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Chinese President Xi Jinping (right)
and U.S. President Trump shaking
hands in June 2019, Osaka, Japan
(Reuters/Kyodo)

Conclusion

War with New and Old Characteristics

This book examined the Russo-Ukrainian War's impact on the military strategies, doctrines, operational concepts, and defense buildup policies of China, Taiwan, and the United States, in which each chapter assessed the future prospects for U.S.-China confrontation. In particular, the book focused on elucidating three questions. (1) What efforts are currently considered important by China, Taiwan, and the United States in view of a Taiwan contingency, and to what extent has the Russo-Ukrainian War influenced these efforts? (2) What factors should be monitored to assess the probability of a Taiwan contingency? (3) Which domains and means will be critical in determining the outcome of a "war with new and old characteristics" in view of a Taiwan contingency? Drawing from the analysis in each chapter, the answers to the above questions can be summarized as follows.

The Russo-Ukrainian War's Military Implications for the United States, China, and Taiwan

First, the United States, China, and Taiwan view the lessons of the Russo-Ukrainian War as confirming the appropriateness of their respective national defense policies in recent years. In this regard, the Russo-Ukrainian War did not have a dramatic impact on the military strategies, military doctrines, operational concepts, and defense buildup policies of the three countries.

As Chapter 1 explained, for China, the Russo-Ukrainian War attested to the correctness of the country's military doctrines (the current "informationized local wars" doctrine and the "intelligentized warfare" doctrine being considered for future warfare), operational concepts ("System of systems operation" and "Integrated Joint Operation"), and force management policies (integrating battles in the cognitive domain with battles in the physical domains of land, sea, air, and space and battles in the information domains of cyberspace and the information dimension). Furthermore, as Chapter 2 suggests, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force has not changed its existing air force strategy of "integrating air and space capabilities as well as coordinating offensive and defensive operations [空天一体, 攻防兼备]" in its air battle concept. While adhering to the existing air force strategy, they are considering deploying stand-off weapons, stealth fighter jets, and accompanying stealth drones that are difficult to intercept, supported by "System of systems" that includes satellite

constellation communications, in order to break through enemy air defense systems in their air combat.

Chapter 3 argues that, while “asymmetric operations” and strengthening “resilience” with U.S. support received attention in the Russo-Ukrainian War, Taiwan’s military strategy for defense operations has focused on them from even before the war. In fact, Taiwan has conducted exercises and defense buildup under this strategy. Additionally, Taiwan has long emphasized the importance of strengthening its independent weapons production capabilities and mobilization capabilities, collectively referred to as “all-out defense.” According to the analysis, the lessons from Ukraine confirmed Taiwan was not wrong about its prevailing policy direction.

As Chapter 5 suggests, U.S. indirect intervention in the Russo-Ukrainian War was somewhat successful at avoiding unnecessary consumption of strategic resources in the U.S.-China competition. There is not an indication that the U.S. indirect intervention in Ukraine had significant consequences on the U.S. deterrence posture in the Western Pacific, including the strategies, budgets, and programs of the Department of Defense. As for efforts to reinforce the deterrence posture against China, the United States on the whole has sustained and even accelerated its pre-conflict tendencies.

Additionally, as Chapter 6 revealed, the U.S. forces have adopted a distributed operations approach for the Western Pacific with China in mind, and this intention has not changed since the Russo-Ukrainian War. Recognizing the importance of securing land in maritime theaters, the U.S. forces are exploring ways to do so through the Marine Corps’ Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) and Stand-in Forces (SIF), the Army’s introduction of long-range firepower, and the Air Force’s Agile Combat Employment (ACE), which operates from austere airstrips while evading enemy attack. Changes have neither been observed in the U.S. military’s execution of “campaigning,” a sustained effort to strengthen relationships with allies and partners to create a favorable situation against China.

These observations do not mean the Russo-Ukrainian War had no military impact on either the United States, China, or Taiwan. Drawing on the lessons from the conflict, all three understand the need to adjust their national defense policies and have begun taking steps in that direction.

