Taiwan Strait

China frequently holds large-scale military exercises off the coast of Taiwan, including mock blockades and air intrusions. These drills probe Taiwan's defense reactions and seek to intimidate its government.

South China Sea

The PLAN regularly holds exercises off disputed islands, including the Spratly and Paracel Islands. In doing so, China aims to bolster its territorial claims and discourage other claimants such as the Philippines and Vietnam.

East China Sea (Off Japan's Senkaku Islands)

China's Navy and Air Force have been more active near Japan's Senkaku Islands, creating increasing tensions with Tokyo. These exercises test Japan's maritime defences and regional response times.

Western Pacific (Beyond the First Island Chain)

China's carrier task forces have lengthened exercises in the Philippine Sea and even east of Guam, showing its expanded blue-water navy capabilities.

It indicates China's desire to resist U.S. military expansion into the Pacific.

Implications of China's Maritime Military Exercises

Impact on Taiwan Increased military pressure compels Taiwan to hike defense spending and pursue firmer U.S. security commitments. Drills around Taiwan's coastlines risk unplanned wars or military misperceptions, further escalating war probabilities.

3.7 U.S. and Allied Responses

The U.S. has stepped up Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in retaliation for China's aggressive drills. The Quad group (U.S., Japan, India, Australia) has strengthened naval coordination to balance China's maritime ascendancy.

Destabilization of the South China Sea

China's aggressive drills have sparked confrontations with Southeast Asian countries, destabilizing regional security. ASEAN nations are being forced to make a decision between economic partnerships with China and military alliances with the U.S.

Risk of Military Escalation

China's repeated incursions close to Taiwan and Japan raise the possibility of an accidental military clash. A U.S.-China naval confrontation in the South China Sea may escalate into a regional war with

international ramifications.

4. RESPONSE OF TAIWAN TOWARDS CHINAS THREATS

Taiwan is confronted with a constantly escalating military threat from China, which has stepped up its maritime military exercises, air intrusions, and gray zone operations in the Taiwan Strait. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has stepped up naval exercises, amphibious assault simulations, and missile tests, indicating its intention to pressure Taiwan into reunification, either by psychological means or force. With this existential threat, Taiwan has embraced a multi-faceted defense strategy to protect its sovereignty. This part discusses Taiwan's military, diplomatic, economic, and technological countermeasures against China's increasing military activities, such as reinforcing its asymmetric warfare strategy, military alliances, defense modernization, and cybersecurity.

4.1 Taiwan's Military Strategy:

a. Overall Defense Concept (ODC)

Responding to China's military expansionism, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense (MND) introduced the Overall Defense Concept (ODC), wherein asymmetric warfare was emphasized to even out the numerically and technologically superior People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The measure is intended to make Taiwanese defense expensive and challenging for a force to be invaded and jam Chinese military plans early in hostilities. Deploy flexible, deployable, and survivable forces to project Taiwan's defensive presence.

b. Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) Strategy

A2/AD strategies are being used by Taiwan to deter or slow down any possible Chinese invasion by: Introducing land-based anti-ship and anti-air missiles, such as the Hsiung Feng III and Sky Bow III. Improving mine warfare capabilities within strategic waterways to slow PLA Navy movement and Improving submarine warfare capabilities using new indigenous submarines (IDS program).

c. Enhancing Air Defense and Missile Capabilities

Taiwan's air defense system prioritizes detection, interception, and neutralization of potential threats. Purchase of F-16V fighter jets and domestic Brave Eagle aircraft. Patriot PAC-3 missile defense systems and domestic Tien-Kung (Sky Bow) air defense systems.

Investments in early warning radar systems like the Leshan radar with the capability of detecting Chinese missile launches.

d. Improved Cybersecurity and Electronic Warfare

Embracing the increasing threat posed by Chinese cyber warfare, Taiwan has established, A Cyber Command within the MND to counter cyber threats from China. Hardened critical infrastructure to resist cyber-attacks on power grids, communications networks, and financial systems.

