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Strategic Implication of China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative

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The ROC Armed Forces' Contributions to Regional HA/DR Efforts



An EC 225 of the ROC Air Force performs humanitarian rescue at sea. (Source: Military News Agency)

In a world where traditional security issues are no longer the only threats, and countries are increasingly threatened by non-traditional security issues, how countries can deal with these issues, which are indiscriminate and cross-border by nature, has become key to national survivability and sustainability. In light of threat of non-traditional security issues such as natural disasters, infectious diseases and terrorism, the military, which is trained to deal with diverse, complex, and contingent situations, has become a critical part in comprehensive emergency response efforts. In the Republic of China (ROC), “enhancing disaster prevention and relief preparedness” is included in the *2013 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)* as one of the seven goals of the country’s national defense policy, which aims to create a “Hard ROC” defense force. Based on the principle of preparing for disasters in advance, prepositioning troops for response, and ensuring readiness for rescue operations, the ROC Armed Forces are charged with the responsibility for assisting in disaster prevention and emergency actions.

The ROC Armed Forces’ contributions to the response to non-traditional security issues are best known in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR). At home, the Armed Forces have

participated in major relief operations, including those following the 921 Earthquake in 1999, the Typhoon Morakot disaster in 2009, the Kaohsiung gas explosion in 2014, and numerous aviation disasters, among others. Moreover, the Armed Forces have also often lent a helping hand to other countries. In 2004, the Air Force dispatched three sorties of C-130 transport aircraft with relief materials to Indonesia following the tsunami disaster. In 2010, after a huge earthquake hit Haiti, the Air Force sent a C-130 with relief materials to Haiti's neighbor, the Dominican Republic, and the materials were then transported to the affected areas by land transportation. In 2013, after the Philippines was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan, the Air Force sent 18 C-130 sorties carrying relief materials to that country. The Navy also sent a tank landing ship and a frigate with relief aid to Cebu Harbor. Apart from natural disasters, the ROC Armed Forces have also played major roles in disease control, anti-terrorism, cyber security, and maritime security work. Their efforts have been widely acclaimed and acknowledged by both Taiwan's citizens and people throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

As more and more countries in the region fall victims to various non-traditional security threats, collective efforts among different countries, particularly those involving military units, are becoming more important than ever. Existing bilateral and multilateral joint exercises say much about the importance of such efforts, and this begs the question of why the ROC Armed Forces, despite their excellence and willingness to contribute, are absent from most of the major joint exercises addressing non-traditional security threats. In fact, some supporters, particularly those in political and academic circles in the United States, have recognized the necessity of including Taiwan in regional efforts to cope with non-traditional security threats. As stated in the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015*, the ROC should be able to take part in HA/DR exercises, such as the Pacific Partnership, the Pacific Angel, and the Rim of the Pacific. It will comply with wishes of the ROC and benefit the region if the ROC is allowed to join relevant exercises with the initial status as an observer. By gaining familiarity through participation in relevant exercises, the ROC will be able to reinforce its responsibility and commitment to a better regional security environment.



The ROC Navy works with civilian organizations to transport relief aid to the Philippines by a naval vessel during the Typhoon Haiyan disaster. (Source: Military News Agency)

Cross Strait Asymmetries: Leveraging Taiwan's Diplomatic Opportunities to Offset Military Vulnerabilities

Zack Cooper and Mira Rapp Hooper

There are two prominent asymmetries in Taiwan's defense and security policy. The first is Taiwan's familiar need to offset growing Chinese military strength, particularly its power projection capabilities.* The second, less-explored dynamic is that Taiwan's security situation increasingly parallels that of its neighbors in the East and South China Seas. This paper explores how Taiwan can leverage strategic similarities with like-minded regional states to offset growing Chinese military power.

Disadvantageous Military Balance

Over the last two decades, China's military modernization has fundamentally altered the military balance in East Asia. The United States military's longstanding regional military supremacy has been incrementally undermined, particularly by China's development of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities such as conventionally-armed ballistic and cruise missiles, advanced air defenses, and diesel submarines. China's denial capabilities do not allow it to control air and maritime zones, but they have forced US leaders to think twice about the wisdom of forward deploying large and potentially vulnerable targets, such as aircraft carriers. In addition to its focus on A2/AD capabilities, Beijing has more recently developed its power projection capabilities, which also pose a direct threat to Taiwan. When

combined, these Chinese capabilities call into question Taiwan's unilateral defense prospects and the ability of the US to come to Taiwan's aid in a conflict.