As Chapter 1 explains, the lessons from the war are requiring China to make several adjustments. At the strategic and policy levels, the adjustments are: (1) revising the nuclear doctrine, (2) overcoming inferiority in the

cognitive domain, (3) strengthening operational capabilities in the space and information domains through the organizational reform of the PLA, and (4) further enhancing the development of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and anti-UAV air defense System of systems. At the operational level, the adjustments include: (1) further strengthening cyberattacks and precision-guided strikes, (2) reassessing decapitation strikes and enhancing close-quarters combat capabilities, (3) ensuring the smooth implementation of sea and air blockade operations against Taiwan, (4) developing responses to Starlink, and (5) reviewing the command and control system during wartime.

As Chapter 3 has shown, Taiwan's long-time lack of combat experience raises the need to reflect the lessons from Ukraine in modes of warfighting, including "asymmetric operations." In late 2018, Taiwan shifted from a traditional conscription system to an all-volunteer system, requiring men of military age to receive only four months of military training. However, when the transition was completed, concerns were raised that a four-month training was insufficient to maintain force readiness as military pressure from China intensifies. Subsequently, drawing lessons from the Russo-Ukrainian War, Taiwan abolished the four-month training from January 2024 and required men born on or after January 1, 2005 to serve one year of military duty under a conscription system. Furthermore, Taiwan has come to recognize the need to enhance its overall national power, including economic power and foreign relations.

Chapter 5 describes how the Russo-Ukrainian War has prompted the United States to gradually increase its support to bolster Taiwan's defense capabilities. Under the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act (TERA) included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, the United States authorized the provision of weapons to Taiwan through the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA). Additionally, to address delays in the delivery of military equipment, the TERA's provisions require: (1) the Department of Defense and the Department of State to develop a multi-year plan to fulfill Taiwan's defense needs, (2) shorten the process for Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to Taiwan, and (3) prepare an annual report on items not yet delivered to Taiwan, their alternatives, and countries scheduled to receive deliveries before Taiwan. In this way, the United States has increasingly taken steps in line with the model of indirect intervention. Moreover, with indirect intervention in wartime expected to be difficult, this chapter underline the urgent need to increase ammunition stockpiles in Taiwan. In addition, as

seen from the incremental expansion of both the intensity and scope of training conducted inside and outside Taiwan, the United States has slowly enhanced its training support for the Taiwanese military.

Factors Influencing the Probability of a Taiwan Contingency

Conditions that Could Trigger a Taiwan Contingency

Secondly, Chapter 3 of this book identifies the following conditions that could trigger a Taiwan contingency. Through the Anti-Secession Law enacted in March 2005, China has enshrined into law the right to use force against Taiwan under three circumstances: (1) if “Taiwan independence” secessionist forces act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan’s secession from China, (2) if a major incident entailing Taiwan’s secession from China occurs, and (3) if the possibilities for a peaceful reunification are completely exhausted. In response, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense has presented seven scenarios in which the PLA might launch an invasion of Taiwan: (1) Taiwan’s declaration of independence, (2) Taiwan’s clear moves toward independence, (3) Taiwan’s possession of nuclear weapons, (4) domestic turmoil or instability in mainland China, (5) delay in the “Peaceful Unification” of the Cross-Strait, (6) involvement of foreign powers in Taiwan’s internal affairs, and (7) stationing of foreign troops in Taiwan. In addition, the U.S. Department of Defense lists six conditions under which a Taiwan contingency may be caused by China: (1) formal declaration of Taiwan’s independence, (2) undefined moves toward Taiwan independence, (3) internal unrest in Taiwan, (4) Taiwan’s acquisition of nuclear weapons, (5) indefinite delays in the resumption of cross-strait dialogue on unification, and (6) foreign military intervention in Taiwan’s internal affairs.

The analyses in this book also suggest that the probability of a Taiwan contingency in the form of direct U.S.-China clashes may be influenced by (1) differences in nuclear balance perceptions between the United States and China and (2) China’s sea and air blockade of Taiwan and the resulting

wavering of the U.S. model of indirect intervention. In other words, contrary situations will arise in the Russo-Ukrainian War and a Taiwan contingency.