4.2 Taiwan's Diplomatic and Strategic Alliances

a. Enhancing Relations with the United States

The United States is Taiwan's main security guarantor, which offers defense assistance via the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) (1979) and U.S. arms sales. The 2022 Taiwan Policy Act further enhanced military cooperation. The AUKUS and Quad alliances indirectly support Taiwan's security by pushing back against China's Indo-Pacific expansion. Routine U.S. warship transits through the Taiwan Strait act as deterrence against Chinese aggression.

b. Military Cooperation with Japan

Japan has deepened military intelligence cooperation with Taiwan. The Japanese Self-Defense Forces

(JSDF) holds joint exercises with American forces off the coast of Taiwan. It has also committed to defending Taiwan in the event of a conflict in 2023 under its new National Security Strategy.

c. Deepening Relations with the European Union

The EU has condemned Chinese military aggression and deepened economic and technological cooperation with Taiwan. European nations, such as France and Germany, have deployed naval ships to the Indo-Pacific in support of regional stability.

4.3 Taiwan's Domestic Defense Modernization and Civilian Preparedness

a. Expansion of Taiwan's Defense Budget

Taiwan's 2024 defense budget was a record \$19.1 billion, showing a commitment to military modernization. Investment in the development of indigenous missile production, such as the Hsiung Feng IIE cruise missile, with the capability to strike deep into mainland China.

b. Civilian Defense and Reserve Force Mobilization

To improve national resilience, Taiwan has: Increased civilian mandatory military training under the new All-Out Defense Mobilization System. Established the Black Bear Defense program, educating civilians in guerrilla warfare and emergency response. They also Collaborated with the U.S. on urban warfare training for Taiwan's military reserves.

c. Building Taiwan's Domestic Defense Industry

Taiwan has minimized foreign arms imports reliance by establishing indigenous fighter jets (Brave Eagle program) and construction of locally designed submarines under the Indigenous Defense Submarine (IDS) project and Upgrading drone warfare capabilities, involving AI-based autonomous drones.

4.4 Regional and International Consequences of Taiwan's Military Action

a. U.S.-China Relations

Taiwan's increasing military ties with the U.S. have increased tensions with China. China blames the U.S. for breaching the One-China Policy by supplying arms to Taiwan.

b. Escalation of Military Activity in the Taiwan Strait

The PLAN holds military exercises in reaction to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Escalating tensions raise the danger of military miscalculations and accidental war.

c. Taiwan as an Example for Other U.S. Allies

Ukraine, Japan, and South Korea are all learning from Taiwan's asymmetric warfare strategies. Taiwan's cybersecurity innovations are being used as a model for the defense of critical infrastructure.

5. Global Implications of China-Taiwan Maritime Tensions

Geopolitical stability, international trade, military alliances, and diplomatic relations are all significantly impacted by the growing maritime tensions between China and Taiwan. World powers are concerned about the prospect of an armed conflict or blockade because of Taiwan's strategic location in the Indo-Pacific and China's increasing military assertiveness. This section examines the ways in which these tensions affect military alliances, U.S.-China relations, economic stability, global security, and the larger Indo-Pacific strategy.

5.1. Global Security and Military Alliances Impact

a. Increased U.S.-China Military Rivalry

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy considers Taiwan a key frontline state in countering Chinese expansionism. Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) by the U.S. Navy in the Taiwan Strait are direct confrontations with China's territorial claims, heightening the likelihood of accidental military clashes.

AUKUS (Australia, UK, U.S.) and Quad (U.S., Japan, India, Australia) are bolstering military collaboration as a response to China's growing assertiveness.

b. Spiking Military Spending Among U.S. Allies

Japan has overhauled its National Security Strategy (2022) to facilitate counterstrike operations and hike defense spending to confront China's seaborne expansion. South Korea has enhanced military relations with the U.S. while developing contingency plans for a Taiwan crisis.

The Philippines has broadened U.S. military access to strategic bases under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) to prevent Chinese aggression.

c. Strengthening of NATO-Asia Partnerships

NATO has stepped up diplomatic interaction with Indo-Pacific countries, acknowledging China's emergence as an international security threat. European powers like France and Germany have deployed naval vessels to the Indo-Pacific to ensure freedom of navigation.