Even before its most recent 10% increase in military spending, China already held at least a 10:1 advantage over Taiwan in military spending. China also has a 10:1 advantage in military personnel, destroyers, submarines, bombers, and transport aircraft, to say nothing of China's Second Artillery or its expanding Coast Guard fleet. These dynamics are likely to worsen in coming years as China rapidly reshapes and modernizes its forces. Moreover, given that the US and its treaty allies generally face stable or declining defense budgets, Taiwan should not assume that the prospect of US military intervention will suffice to dissuade China from military aggression.

While Taiwan has long been a central focus of US contingency planning in Asia, this shifting military balance in the Pacific littoral has forced US leaders to think more about challenges to Taiwan's north and south. Not only do US planners have to consider the US ability to come to Taiwan's defense in a conflict, but increasingly they must consider the defense of allies such as Japan and the Philippines. The military challenges that Taiwan faces differ substantially from those of its neighbors. Most notably, Taiwan must remain vigilant against large-

* For clarity, this article uses "Taiwan" when referring to the Republic of China, and "China" when referring to Mainland China.



ROC President Ma Ying-jeou speaks in the 2014 East China Sea Peace Initiative Forum and reiterates the importance of maritime peace and cooperation. (Source: ROC Presidential Office)

scale amphibious landing operations. Taiwan is also more vulnerable to a naval blockade that could be carried out with surface vessels, submarines, sea or air delivered mines, or even air and missile strikes on ports and vessels. The requirement that the US be able to assist Taiwan in the event of a conflict therefore mandates that the US invests in a set of counter-invasion and counter-blockade capabilities. However, these military missions necessitate capabilities that are less relevant to aiding other regional states. As a result, Taiwan's leaders face not only the challenge of growing Chinese military capabilities, but also limited US investment in some of Taiwan's high-priority mission areas.

Recent trends are only part of the regional military challenge, and China's potential future capabilities represent an even more serious concern for China's neighbors, including Taiwan. In the

last several years, China has begun to shift its investments from A2/AD systems to maritime power projection forces. These capabilities—exemplified by China's growing air and space-based surveillance capabilities, expanding blue water navy, and increasingly capable long-range aircraft—pose a challenge not just to forward deployed US forces, but particularly to US allies and partners. China's nuclear deterrent and conventional power projection capabilities remain relatively weak when compared with those of the US. However, China's nascent power projection capabilities, when used in combination with its growing A2/AD capabilities, allow Beijing to militarily challenge the regional status quo.

China's accelerating shift from a denial-focused military to a control-focused military represents perhaps the most important regional military trend of



the decade. In many senses, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is adopting a more symmetric approach to compete with the US, one that complements its longstanding asymmetric advantages. Coupled with its rapidly growing Coast Guard, these dynamics have permitted China to coerce its neighbors in an effort to enforce its maritime claims. Given the reticence of the US and smaller states in Asia to risk a conflict with China, these capabilities have allowed Beijing to act assertively while minimizing the risk of a military escalation. The apparent Chinese expectation that the current US administration will practice restraint in the face of its coercive actions has enabled it to continue these activities.

Although China's asymmetric military advantage is shrinking Taiwan's defense options, China's diplomatic missteps are providing Taiwan with additional diplomatic options.

Advantageous Diplomatic Balance

While China's growing military strength has allowed it to go on the offensive against regional states, its worsening regional disputes provide Taiwan with an opportunity for leverage. China's more muscular regional strategy appears to be motivating China's neighbors to adopt countervailing balancing policies. Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are rapidly improving their military capabilities and seeking to cooperate more closely on security policies. Japan, Australia, and India are doing the same. To date, Chinese pressure has been focused on the East and South China Seas, effectively drawing attention away from the military challenge of defending Taiwan. Therefore, although China's asymmetric military advantage is shrinking Taiwan's defense options, China's diplomatic missteps are providing Taiwan with additional diplomatic options.

