

Key points

1. The Russo-Ukraine war is analogous in several ways to a hypothetical war between China and Taiwan. Like Ukraine, Taiwan is a relatively weak state, threatened by a neighboring great power with a sizable nuclear arsenal who makes historical claims to its territory, and has some backing from the United States. Ukraine's experience provides several lessons for Taiwan.
2. War remains an instrument of statecraft that great powers use in pursuit of their perceived national interests; smaller, weaker states should plan accordingly. In Taiwan's case, that means continuation of the status quo which has helped provide peace for decades.
3. Taiwan should assume the United States will not engage in direct conflict with China on its behalf. This assumption should encourage Taiwan to focus its military strategy on securing an advantage by acquiring more anti-access, area-denial capability and reforming its reserve force to help it deter or resist an invasion.
4. While Ukraine shows Taiwan could expect an outpouring of global humanitarian and military aid if attacked, its island geography and the likely course of the war means it might not manage to receive or access those supplies, and should therefore maintain strategic stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, food, fuel, and other supplies.
5. The United States and others will likely impose economic sanctions on China. However, sanctions are unlikely to alter China's behavior in any meaningful way if it has already committed to war.

Learning lessons from the war in Ukraine will help Taiwan

As the Russo-Ukraine war continues in Eastern Europe, tensions are growing in the Western Pacific. China's growing military capability and claim to Taiwan create a growing risk of war. Taiwan may also elevate the risk of conflict with China should it pursue formal independence or seek a security commitment from the United States.¹

Although Taiwan and Ukraine face quite different circumstances—Russia is not China and Ukraine is not a small island—both face similar dilemmas. Like Ukraine, Taiwan is a weaker, smaller state in the shadow of a threatening great power with nuclear weapons that makes claims on its territory. Both are supported by the United States, including with military aid, and would like to escape their neighbor's sphere of influence.

As the most recent large-scale, conventional conflict of the twenty-first century, the Russo-Ukraine war and its leadup offers several insights for Taiwan regarding what political decisions might elevate its status on China's list of security concerns; it also suggests how certain factors in a hypothetical China-Taiwan war may play out, including how the United States might respond.

Learning lessons from Ukraine's experience may give Taiwan a better chance to prevent, deter, or if needed, resist a Chinese invasion.

¹ Andrew Scobell and Alex Stephenson, "The United States and China: Who Changed the 'Status Quo' over Taiwan?" *United States Institute of Peace*, Last modified June 22, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/united-states-and-china-who-changed-status-quo-over-taiwan>.

Map of China and Taiwan



Source: BBC

Taiwan's island geography, lack of strategic depth, and proximity to mainland China should instruct its policy toward China.

Taiwan should defend, not abandon, the status quo

A critical lesson Taiwan can learn from Ukraine is that while interstate war has grown far less common, war remains an instrument of statecraft which great powers can use in pursuit of their key national interests.² That understanding has explanatory and predictive value without justifying aggression. Given the anarchic nature of the international system, it is prudent for smaller, weaker states to consider the interests of their great power neighbors—or risk attracting their ire. While Taiwan has the right to pursue any foreign policy it wishes, Taiwan must be prepared for the reality that China may resort to military force.

Taiwan is much smaller and weaker than Ukraine and is threatened by China, a country with greater power than Russia. As in Ukraine, the United States supports Taiwan's aspirations to escape its great power neighbor's sphere of influence. While such desires are understandable, great power politics requires soberly assessing the risks of such changes to the status quo. The status quo is recognition that there is one China—Taiwan does not seek de-jure independence and China does not seek unification through force. Taiwan should therefore carefully consider the risks of pursuing policies that jeopardize or abandon the status quo, which has helped maintain cross-strait peace for decades. The unique historical context encompassing the China-Taiwan relationship makes this geopolitical reality even more pertinent.