Differences in Nuclear Balance Perceptions between the United States and China

As noted in Chapter 1, China views Russia's nuclear deterrent as one of the reasons for which the United States and NATO countries do not directly engage in the Russo-Ukrainian War. Furthermore, China is enhancing its own nuclear capabilities, and the U.S. Department of Defense estimates that China will have over 1,000 warheads by 2030.

Should China succeed in reinforcing its nuclear capabilities, it may believe it has reached a state of nuclear parity with the United States. As a result, China may embark on a Taiwan invasion of some form, expecting that nuclear threats would deter the United States from direct intervention as in the Russo-Ukrainian scenario.

On the other hand, Chapter 4 posits that even if China increases its warhead count to 1,000 by 2030, it must be noted that this does not automatically imply the establishment of nuclear parity between the United States and China. The United States can maintain a simple numerical superiority without much difficulty if undeployed stored warheads are also included in the count. While many uncertainties remain about the use of China's expanded stockpiles of warheads, to date it is evident that China has not demonstrated a significant degree of emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons, which are considered to be relatively straightforward to utilize as a preliminary measure in order to traverse the nuclear threshold. Furthermore, if the United States were to abandon its security commitment to Taiwan in response to Chinese nuclear threats, it would undermine the credibility of U.S. alliances with Japan and other East Asian allies. In other words, the United States would incur reputational costs. As such, even if China made nuclear threats, it cannot be predicted that the United States will instantly rule out direct intervention, as it did in the Russo-Ukrainian War.

Consequently, divergent perspectives may emerge concerning the evolving nuclear balance between the United States and China. For example, in the case that China does not fully understand the unique reputation concerns of the United States, which possesses a global alliance network, it could contribute to China's underestimation of U.S. commitment. Such

a divergence in perceptions may increase the likelihood of a Taiwan contingency in the form of direct U.S.-China clashes. In this respect, it remains to be seen how the United States will respond to China's nuclear buildup.

China's Blockade against Taiwan and the Wavering of the U.S. Model of Indirect Intervention

Chapter 1 noted that China, drawing from lessons learned from the Russo-Ukrainian War, may conduct a blockade of Taiwan in the event of a Taiwan contingency. It was also mentioned that such blockade scenarios have been simulated during large-scale exercises conducted around Taiwan in recent years.

A blockade of Taiwan does not necessarily imply China's use of force against Taiwan. Beijing places emphasis on ensuring that its blockade of Taiwan is in line with international law. This position adopted by China can be interpreted as a strategy to circumvent external intervention, notably that of the United States, and to impose a combination of political and economic pressure on Taiwan with the objective of achieving "forced peaceful unification."

Conversely, to elaborate on the discussion in Chapter 5, a Chinese blockade of Taiwan implies the risk of collapse of U.S. deterrence based on the model of indirect intervention in peacetime. In a blockade scenario, as with the Chinese nuclear threat scenario, the United States must ensure that the abandonment of its security commitment to Taiwan does not undermine other East Asian allies' credibility in the United States. Consequently, the United States would be compelled either to find ways to maintain its model of indirect intervention in some way, including sustaining support through forcible penetration, or to resort to direct intervention to break the blockade imposed by China.

The resulting situation in the Taiwan Strait would be akin to the Soviet Union's 1948 Berlin Blockade.¹ Allowing the United States to maintain its

1) Regarding the Berlin Blockade, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, trans. Masuda Minoru, Yamamoto Takeshi, and Ogawa Hiroyuki (Iwanami Shoten, 2020), 163–166. In the book, Westad writes, "The Berlin blockade, which lasted for almost a year, was a Soviet political failure from start to finish."

model of indirect intervention in Taiwan, as the Soviets did in Germany in 1948, would substantially lower the effectiveness of the blockade for China and pose the risk of severely damaging its national prestige. On the other hand, the use of military force to forcibly eliminate the U.S. model of indirect intervention carries the risk of triggering direct U.S. intervention, an outcome China fundamentally does not want.

In this way, a Chinese blockade against Taiwan could increase the probability of a Taiwan contingency, including direct U.S.-China military clashes. In this regard, it is imperative to closely monitor the nature of the blockade operation drill that China will undertake as part of its future large-scale military exercises around Taiwan.