China's recent island building efforts may pose more of a strategic threat to Taiwan than has been recognized. Beijing's belief in the inevitability of reunification helps to explain why it has traditionally placed value on Taiwan's strategic presence in the South China Sea. But its own land reclamation and construction efforts in the Spratlys may be undermining the importance of Taiping Island in Beijing's broader calculus.

China's construction of artificial islands changes its strategic position in the Spratlys. These bases will substantially improve its ability to monitor the southern part of the South China Sea and may eventually allow it to declare a second Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). With an airstrip on Fiery Cross Reef and helipads and ports on other features, Beijing's long-term interest in Taiwan's position on Taiping Island is naturally diminished. If cross-strait relations deteriorate significantly, China's new bases could be used to threaten Taiwan's control of Taiping. Furthermore, if one draws a straight line from China's artificial Spratly Islands to the Diaoyu/Senkaku group, that axis cuts directly through Taiwan itself. As China looks to project power out into the Western Pacific, Taiwan is therefore likely to find itself in an increasingly isolated position. Thus, while China continues to have common diplomatic and historical ground with Taiwan in the South China Sea, the strategic picture is shifting.

This situation is only likely to worsen in the event that China announces a South China Sea ADIZ. Many experts speculate that China's inability to enforce its East China Sea ADIZ caused consternation among China's leadership. Therefore, the PLA may be attempting to ensure that it can monitor air approaches throughout the South China Sea, in an effort to detect and intercept aircraft violating any future South China Sea ADIZ. If this were to occur, Taiwan would find itself surrounded on its north, south, and west by Chinese air defense zones, in addition to a maritime periphery that is increasingly under pressure. Thus, as a result of China's expanding pressure, Taiwan's strategic position now parallels those of its neighbors,

providing an opportunity for deepened cooperation.

Taiwan is in a unique position to shape the discussion on regional maritime and territorial disputes. It has initiated one of the few successful recent proposals in maritime Asia: East China Sea Peace Initiative. Taiwan therefore has the potential to be a leader in helping to stabilize the maritime status quo.

Offsetting Military Asymmetries by Leveraging Diplomatic Asymmetries

If the above trends continue, Taiwan's best defense is to align its strategy with those of its neighbors in the diplomatic arena by reinforcing the emerging regional coalition seeking to uphold the status quo. While China is not currently taking action against Taiwan or its outlying islands, China's first island chain claims run directly through Taiwan. Eventually, China's growing sphere of influence will impinge on Taiwan and PLA pressure is likely to be redirected toward the island. When pressure concentrates across the Strait, Taiwan is likely to find itself unable to compete with China's maritime power projection capabilities. Yet, Taiwan may find strong support from its neighbors if such a contingency occurs.

China's assertive activities in the East and South China Seas open diplomatic opportunities for Taiwan. Taiwan is in a unique position to shape the discussion on regional maritime and territorial disputes. It has initiated one of the few successful recent proposals in maritime Asia: the East China Sea Peace Initiative. Taiwan therefore has the potential to be a leader in helping to stabilize the maritime status quo.

Over the next year, international legal developments may present one opportunity for

Taiwan to gain like-minded partners who are concerned with stability and security in its maritime periphery. With international arbitration between the Philippines and China currently before the Permanent Court of Arbitration at Hague, Beijing's Nine-Dash Line will receive unprecedented international scrutiny. If the Court rules that it has jurisdiction, there is a good chance that it will also deem the Nine-Dash Line to be in violation of the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*. How exactly Beijing would respond to such a judgment is unknown, but this ruling could serve as an opening for Taiwan to shift its maritime course.

If the Arbitral Tribunal rules the Nine-Dash Line invalid, Taiwan should take this opportunity to restate its own claims. Beijing has said that it will not abide by the Tribunal's ruling, whatever it may be. Yet, regardless of China's response, that verdict will mark a turning point for Taiwan. By explicitly restating its claims in terms of land features and their legal maritime entitlements, Taipei could reinforce its commitment to stability, rule of law, and peaceful dispute settlement. The time is particularly opportune for Taiwan to reformulate its position because of its upcoming presidential election. While Beijing may be expected to object to a public move by Taipei to restate its claims, the Xi government is keenly focused on domestic corruption and economic issues at present. It does not have an interest in seeing a major downturn in cross-Strait relations, particularly if this were to impact public opinion and the election in Taiwan.