Taiwan should also avoid situations that antagonize Beijing without clear benefit. The recent visit of U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is an example. As a result of Speaker Pelosi's visit, China held extensive military drills which saw aircraft cross the median line of the Taiwan Strait, warships conduct live fire exercises,

² On the decline of war see, David, A. Backer, Ravi Bhavnani, and Paul K. Huth, *Peace and Conflict 2017* (New York: Routledge, 2018); on its continued possibility, see Barry Posen, "Hypotheses on the Implications of the Ukraine-Russia War," *Defense Priorities*, June 7, 2022, <https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/hypotheses-on-the-implications-of-the-ukraine-russia-war>.



and ballistic missile tests, some of which flew over Taiwan.³ China certainly approached these drills as a rehearsal, learning invaluable tactical information that will help it refine its operations for a future attack on Taiwan.⁴ While Taiwan received a high-profile photo op and statements of support from U.S. politicians, it led China to shift the status quo by regularizing military drills closer to Taiwan. Ukraine received similar shows of U.S. support against Russia and held various military exercises with the United States, but it was invaded regardless and left to fight Russia alone. Taiwan should more seriously consider that its pursuit of closer ties with the United States risks China adopting a more aggressive posture toward it—and in the case of Speaker Pelosi’s visit, allowed China to exploit the situation to gain military advantages.

Taiwan cannot rely on the United States to fight on its behalf

While the United States has supported Ukraine with intelligence and aid, it has not engaged in direct military conflict with Russia on behalf of Ukraine. U.S. interests at stake are too low and the risks too high to justify war with Russia over Ukraine.⁵ The lack of a formal security commitment, the profound costs of a conventional conflict, and the very real risk of nuclear escalation or miscalculation are three key reasons the United States and others have avoided directly fighting in the war in Ukraine. These same factors apply to a China-Taiwan conflict.

The United States, guided by the Taiwan Relations Act established in 1979, maintains no formal security commitment to defend Taiwan, nor does it recognize Taiwan as an independent state. Instead, the United States maintains informal diplomatic relations with Taiwan and a policy of strategic ambiguity—it may or may not intervene on behalf of Taiwan should it be attacked. While this differs from the U.S. approach to Ukraine—President Joe Biden said before Russia’s invasion that U.S. forces would not fight in Ukraine—it would be unwise for Taiwan to bet its national existence on a possibility that the United States will defend it.⁶

The Chinese Communist Party views the integration of Taiwan with the mainland as vital to its legitimacy, with Chinese President Xi Jinping claiming that, “the historical task of the complete reunification of the motherland must be fulfilled, and will definitely be fulfilled.”⁷ As such, it should be assumed that China is willing to endure great costs—far greater than the United States—to achieve this goal. A conventional conflict between the United States and China would see significant casualty rates, with a recent estimate suggesting the United States could lose more than 900 fighter and attack aircraft, encompassing half of the Navy and Air Force’s inventories.⁸ Given geographic and military realities, a U.S. victory is not assured.⁹ As Taiwan lies some 90 miles off the coast of mainland China, China enjoys a big advantage over the United States in operating and supplying forces in theater. Most consequential, there remains a serious risk of nuclear exchange should the United States and China engage in direct conflict. Given these factors, Taiwan should operate under the assumption that, like Ukraine, the United States will not directly fight on its behalf.

³ Seung Min Kim, Eric Tucker, “China extends threatening military exercises around Taiwan,” *AP News*, August 8, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-china-asia-beijing-nancy-pelosi-8fa31bee2bc1dc9979ecd21f7185f7ec>.

⁴ Martin Quin Pollard, Yimou Lee, “China military ‘completes various tasks’ around Taiwan, will conduct regular patrols,” *Reuters*, August 10, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-extends-military-drills-around-taiwan-after-pelosi-visit-2022-08-10/>.

⁵ Posen, “Hypotheses.”

⁶ Michael Lee, “Biden pledges he won’t ‘send American servicemen to fight in Ukraine’,” *Fox News*, February 15, 2022, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-pledges-wont-send-american-servicemen-fight-ukraine>.

⁷ Carlos Garcia and Yew Lun Tian, “China Xi vows ‘reunification’ with Taiwan,” *Reuters*, October 9, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-xi-says-reunification-with-taiwan-must-will-be-realised-2021-10-09/>.

⁸ Tony Capaccio, “What-If DC War Game Maps Huge Toll of a Future US-China War Over Taiwan,” *Bloomberg*, August 8, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-09/what-if-war-game-for-a-us-china-conflict-sees-a-heavy-toll>.

⁹ Helen Elfer, “US military changing strategy after losing simulated war with China,” *Independent*, July 30, 2021, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/us-military-changing-strategy-after-losing-simulated-war-with-china-b1894062.html>.