Taiwan Contingency: A “War with New and Old Characteristics”

Third, to elaborate on each chapter’s analysis, the following operational domains and factors are expected to determine the outcome of a “war with new and old characteristics” in view of a Taiwan contingency. In a China-Taiwan war, the key operational domains and factors are: (1) contest in the cognitive domain, (2) securing Taiwan’s resilience capabilities to shatter China’s short-war strategy, and (3) superiority or inferiority of stand-off capabilities integrated with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). In a U.S.-China war, they are: (1) contest between China’s intervention prevention measures and U.S. distributed operations, (2) contest over Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR), and (3) strengthening of the U.S. alliance network and China’s estrangement strategy.

Operational Domains and Factors that Become Critical between China and Taiwan

(1) Contest in the Cognitive Domain

It is highly probable that the cognitive domain will become the primary battlefield of conflict between China and Taiwan. As Chapter 1 explained, the PLA seeks to combine mechanized, informatized, and intelligitized forces to inflict destruction and paralysis on the adversary in the physical

and information domains. To maximize these effects, it aims to combine informatized and intelligentized forces and dominate the adversary in the cognitive domain. Through these operational actions, China seeks to ensure the most effect with the least use of force and achieve control over Taiwan in the shortest time. Under this force management policy, China is expected to deploy not only traditional security domain assets (e.g., Army, Navy, Air Force, and Rocket Force), but also new operational assets (e.g., AI and UAVs) and emerging strategic technologies (e.g., quantum computer technology, blockchain technology, and big data) in new-type security domains, such as space, cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, and the cognitive domain.

Conversely, Chapter 3 revealed that Taiwan aims to improve its “civil defense system” in order to undo the outcomes of China’s operational actions. By doing so, Taiwan seeks to maintain and enhance the crisis management and readiness capabilities of not only its military but also its ordinary citizens in the event of a contingency. Taiwan was also described as reinforcing its mobilization system, including reinstating the conscription system that had been effectively abolished. On the other hand, as Chapter 3 noted, while Taiwan makes efforts to maintain readiness for wartime, the normalization of military exercises by China around Taiwan is likely to result in Taiwanese citizens becoming acclimatized to the presence of such activities, thereby reducing overall levels of tension. Consequently, they may conceivably have a delayed reaction to the preliminary phases of a conflict. It has become evident that the success or failure of Taiwan’s defense is contingent upon the will of the Taiwanese populace.

In short, the Sino-Taiwanese contest in the cognitive domain could become the most critical battlefield in a Taiwan contingency. In this respect, it is imperative to closely monitor the public opinion warfare that the PLA is poised to initiate during large-scale military exercises around Taiwan, along with Taiwan’s subsequent response to these exercises.

(2) Securing Taiwan’s Resilience Capabilities to Shatter China’s Short-War Strategy

Second, China is planning to carry out large-scale joint operations involving precision-guided attacks, decapitation strikes, cyberattacks, and drone attacks in the event of a Taiwan contingency. The objective of these operations is to secure an advantageous position by destroying and paralyzing Taiwan’s command centers, air defense systems, critical infrastructure, and other key

facilities. This is to be accomplished with the aim of achieving victory with minimal damage in the shortest possible time. China wants a quick, decisive war to prevent the U.S. military's direct or indirect intervention in a Taiwan contingency.

Taiwan, well aware of China's intentions, attempts to strengthen its own "resilience capabilities" to shatter China's short-war strategy. Under the military strategy of "Resolute Defense, Multi-Domain Deterrence," Taiwan is currently strengthening "resilience capabilities" focused on "asymmetric operations" and mission command, procuring and using U.S.-made and domestically made equipment suited to this purpose, and promoting the relevant training, conscription, and mobilization systems. The procured equipment includes small mobile AI-mounted weapons and unmanned systems that can supplement existing coastal defense forces, as well as high-performance vessels and mobile anti-ship missiles capable of defeating a vulnerable enemy from further distance at sea. Under this thinking, Taiwan adopts the motto of "Whatever we have, we fight with (Fight with what you have)."