This is not to suggest that Taiwan should cease competing with China militarily. Indeed, Taiwan should continue to exploit Beijing's desire for power projection systems by developing and fielding Taiwan's own A2/AD capabilities such as advanced mines and mobile air defense systems. Taiwan's military has already been at the forefront of developing maritime denial capabilities, such as sea mining capabilities, Hsiung Feng III anti-ship missiles, Kuang Hua VI fast attack craft, and Tien Kung III air defense system. Many regional states, from Japan to Vietnam, are adopting similar



capabilities as they increasingly face pressure from Chinese power projection forces. There may even be opportunities for collaboration with some of these states, given the similar capabilities that they are seeking to develop and the shared operational challenges they face.

Yet, Taiwan's greatest leverage lies not only with its military but also its diplomatic position. For the first time in the 21st century, the geography of East Asia is changing. Taiwan must consider how it can leverage its broader strategic environment to offset the worsening military imbalance. Taiwan's position on island claims is critical, not only to the peaceful resolution of ongoing disputes, but to Taiwan's own future.

For its part, the US must also consider how Taiwan's East China Sea Peace Initiative may serve as a model on the international stage. Washington has long pushed for China and ASEAN to adopt a binding Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, but Beijing appears to be stalling these efforts. If progress cannot be made on a binding Code, US policymakers must consider other multilateral mechanisms for dispute management, and should consider including Taiwan. These discussions may begin as Track 1.5 dialogues and transition to more formal settings as they gain momentum, but Taiwan's resource sharing proposals should be advanced as a paradigm that may provide a way forward in the South China Sea.

A proactive, diplomatic shift by Taiwan would allow it to cooperate more fully with like-minded states in the region at a time when the strategic environment in its maritime periphery appears to be shifting rapidly. Taiwan's willingness to take on a leadership role on these crucial issues would also provide US policymakers with incentive to incorporate it into international dialogues on dispute management in the South China Sea. Adopting such an approach would take Taiwan off the sidelines and make it a fulcrum of regional efforts to maintain stability and security.

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China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative and Responses

Chou Chih-chieh

Preface

The Chinese government initiated two strategic projects, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road,* in 2013, and these projects are collectively known as the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. Some argue that this initiative might launch great geopolitical changes, and will demonstrate Beijing's proactive stance, financial capabilities, and assertiveness. There is no doubt that China's economic power and its position among the leading nations are on the rise, but there has been much speculation about the extent of China's abilities and the nature of its intentions. The reactions from countries included in the plan, and from those parties that will be influenced, vary greatly, their responses will also shape the future of this policy.

A map published by China's Xinhua News Agency shows several "stops" on the land-based Silk Road through Central Asia as well as on its maritime counterpart, and Beijing is still expanding its list of potential partners, since its plans are still in development. A so-called Silk Road Fund, which will contain USD 40 billion, will support infrastructure investments in countries involved in this plan, and this recent plan is in addition to China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) proposal that has already has over 50 countries applying for membership. In fact, China had already invested vast sums of money in these countries even before announcing the Silk Road initiative. It is possible that a more coherent approach and concrete policy concerning the "One Belt, One Road" plan may emerge in 2015. If this plan is realized, it will create

an enormous economic zone and directly benefit 4.4 billion people (63% of the global population). Moreover, this zone has a collective GDP of USD 2.1 trillion, which is 29% of the world's wealth. It is most likely that China will offer aid bilaterally, which will provide more direct benefit to Chinese companies and ensure the much-needed burnishing of China's reputation abroad. This development aid will likely go to countries with large domestic markets or major commodity resources.

In most cases, the Silk Road plan has not been a hard sell. Less-developed countries are eager to gain Chinese assistance in building critical infrastructure for their people. Compared with other powers, China may be the only ready source of aid for these countries.