An asymmetric defense gives Taiwan a fighting chance

With an understanding that it alone is responsible for its defense, Taiwan should study applicable lessons from Ukraine's military resistance. Seven months into the conflict, Ukraine continues to frustrate Russian advances by leveraging defensive advantages and using relatively cheap weapons to destroy more expensive platforms.

Notably, Ukraine's use of air and missile defense systems has so far prevented Russia from establishing air superiority.¹⁰ Likewise, Ukraine has successfully used ground-based anti-ship missiles to target Russian naval vessels, including sinking Russia's Black Sea Fleet flagship, the Moskva.¹¹ It has destroyed Russian armor and aircraft en masse with guided and unguided man-portable weapon systems such as Javelins, NLAWs, remote controlled anti-tank guided missiles, Stinger surface-to-air missiles, as well as unmanned drones and loitering munitions. Ukraine's success highlights for Taiwan how the proliferation of mobile, cost-effective, precision-guided munitions, man-portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, and expendable drones can help level the playing field against a conventionally superior adversary.¹²

Given the power disparity vis-à-vis China, Taiwan should implement a similar asymmetric defensive strategy, with a focus on acquiring anti-access, area-denial (A2/AD) weaponry to deter or resist an invasion, stopping Chinese forces at its coastline, and strengthening its domestic defenses, assuming China attacks its perimeter. Taiwan's island geography indicates it should prioritize capabilities to neutralize enemy air and naval threats. Taiwan should pursue integrated air and missile defense capabilities, anti-ship missiles, as well as intelligence and observation systems to prevent Chinese forces from reaching the island. As in Ukraine, Taiwan can likely expect the United States to provide actionable intelligence and targeting information during a conflict to support this strategy further.¹³ Taiwan should also bolster its shore defense with sea and landmines, static obstacles, fortifications, and pre-targeted artillery. This layered approach of denying China the ability to control the air, sea, and land is the best approach for Taiwan to resist a Chinese attack.

While Taiwan already maintains many A2/AD weapon systems, such as PATRIOT, MIM-23 HAWK, Stinger missiles, Javelin missiles, and indigenous Tien-Kung and Hsiung Feng air and missile defense and anti-ship systems, a quantitative increase in such defenses is needed. Taiwan seemingly recognizes a greater need to invest in its defense, proposing a 13.9 percent increase in its defense budget next year.¹⁴ However, conflicting views regarding what weapon systems to acquire persist. Some Taiwanese officials seek to obtain high-profile weapon systems such as advanced fighter jets and warships in an attempt to seek parity with Chinese capabilities.¹⁵ That approach is doomed to fail, as the power disparity between Taiwan and China is simply too great. In 2021, Taiwan's defense budget was \$16.2 billion compared to China's \$207 billion.¹⁶ Ensuring defense funding is allocated toward cost-effective A2/AD arms procurement is key to increasing Taiwan's deterrent and warfighting capability.

¹⁰ Maximillian K. Bremer and Kelly A. Grieco, "In Denial About Denial: Why Ukraine's Air Success Should Worry the West," *War on the Rocks*, June 15, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/06/in-denial-about-denial-why-ukraines-air-success-should-worry-the-west/>.

¹¹ Joe Courtney, "Moskva's sinking, the rise of anti-ship cruise missiles and what that means for the US Navy," *Defense News*, May 3, 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/05/03/moskvas-sinking-the-rise-of-anti-ship-cruise-missiles-and-what-that-means-for-the-us-navy/>.

¹² David Johnson, "Ending the ideology of the offense, Part I," *War on the Rocks*, August 15, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/08/ending-the-ideology-of-the-offense-part-i/>; Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., "Three Reasons Why Defense is Beating Offense in Ukraine—and Why It Matters for Taiwan," *Breaking Defense*, April 8, 2022, <https://breakingdefense.com/2022/04/three-reasons-why-defense-is-beating-offense-in-ukraine-and-why-it-matters-for-taiwan/>.

¹³ Julian E. Barnes, Helene Cooper, and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Intelligence Is Helping Ukraine Kill Russian Generals, Officials Say," *New York Times*, May 4, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/04/us/politics/russia-generals-killed-ukraine.html>.