As Chapter 4 points out, Taiwan is considered unlikely to repel a Chinese invasion on its own. Consequently, the enhancement of Taiwan's "resilience capabilities" can be regarded as the capacity to resist Chinese invasion until the arrival of U.S. military reinforcements. Furthermore, as Chapter 5 indicates, U.S. support for Taiwan during peacetime is essential for strengthening Taiwan's "resilience capabilities." As Taiwan's "resilience capabilities" grow stronger, China will find it difficult to defeat Taiwan in a short-term battle. As a result, China will more likely refrain from using force against Taiwan, so long as Taiwan does not unilaterally change the status quo, for example, by declaring independence or pursuing nuclear armament.

Furthermore, as Chapter 5 has revealed, the Russo-Ukrainian War has once again shed light on the importance of the defense industrial base. Following the war's outbreak, the United States and other Western countries have boosted their weapons production capacities. This marks a major shift from the pre-war trend to downsize the weapons industry. At the same time, however, a key question becomes how the West can leverage this expanded weapons supply capacity, looking ahead to strategic competition in the post-Ukraine era. Today, as the "production is deterrence" notion gains traction, it goes without saying that the resilience of the industrial base and weapons

production capacity, both in and outside the United States, will become critical factors in deterrence. Even if a conflict arises, these capacities are expected to play a vital defense role by sustaining warfighting capability.

(3) Superiority and Inferiority of Stand-off Capabilities Integrated with UAVs

Third, both China and Taiwan are seeking to enhance stand-off capabilities. As described in Chapter 2, learning from the Russo-Ukrainian War, the PLA Air Force has come to realize that neutralizing an adversary's integrated air defense system will be more difficult than anticipated. Consequently, Chinese military experts and PLA members are paying close attention to the cost-effectiveness of expending U.S.-made PAC-3 missiles against the Kinzhal missile, which Russia calls a hypersonic missile.

Given these considerations, the PLA Air Force is highly likely to attempt at penetrating the adversary's integrated air defense system in future air battles in concert with extensive employment of stealth aircraft and long-range stand-off weapons. As noted in Chapter 1, it is evident that China has come to recognize the complexity of achieving Taiwanese subjugation exclusively through long-range precision strikes and cyberattacks, as evidenced by the Russo-Ukrainian War. In addition, China has reaffirmed the need to strengthen close-combat capabilities. At the same time, however, the PLA also recognizes the importance of non-contact air operations, and views the enhancement of stand-off capabilities as an effective means of paralyzing and destroying Taiwan's nerve centers and achieving victory in a short war. For this reason, China is expected to continue strengthening stand-off capabilities.

As noted in Chapter 3, Taiwan likewise understands the importance of and seeks to reinforce stand-off capabilities. Ever since the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996, Taiwan has developed stand-off capabilities with ranges covering the Chinese mainland. In recent years, it has developed and deployed the long-range Hsiung Feng 2E surface-to-surface cruise missile. Additionally, for its long-range air-to-ground missiles mounted on fighter jets, Taiwan has deployed the domestically produced Wan Chien guided missile capable of targeting runways and purchased U.S.-made AGM-158 missiles. Furthermore, Taiwan deploys the domestically produced Chien Hsiang suicide drone capable of flying long distances and purchases U.S.-made Altius-600M suicide drones.

Considering these developments, the superiority or inferiority of stand-off capabilities between China and Taiwan will be a key factor in turning the tide of a Taiwan contingency in one's favor. On the other hand, as Chapter 3 points out, the deployment of stand-off missiles by Taiwan, which have the capacity to strike mainland China, has the potential to provoke a reaction from China and, consequently, to escalate the conflict. In this regard, close attention must be paid to Chinese and Taiwanese developments in enhancing stand-off capabilities.

Operational Domains and Factors that Become Critical between the United States and China

(1) Contest between China's Intervention Prevention Measures and U.S.