China's Intentions and Efforts

China's intentions are clear. The main idea behind its actions is to promote infrastructure development in Asia (and possibly beyond), thereby enabling deeper economic cooperation. Through this strategy, China can increase its regional influence as well as support its domestic economy by encouraging trade and investment and creating business opportunities overseas for Chinese

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companies. First, the “One Belt, One Road” plan will boost China’s trade throughout almost the entire Eurasian continent. At the same time, if China pays for various infrastructure projects, the resulting trade network will convince participating and affected countries that China is a partner and benefactor, rather than a threat. China can thus simultaneously promote a softer image, while strengthening its regional power.

Additionally, this plan, with its land and maritime routes, will link China more closely with Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe through its landlocked neighbors in Central Asia and the states in the Indochina Peninsula and South Asia. In addition, it will decrease China’s geographic and strategic vulnerability by diversifying transportation routes. The resulting system of ports, railways, and roads will effectively help China secure the shipment of oil and gas and other essential goods needed to sustain China’s economic development. It will thus strengthen the country’s energy and economic security, and reduce the risk of transporting fuel and goods through unstable or unfriendly regions. For example, the proposed transport corridors through Pakistan, Myanmar, and Thailand will shrink China’s dependence on the shipping route through the Strait of Malacca. China has also taken over operation of Pakistan’s Gwadar port, enabling it to obtain oil from the Middle East while avoiding the Malacca Strait, where the US presence seems to dominate. In short, since China is situated in a rough neighborhood and shares a long contiguous land border with Russia and India and a common sea boundary with Japan, this plan could possibly be seen as a strategy to prevent any encirclement or containment by hostile power acting in concert with other states to harm China’s interests.

Significantly, China’s economic power is rising and still increasing, and Beijing is naturally trying to take advantage of its fiscal strength to boost its political influence. It is a truism that a rising global power will always seek to utilize its economic strength to secure its foreign policy goals. Looking back on history, the United States’ Marshall Plan

in the end of WWII helped to establish itself as a dominant power, and China’s current initiative might enable it to do the same. Of course, some Chinese scholars have criticized the putative similarities between the two plans, and asserted that the “One Belt, One Road” strategy has nothing to do with ideological intentions and a desire to achieve hegemony. Furthermore, there are no political preconditions for this plan, which is open to all countries pursuing development and growth. In contrast to the Marshall Plan, the “One Belt, One Road” plan emphasizes mutual negotiation, joint efforts, and sharing the fruits of development. Each country can decide whether or not to participate in this plan. China seems to understand the key desire of many developing countries to achieve development first, particularly development without the political restraints imposed by the West.

More importantly, by linking the economies of Central Asia with western China, Beijing will encourage further development and stability in the comparatively less-developed Xinjiang and Tibet areas, which will weaken any potential support that Uygur dissident groups may obtain from kindred Muslims in Central Asia. This suggests that Beijing’s plan goes far beyond simply sharing economic prosperity, but has also readily evident political and security implications. Furthermore, the plan will also provide a strategic outlet for Beijing at a time when the Pacific Ocean is being blocked by the US. In view of the fact that China is pushing for a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific region (FTAAP) to balance the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), this strategy is an open statement that China will someday aim to share Washington’s current dominance in the Asia-Pacific.

Responses from the International Community

On the one hand, some countries in the region welcome Beijing’s initiative and perceive it as an excellent opportunity to comprehensively deepen economic and people-to-people relations. Many

smaller and less-developed countries indeed require financial assistance if they try to establish new ports or other transportation infrastructure or upgrade existing facilities, and they welcome a new sponsor or financier. This is especially the case in so far that Beijing has long coupled its foreign aid with a policy of non-intervention. Compared with the “Washington Consensus” and its political conditionality, the “Beijing Consensus,” and its freedom from political requirements, is more popular with states that have limited access to capital and technology because of foreign-imposed sanctions or stringent governance requirements set by regional or international lending institutions, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Asian Development Bank. This is one of the reasons Chinese help is so attractive.