¹⁴ "Taiwan proposes large rise in defense spending amid escalating China tensions," *CNBC*, August 25, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/25/taiwan-proposes-large-rise-in-defense-spending-amid-escalating-china-tensions.html>.

¹⁵ Kathrin Hille, "China pressure deepens Taiwan's desire for big US weapon systems," *Financial Times*, August 18, 2022., <https://www.ft.com/content/0d492ad7-9346-4c9e-b186-834c6fc75e85>.

¹⁶ IISS, *Military Balance 2022* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 308, 255.



China and Taiwan military comparison

	Defense budget (2021)	Total active forces	Ground forces	Navy	Air force	Reserves	Tanks	Aircraft	Submarines	Naval ships*	Artillery
CHINA	\$207 B	2,035,000	965,000	260,000	395,000	510,000	5,400	3,227+	59	86	9,834+
TAIWAN	\$16.2 B	169,000	94,000	40,000	35,000	1,657,000	650	504+	4	26	2,093

*Only includes ships classified as principal surface combatants, such as aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and frigates
Source: The Military Balance 2022, IISS

Taiwan's military is significantly outclassed by China's. Taiwan must therefore adopt an asymmetric defensive strategy and increase defense spending to acquire specific weapon systems capable of deterring or resisting an invasion force.

Taiwan has made prudent investments to that effect in recent years, announcing plans to more than double domestic missile production and purchasing 400 Javelin missiles, 250 Stinger missiles, and 1,700 TOW 2B anti-tank missiles from the United States.¹⁷ Taiwan can leverage these cost-effective, versatile, and easy-to-operate man-portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons to its advantage. Javelin missiles and guided anti-tank missiles can be used to target Chinese ships, low-flying helicopters, tanks, and other vehicles that make it on shore. Likewise, Stinger missiles could help prevent China from establishing air-superiority and reduce the risk of Chinese forces gaining a foothold on the island via airborne insertion.

Taiwan should reform its reserve force

A final military lesson for Taiwan is the importance of maintaining well-trained and combat-ready reserves. Ukrainian forces have been engaged in conflict with Russian-backed separatists since 2014, and many reserves called up following Russia's full-scale invasion of 2022 had valuable training and experience from prior service.¹⁸ While Taiwan maintains a sizable civilian defense and reserve force, many Taiwanese worry about inadequate training and readiness.¹⁹ Taiwanese reserves receive only five to seven days of training every two years.²⁰ Many reservists are former conscripts who completed a mandatory 4-month service in the military—currently only Taiwanese men over the age of 18 are required to fulfill mandatory service.²¹ By comparison, Israel, another country that faces significant external threats, mandates 30 months of compulsory military service for men and 24 months for women.²² Taiwan's current reserve system and mandatory service requirements are not likely to

¹⁷ Yimou Lee, "Taiwan to more than double annual missile production capacity amid China tension," *Reuters*, March 3, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-more-than-double-annual-missile-production-capacity-amid-china-tension-2022-03-03/>.

¹⁸ Andrew S. Bowen, "Ukrainian Military Performance and Outlook," *Congressional Research Services*, June 29, 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12150>.

¹⁹ Huizhong Wu, "Military reserves, civil defense worry Taiwan as China looms," *AP News*, September 4, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-taiwan-china-taipei-0ac81227d1fe37822b8a1d084119e248>.

²⁰ Paul Huang, "Taiwan's Military is a Hollow Shell," *Foreign Policy*, February 15, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/15/china-threat-invasion-conscription-taiwans-military-is-a-hollow-shell/>.

²¹ Lawrence Chung, "Taiwan left divided by US ex-defence chief's call for longer compulsory military service," *South China Morning Post*, July 24, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3186406/taiwan-left-divided-us-ex-defence-chiefs-call-longer>.

²² Alexander Fulbright, "IDF cuts mandatory military service for men to 2.5 years," *Times of Israel*, July 1, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-cuts-mandatory-military-service-for-men-to-2-5-years/>; Matthew Strong, "Taiwan to receive all 400 Javelin missiles in 2022," *Taiwan News*, April 10, 2021, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4173428>; Matthew Strong, "Taiwan and US move forward on deal for 250 Stinger missiles," *Taiwan News*, March 18, 2020, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3899549>; Lo Tien-pin and Jonathan Chin, "Budget for TOW 2B missile deal raised to NT\$11.57bn," *Taipei Times*, April 15, 2022, <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2022/04/15/2003776647>.



prove decisive in a conflict with China. Providing more frequent and robust training would go a long way to increase deterrence and improve Taiwan's ability to combat invading Chinese forces with near equal manpower.