5.2. Economic Consequences of China-Taiwan Maritime Tensions

a. Threat to Global Trade and Supply Chains

The Taiwan Strait handles over 50% of global container ship traffic. A Chinese blockade or conflict would severely disrupt international trade. Taiwan produces the world's most semiconductor chips, exporting more than 60% of global chips through TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company). An emergency would bring global industries like automobiles, consumer electronics, and military technology to a standstill.

b. Energy Security Risks

Japan, South Korea, and China depend on energy shipments across the Taiwan Strait. A conflict or blockade may drive up world oil prices and interfere with supply chains.

c. Financial Market Instability

Heightened tensions have led to instability in Asian equities markets, especially in tech and manufacturing stocks. Investors worry that an escalation of military action would cause U.S.-China economic decoupling, exacerbating global economic uncertainty.

5.3. China-Taiwan Tensions' Role in Global Diplomacy

a. China's Diplomatic Pressure on Taiwan Supporters

China escalated economic pressure against nations that have diplomatic engagement with Taiwan. Beijing sanctioned Lithuania for permitting a Taiwanese Representative Office, cautioning other European states against Taiwan support.

b. The UN and International Law Challenges

Taiwan is not represented in the United Nations as a result of China's One-China Policy, restricting its diplomatic representation. The U.S., Japan, and EU support Taiwan joining international organizations such as the WHO and ICAO.

5.4. Escalation Risks: Potential for Armed Conflict and Global War

a. China's Increasing Military Exercises Near Taiwan

The PLA Navy and Air Force regularly practice blockades and amphibious assaults. The 2022 Pelosi Taiwan visit prompted the biggest Chinese military exercise close to Taiwan since the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis.

b. Greater Chance of Accidental War

U.S and Chinese warplanes/military ships sail close together, increasing the chance of accidental conflicts. A misjudgement or inadvertent clash in the Taiwan Strait would initiate a cascade of unintended conflict.

6. The Future of Taiwan's Security: Global Policy Recommendations

a. Promoting Regional Deterrence Strategies

Boost arms sales to Taiwan, bolstering its asymmetric warfare capabilities.

Introduce joint military training with Indo-Pacific allies to deter any Chinese aggression.

b. Increasing Economic and Trade Resilience

Decrease reliance on Taiwan's semiconductor production by increasing manufacturing in the U.S., Japan, and Europe and creating substitute sea routes to avoid the Taiwan Strait during crises.

c. Diplomatic Engagement and De-escalation Measures

The U.S. and China need to create crisis communication hotlines to avoid unintended military confrontations, And Promote Taiwan-China diplomatic negotiations under international mediation.

6.1 Policy Suggestions and Approaches for Resolving Conflicts

Global trade, military security, and regional stability are all seriously threatened by the growing maritime tensions between China and Taiwan. A comprehensive policy approach is needed to reduce these risks and avoid armed conflict. The main tactics discussed in this section include diplomatic engagement, economic resilience, deterrence tactics, and conflict de-escalation techniques.

6.2 Enhancing Taiwan's Defense Capabilities

Boosting Capabilities for Asymmetric Warfare

Taiwan needs to improve its asymmetric defense strategy, emphasizing rapid-response forces, drone technology, cyberwarfare, and anti-ship missiles. In order to provide Taiwan with cutting-edge defense systems. United States should expedite arms sales under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act (TERA).

Enhancing Multi-Layered Air and Naval Defenses

Taiwan must upgrade its missile defense systems (e.g., Patriot PAC-3, homegrown Sky Bow III missiles) to discourage Chinese missile attacks. Submarine and naval mine-laying investment will protect against possible Chinese naval blockades.

6.2.1. Enhancing Regional and Global Military Alliances

a. U.S. and Allied Deterrence Strategies to be Enhanced

The United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) can enhance joint military drills with Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines. The Quad (U.S., Japan, India, Australia) and AUKUS (Australia, UK, U.S.) partnerships should establish common response mechanisms for Taiwan Strait crises.

b. Expanding the Role of Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN

Japan's new security policy permits direct engagement in Taiwan-related crises. The Philippines has provided U.S. military base access through the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), raising regional deterrence against China. ASEAN countries (Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia) must create maritime security frameworks to counter Chinese military expansion.