On the other hand, some countries that consider Beijing a major national security threat, and may mistrust China’s strategic objectives, are more likely to adopt a wait-and-see position toward China’s implementation of the initiative. To some degrees, China has fuelled its neighbors’ suspicions by taking an aggressive stance on territorial disputes in recent years, and giving repeated warnings concerning the possibility of military solutions to overlapping territorial claims with Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and India. Central Asian states are fearful

of replacing Moscow with Beijing as the regional economic hegemon. China’s huge population also causes some fears of growing numbers of Chinese immigrants in the region. As such, many countries simultaneously look forward to the benefits of the “One Belt, One Road” plan while also hope to offset their economic dependence on China by strengthening ties with other powers, especially the US. In terms of soft power, Washington remains far more influential than Beijing in Asia. The continued American presence in the region is still crucial for most countries, particularly in terms of the security dimension.

Moreover, it is obvious that India, and especially the Indian security establishment, is concerned about China’s Silk Road plan. Delhi’s strategists have long objected to China’s road construction near India’s land frontiers and port-building in the Indian Ocean, and treat these actions as strategic encirclement of India. India not only regards China’s plans as part of the strategic encirclement of India, but also sees them as the same as other similar but smaller initiatives, such as China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the prospective Trans-Himalayan Economic Zone of Cooperation with Nepal and Bhutan, and the Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar (BCIM)



The “One Belt, One Road” plan includes a land route and maritime route that pass through several countries, and China is still expanding the list of participants. (Graphic design: Lin Yi-jie)

Economic Corridor connecting India's northeast to China's southwest, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Mainstream Indian decision makers and security scholars insist that India cannot allow China to gain access to India's sensitive areas. However, India badly needs connectivity, and Delhi has rarely dealt with this concern in recent years. If the Modi government ignores the issue, it will be paving the way for India's marginalization from significant geo-economic and geopolitical transformations in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. However, Modi is also aware that China is not the only option in terms of increasing connectivity, since Japan and America are eager to collaborate with India as a counterbalance to China.

With regard to the South China Sea issues, China must address the question of which countries along the proposed route will permit the leasing of ports and related facilities, which would create anxiety on the part of India, as well as the US. For those countries located around the South China Sea, the continued presence of Chinese naval and coast guard vessels patrolling shipping sea lanes and waters may dissuade them from participating in this plan. Territorial and maritime disputes generally compel states to disregard their economic advantage. However, if China is willing to fund some multilateral actions connected with transnational or non-traditional security issues, such as joint exercises or search and rescue operations, joint measures against maritime piracy and terrorism, responses to maritime pollution and marine environment degradation, and even joint management of shared fisheries resources and joint development of offshore oil and gas and seabed minerals, relevant countries might welcome China's presence and be willing to participate in the "One Belt, One Road" plan.

As for the relationship between Beijing and Moscow, while relations between Russia and the West have been significantly cooler since the recent Ukraine conflict, cooperation between Russia and China has accelerated noticeably. Cooperation in terms of gas shipments may lead to huge quantities of trade, and eventually reverse global trading

patterns. As such, the "One Belt, One Road" plan is welcomed by Moscow, at least officially. Furthermore, China and Russia have also decided to cooperate in the field of high-speed rail. While Europe has almost stopped establishing new lines, not only has China's high-speed rail construction increased, but it also competes with other countries in the international high-speed rail market. Moreover, China's cooperation with Middle East has also been very fruitful. As the US withdraws from Afghanistan, during his last visit to China, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani declared his country's willingness to be part of this initiative. In most cases, the Silk Road plan has not been a hard sell. As mentioned above, less-developed countries are eager to gain Chinese assistance in building critical infrastructure for their people. Compared with other powers, China may be the only ready source of aid for these countries.

In general, the "One Belt, One Road" plan is intended to spread China's influence in many directions. If completed, the plan's ambitious, expensive projects will definitely put China on a new level, where it will be almost on a par with the US.

Implications for Taiwan

As for Taiwan, a trade pact with China can provide Taiwan with access to new markets and also opportunities for investment, especially in southern Chinese provinces, which are also included in the belt. Chinese President Xi Jinping, who combines a profound knowledge of Fujian and a deep understanding of Taiwan affairs, is currently offering Taipei an opportunity to benefit from his grand strategy and greater regional economic integration in addition to Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) membership. Taiwan's assets include extensive construction capabilities and highly

creative services and labor. As a result, Taiwan is more than capable of playing a role in the “One Belt, One Road” plan. However, Taiwan’s internal situation is complicated, and public reaction to closer economic relations with China is not positive. If the “One Belt, One Road” plan and the proposed FTAAP turn out to be a success, and if Taiwan is excluded, this will mean greater isolation for the island. Some claim that Taiwan’s economic strategy could fall hostage to an anti-China mindset, as was the case during the Sunflower Movement in March 2014. Since the cross-Taiwan Strait relationship can be characterized as economic interdependence and political rivalry, people in Taiwan may yet find a way to ride on China’s wings while minimizing the threat from China.