Taiwan should build self-sufficiency

Taiwan must ultimately anticipate and prepare for dire economic conditions in the case of war. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal estimates Ukraine's GDP will shrink by 35 percent in 2022 due to Russia's invasion.²³ Taiwan's economic situation could be far worse as the entire island will be involved in conflict, as opposed to Ukraine, where the war is focused in the east and south—allowing regular economic activity to continue elsewhere. Taiwan's economy is heavily dependent on trade, particularly with China, which encompasses some 33 percent of the island's total foreign trade.²⁴ As commercial shipping will be impossible during an invasion attempt, Taiwanese exports and imports will surely halt. Devising strategies to make Taiwan's economy more self-sufficient, especially in critical areas such as energy and food production, may give Taiwan a better chance of resisting Chinese aggression.

Given Ukraine's western border with several NATO states, it has been relatively easy for the West to provide it with humanitarian and military aid. Ukraine's continued war effort is heavily dependent on this aid, with the United States providing \$17.6 billion in security assistance alone.²⁵ While the United States and other countries may want to aid Taiwan in the case of a Chinese attack, several factors will likely preclude a Ukraine-type response. Taiwan therefore cannot assume it will receive abundant western aid and should maintain strategic stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, and other supplies in survivable deep bunkers.

Taiwan's island geography during wartime conditions presents serious challenges in delivering aid, as it will need to be delivered exclusively via ships and aircraft. Given Taiwan's small size, there will likely be no safe and functioning airstrips or ports for aid to be offloaded. Making such an effort even more precarious is the fact that Chinese naval forces may attempt to blockade the island and establish a no-fly zone. The United States and others may not be willing to risk delivering aid to Taiwan if they believe their ships and aircraft will be attacked in the process. Taiwan also lacks the strategic depth—physical distance between a country's borders—that Ukraine enjoys.

China, understanding the pitfalls of a protracted conflict, will likely seek to use overwhelming force to subjugate Taiwan as quickly as possible. This decreases the prospects of significant aid reaching Taiwan and being effectively employed. Finally, U.S. stockpiles of certain weapon systems, ammunition, and supplies have been depleted in support of Ukraine.²⁶ Indeed, Taiwan's deputy head of the military's army planning department, Chu Wen-wu, expressed concern that shipments of Stinger missiles may be delayed given the situation in Ukraine.²⁷ If a conflict over Taiwan were to erupt even in one or two years, critical aid may simply not be available due to long lead times exacerbated by demands of supporting Ukraine in its ongoing war to blunt Russia's invasion.

²³ "Amid Russia's war, Ukraine's economy to shrink by at least 35% in 2022," *Business Standard*, July 6, 2022, https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/amid-russia-s-war-ukraine-s-economy-to-shrink-by-at-least-35-in-2022-122070600532_1.html.

²⁴ Gabriel Dominguez, "What would be the economic cost of a full-blown Taiwan crisis," *Japan Times*, August 16, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/16/business/taiwan-crisis-economic-impact/>.

²⁵ "\$725 Million in Additional Security Assistance for Ukraine," *U.S. Department of Defense*, October 14, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3189571/725-million-in-additional-security-assistance-for-ukraine/>.

²⁶ Gordon Lubold, Nancy A. Youssef, and Ben Kesling, "Ukraine War Is Depleting U.S. Ammunition Stockpiles, Sparking Pentagon Concern," *Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-war-depleting-u-s-ammunition-stockpiles-sparking-pentagon-concern-11661792188>.

²⁷ Roger Tung and Ben Blanchard, "Taiwan flags risk of Stinger missile delays, says pressing U.S.," *Reuters*, May 3, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-flags-risk-stinger-missile-delays-says-pressing-us-2022-05-03/>;

Lawrence Chung, "Ukraine war 'could delay US stinger missile delivery' to Taiwan," *South China Morning Post*, May 3, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3176376/ukraine-war-could-delay-us-stinger-missile-delivery-taiwan>.