Distributed Operations

As discussed in Chapter 1, the PLA is considering military options to prevent direct U.S. military intervention in a Taiwan contingency. China envisions, for example: (a) using intimidation, (b) waging information offensive and defensive operations, (c) enforcing restrictions on behavior, (d) striking individual operational platforms and small-scale fleets in the sea and airspace, and (e) striking carrier strike groups and overseas bases. In particular, if intimidation by nuclear threats fails to achieve its objectives, the PLA may launch a preemptive strike against the U.S. forces while conducting the "Three Warfares" of public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare.

Moreover, Chapter 6 posits that the U.S. forces, while bearing in mind such Chinese responses, emphasize capacity development to conduct operations under enemy attack. The Army's Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), the Navy's Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO), the Air Force's ACE, and the Marine Corps' EABO and SIF were all established on the premise of executing operations under enemy attack. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, too, is promoting joint all-domain operations that coordinate operations across the land, sea, air, space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum. These operational concepts were developed for armed conflicts with great powers. All (a) have a distributed operations approach, (b) avoid enemy detection through low signature, and (c) concentrate fires or effects.

In light of these considerations, in a Taiwan contingency, the primary battlefield between the United States and China is expected to be a

contest between China's intervention prevention efforts and U.S. distributed operations. Noteworthy, under an operational concept premised on Chinese attack, the U.S. military is already considering operational actions that prioritize dispersion, concealment, and concentration, and in doing so, seek to secure the initiative. In this sense, it is imperative to closely monitor the nature of the exercises conducted by the U.S. military under this operational concept, and to observe how China will evaluate and analyze them.

(2) Contest over C4ISR

China has been focusing on System of systems confrontation in its "System of systems operation" and "Integrated Joint Operation" concepts. The aim of these operations is to build and defend its own combat System of systems and to identify and attack the enemy's critical vulnerabilities. In such System of systems confrontation, China places focus on System paralysis, System destruction, and System protection. Furthermore, under the intelligitized warfare concept, the PLA is considering the introduction of AI to accelerate decision-making and building satellite constellation communication networks. Moreover, the PLA Air Force is expected to pursue collaboration between manned stealth aircraft and UAVs and explore intelligitized penetrating counterair (PCA) using hypersonic stand-off weapons and other capabilities.

For its part, the U.S. military is reviewing its own countermeasures by studying China's operational concepts to some extent. The U.S. Marine Corps' SIF, for example, emphasize the following in a maritime reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance battle: discovering an adversary's information collection methods, maintaining target custody, applying non-lethal means to disrupt an adversary's information collection, supporting the identification of an adversary's positions for strikes, and denying an adversary's information collection (through disrupting, defeating, or destroying enemy sensors and conducting attacks to disrupt adversary reconnaissance efforts).

In this light, the contest over C4ISR will be a key factor in determining the outcome of a U.S.-China military confrontation in the event of a Taiwan contingency. Moreover, as both the United States and China actively employ various UAVs, the contest in the electromagnetic domain is expected to gain further importance.

[3] Strengthening of the U.S. Alliance Network and China's Estrangement Strategy

As highlighted in Chapter 6, for the United States to carry out distributed operations, the U.S. forces must form a “home team” with allies. Accordingly, in recent years the United States has taken steps to bolster its “arc of military alliances” to better counter China in the Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, the U.S. forces have promoted “campaigning” with an eye to giving the United States a favorable position in its precision strike, intelligence, and logistics activities in the Western Pacific in the long-term strategic competition with China. In sum, all of these U.S. military efforts are founded on U.S. relationships with allies and partners.

China is highly wary of alliance network building by the United States and criticizes the strengthening of its alliance system as representing “Cold War thinking.”² Beijing is similarly critical of the strengthening trilateral security cooperation among Japan, the United States, and Korea and among Japan, the United States, and the Philippines, as well as the moves of AUKUS (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States).³

In this light, it is imperative to closely observe and analyze how China will develop strategies to drive a wedge between the United States and its East Asian allies. In particular, with the inauguration of the second Trump administration anticipated to create frictions between the United States and its allies, it will be important to keep a close eye on what kind of foreign policy China will pursue.

2) 人民日报 [People's Daily], February 3, 2023.

3) 解放军报 [PLA Daily], February 4, April 12, April 13, April 17, April 18, and April 26, 2024.