Unfortunately, the situation does not look very good for Taiwan. Some people and politicians in Taiwan believe that any rise of Chinese power threatens the island, and that makes them increasingly dependent on the US. Moreover, China is also fighting Taiwan on other fronts, such as by choking off diplomatic support and recognition of Taiwan by Pacific island countries. As China can only become more powerful, Beijing’s grip will continue to tighten around Taiwan’s neck. As a consequence, striking an advantageous balance between Washington and Beijing will be a crucial issue for all future Taiwanese leaders.

Conclusion

In general, the “One Belt, One Road” plan is intended to spread China’s influence in many directions. If completed, the plan’s ambitious, expensive projects will definitely put China on a new level, where it will be almost on a par with the US. The plan is still very chaotic, and too vast and uncertain to allow the projection of future results. If nothing else, it is a statement that China has international capabilities. Further moves towards the integration of Eurasia, as the US is progressively squeezed out of Eurasia, is a possible future strategic direction for China. We may see a complex

geostrategic campaign progressively undermining the hegemony of the US dollar as a reserve currency and petro-currency. For all the immense challenges China faces, it is easy to detect in Beijing the unmistakable signs of a self-assured, self-confident, and fully-fledged economic superpower.

The current task for Taiwan is to re-identify its geopolitical and geo-economic status in the Asia-Pacific region and vis-à-vis China. Taiwan is a de facto small island country in geographical terms, so it is urgent to undertake some actions addressing humanitarian and sustainable development issues, such as the problem of rising sea levels, is an urgent matter. More importantly, most of Taiwan’s diplomatic allies are less-developed island or coastal nations. Taiwan has been perhaps the biggest and strongest among these island nations, and its government would be wise to help friendly countries find solutions to the problem of rising sea level, for their benefit and for that of Taiwan itself. Taiwan can establish its own “blue belt” among the Pacific islands and other coastal allies. Taiwan could facilitate technology transfers to friendly island countries and help them build up disaster response capabilities that are similar to those in Taiwan. This would not only help Taipei’s allies resolve practical problems, but would also establish a sense of belonging to a community with a common destiny, and thus cement its friendship with allies in a meaningful way. Only if Taiwan’s geopolitical orientation and diplomatic strategy are adjusted can it overcome obstacles and succeed in its viable diplomacy.

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A Look at China's “One Belt, One Road” Initiative

Yang Ya-chi

Since 2013, the Chinese leadership has been using various domestic and international occasions to promote China's Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, or the “One Belt, One Road” initiative.* China's efforts have included providing USD 40 billion for the Silk Road Fund, promoting the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), initiating relevant infrastructure projects, and approaching countries along the routes of the “One Belt, One Road” for their support and participation. It has also been reported that the Chinese government would soon publish an official “One Belt, One Road” plan, which is expected to be translated into multiple languages. Trumpeted by the central government, the “One Belt, One Road” initiative has become a new buzzword throughout China, and countless local governments have striven to propose relevant plans as they seek to obtain a slice of the pie. More than just an economic and trade policy, the “One Belt, One Road” initiative is a part of China's grand strategy to not only maintain the momentum of its economic growth, but also expand and consolidate the country's influence in Asia. But while the initiative has been proposed by China, its success depends on all the countries along the routes, and perhaps to a certain extent also on countries that have different plans for Asia. This article introduces the initiative's origin, important construction projects, and implications, and also discusses its possible future development.