Sanctions will not change China's objectives

Following Russia's invasion, Ukraine rallied much of the western world to economically sanction Russia. If attacked by China, Taiwan would likely attempt a similar effort to sanction China. However, a key lesson for Taiwan is that while the United States and other countries may be willing to impose severe sanctions on China—even at the cost of great self-harm—sanctions alone are unlikely to meaningfully alter China's behavior. Also, any effects may take months or, more likely, years to have a significant effect on China's ability to wage war, which is likely too long to help Taiwan.

Historically, sanctions have a low success rate in coercing a state to change its behavior. Nationalism is a key reason why sanctions fail, as states and populations are willing to endure significant punishment in pursuit of a perceived national interest. External pressure also often provides sanctioned regimes with a 'rally around the flag' effect, increasing their domestic legitimacy rather than undermining it.²⁸

Russia has proven this point by continuing its war effort in Ukraine despite the severe sanctions levied on it. As Moscow views Ukraine's political status as inexorably tied to its national security, it has not allowed sanctions to alter its ultimate military objective. While the threat of sanctions may play some role in deterring China presently, they will not help Taiwan if China has already committed to war. Given the national importance of Taiwanese reunification for China, it can be expected that China is willing to endure significant economic costs to achieve that aim.

Moreover, it is unclear if a united international front to sanction China would materialize. Given China's significant influence in the global economy—it is the top trading partner of more than 120 countries and regional blocs—it will be difficult to convince countries far removed from a China-Taiwan conflict to sanction China on behalf of Taiwan.²⁹ Countries may be wary of secondary consequences following economic retaliation as Russian sanctions contributed to global food insecurity, high energy prices, and record inflation.³⁰ China's economy is ten times the size of Russia's, and a similar approach would see greater consequences for the global economy.³¹

Additionally, sanctioned states often find ways to mitigate economic consequences.³² Russia, for example, shifted its oil exports away from Europe and toward Asia.³³ It can be expected that China would also adopt strategies, be it domestic innovation or diversifying international trade, to mitigate the negative effects of imposed sanctions.

Taiwan's best path forward

Taiwan finds itself in unenviable circumstances. However, the Russo-Ukraine war highlights several insightful and sobering lessons. Great powers remain willing to wage war in pursuit of their core national interests. As a much weaker state, Taiwan should do all it can to ensure the continuation of the status quo where Taiwan does not declare formal independence, and China does not pursue unification by force.

²⁸ Robert A. Pape, "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (Autumn 1997): 90–136.

²⁹ "China's Booming Foreign Trade Brings Benefits to the World," *China International Import Expo*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.ciie.org/zbh/en/news/exhibition/news/20210324/27370.html>.

³⁰ Alan Rappeport, "Global Food Crisis Tests Western Resolve to Retain Russia Sanctions," *New York Times*, June 27, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/27/business/russia-food-crisis-sanctions.html>.

³¹ "GDP-China, Russian Federation," *World Bank*, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=CN-RU>.

³² Enea Gjoza "Counting the Cost of Financial Warfare," *Defense Priorities*, November 11, 2019, <https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/counting-the-cost-of-financial-warfare>; Pape, "Economic Sanctions." 90–136.

³³ Krutika Pathi and Elaine Kurtenbach, "India and China increasingly welcome shunned Russian oil," *PBS*, June 13, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/india-and-china-increasingly-welcome-shunned-russian-oil>.



Nevertheless, if conflict does occur, Taiwan must assume the United States will not engage in direct military conflict with China on its behalf. Understanding that it is responsible for its own defense, Taiwan can increase deterrence and its ability to resist an attack by pursuing an asymmetric defensive strategy that leverages cost-effective A2/AD weaponry and technology. It can also reform its reserve system to increase the availability of trained, combat-ready manpower.

Taiwan can take steps to bolster its economic and military self-sufficiency now to prepare for the worst-case scenario and accept the reality that, while the United States and other Western countries may sanction China, it remains unlikely that sanctions alone would alter China's military objectives.

Taiwan should apply these lessons and pursue a dual-track strategy—prioritize efforts to maintain the status quo with China while investing in specific defensive capabilities tailored to deter or, if needed, resist a Chinese invasion. The ongoing war in Ukraine serves as a stark warning of the devastation brought by modern conflict. By studying Ukraine's experience and understanding the unique threat it faces, Taiwan can position itself to avoid a catastrophic war and prolong its autonomy.