6.2.2. Economic Strategies to Minimize Conflict Risks

a. Diversifying Global Semiconductor Supply Chains

The EU, Japan, and the U.S. can minimize reliance on Taiwan's chip sector by increasing chip production under the CHIPS Act and investing in other production bases.

b. Securing Alternative Maritime Trade Routes

In response to possible Chinese naval blockades, international supply chains can diversify shipping routes via the Philippines, Indonesia, and India. Greater investment in India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a

competing naval base can be a strategic response to Chinese dominance.

6.2.3. Diplomatic Engagement and De-escalation Mechanisms

a. Building Crisis Communication Channels

The U.S. and China need to establish military-to-military hotlines to avoid miscalculation in the Taiwan Strait. A Taiwan Strait Code of Conduct must be negotiated among China, Taiwan, and regional stakeholders.

b. Multilateral Conflict Resolution through the United Nations

Although Taiwan is not a member of the UN, international powers must push for Taiwan's inclusion in international institutions (e.g., WHO, ICAO). ASEAN-led diplomatic efforts could provide a neutral forum for China-Taiwan talks.

6.2.4. Long-Term Conflict Prevention Measures

a. Facilitating Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation

China and Taiwan should resume talks on trade under the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) to decrease economic tensions. Facilitating common economic projects on renewable energy and technology could improve stability.

b. Facilitating U.S.-China Strategic Stability Discussions

Washington and Beijing would start regular senior-level talks about Taiwan to preclude escalatory measures. It is possible for a "One-China, Two-Systems with Stability Agreement" to be bargained under international mediation.

Conclusion

As we reach the end of this research journey into China's maritime military exercises and its broader strategic expansion, particularly as they relate to Taiwan, it becomes clear that this is not just a matter of geopolitics or military maneuvers—it's a deeply human issue that touches upon identity, sovereignty, fear, and hope.

China's growing naval presence, advanced technological capabilities, and frequent military drills in and around the Taiwan Strait reflect more than just strategic signaling—they reveal a nation determined to assert what it considers its rightful place in the global and regional order. However, these exercises are not merely symbolic. They demonstrate the Chinese government's readiness to use force if necessary to achieve its goals, including unification with Taiwan, which Beijing views as a renegade province.

Yet, the situation is far from one-dimensional. On the other side, Taiwan is not just a contested island—it is home to over 23 million people, a thriving democracy, and a population that, in large part, identifies as distinct from mainland China. For these individuals, each Chinese fighter jet that crosses the median line of the Taiwan Strait, each naval encirclement, and each amphibious landing drill is not just an act of intimidation—it is a reminder that their peace, security, and way of life hang in a delicate balance.

Throughout this study, we've examined how China's military posture is underpinned by a mix of historical claims, national pride, and a strategic need to secure vital sea lanes and regional dominance. From the construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea to the massive modernization of the PLA Navy, China's actions are reshaping the security architecture of the Indo-Pacific. Countries in the region—and beyond—are responding, and Taiwan, at the very center of this tense chessboard, remains both a symbol and a potential flashpoint.

But beyond strategy and policy, one must remember that this growing militarization has real-world consequences. It stirs fear in the hearts of ordinary people living in coastal towns and cities on both sides.

It causes anxiety in global markets reliant on the Taiwan Strait for shipping. And it raises deep moral and ethical questions about the right to self-determination, the use of force in international relations, and the responsibility of global powers to pursue peace over provocation.

What we've seen is that the Taiwan issue is not going to disappear quietly. It demands thoughtful diplomacy, consistent international attention, and, perhaps most importantly, genuine dialogue that includes the voices of the Taiwanese people themselves. Their future should not be decided in Beijing or Washington or Brussels, but in Taipei.

In the end, this investigation is a reminder that security is not just about the number of warships or missile systems a country has. True security comes from mutual respect, understanding, and the willingness to resolve differences peacefully. As China continues to rise and Taiwan continues to resist forced integration, the choices made in the coming years—by governments, by leaders, and by citizens—will shape not just the future of the region, but the trajectory of global peace and stability.

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