An Initiative to Realize the “China Dream”

One of Chinese President Xi Jinping's ambitions after taking office has been to revive the former glory of ancient China, and the naming of the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road manifests his desire to do so. In antiquity, China was the departure point of the ancient Silk Road, which actually consisted of multiple land and maritime routes connecting the East and the West. The Silk Road facilitated the exchange of commodities, individuals, techniques, and ideas, and thus helped to contribute to the greatness of the Tang Dynasty. The naming of the new Silk Roads thus tells us much about Xi's aspiration to deepen the country's connection, cooperation, and integration with neighboring countries, so as to realize the “China Dream.”

“One Belt, One Road” consists of two routes, which go westbound and southbound from China through its neighbors. The One Belt reaches out to the often landlocked countries of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, while the One Road passes through coastal countries in the Southeast Asia, South Asia, and even East Africa. The idea of the One Belt was firstly proposed by Xi during a visit to Kazakhstan in September, 2013, when he suggested enhancing ties between Europe and Asia by means of strengthened policy communication, improved road connectivity, promotion of trade facilitation, enhancement of monetary circulation, and strengthened people-to-people exchanges. In October of the same year, Xi visited Indonesia and brought up the establishment of the AIIB, as well as his willingness to develop a cooperative maritime partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian

* For clarity, this article uses “Taiwan” when referring to the Republic of China, and “China” when referring to Mainland China.

The Eurasian, Central Asian, and Pan-Asian HSRs are critical to traffic connectivity for the “One Belt, One Road” initiative. (Graphic design: Lin Yi-jie)



Nations (ASEAN) and build the One Road. The initiative was officially written into *The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms* (“*The Decision*”) of the Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party in November of the same year, and *The Decision* states “We will set up development-oriented financial institutions, accelerate the construction of infrastructure connecting China with neighboring countries and regions, and work hard to build a Silk Road Economic Belt and a Maritime Silk Road, so as to form a new pattern of all-round opening.”

According to the statements in *The Decision*, traffic connectivity and infrastructure are important to the realization of the initiative. Of all the construction efforts that are either ongoing or scheduled to take place, cross-border high-speed rail (HSR) projects are the most important and representative. There are currently three projects being planned: the Pan-Asian HSR, the Central Asian HSR, and the Eurasian HSR. The Pan-Asian HSR will depart from Kunming in China and pass through Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia before reaching the terminus in Singapore. The Central Asian HSR will begin at Urumqi in Xinjiang and pass through Kyrgyz, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan,

Turkmenistan, Iran and Turkey before arriving in Germany. The Eurasian HSR will extend from England through France, Germany, Poland, and Ukraine, where it will split into two lines extending to Kazakhstan and Khabarovsk respectively. To make these cross-border high speed rails a reality, China has been negotiating with countries along the way concerning construction details, and has been providing loans and finances to those countries who find it difficult to raise enough funds.

Domestic high speed rail lines are also a key piece of the “One Belt, One Road” picture, and the most prominent of planned lines are the Lanxin HSR (Lanzhou to Xinjiang), Guiguang HSR (Guiyang to Guangzhou), and Nanguang HSR (Nanning to Guangzhou). Among these, the Lanxin HSR has enabled China’s HSR network to extend westward into Xinjiang, thus significantly reducing time and costs for the transportation of raw materials and produces and increasing the competitiveness of trades and logistics. Xinjiang will therefore become an important gateway by which China can develop its west and reach out to Europe. The Guiguang and Nanguang HSRs have connected China’s more-developed Guangdong Province with its relatively underdeveloped Guizhou and Guangxi Provinces,

and will not only facilitate trade, but also provide support for the Maritime Silk Road.

In addition to railways, there are also several energy facilities, such as the Sections A, B and C of the Central Asia natural gas pipeline (completed), the Section D of the Central Asia natural gas pipeline, the eastern and western section of the China—Russia natural gas pipeline, the China—Pakistan nuclear plant, and the gas field project in Turkmenistan. These projects are gradually linking the energy networks of China and its neighbors.

Given that the “One Belt, One Road” initiative involves not only China but also all the countries along the routes, how well China wins the support and participation of the neighboring countries through communication of its policies, and the relations between China and these countries, will be crucial to the success of the initiative. China’s diplomatic efforts to promote the initiative began in 2013 and became more active in 2014, when the Chinese leadership took advantage of events at home and abroad to introduce the initiative to the world. These events included Xi’s visit to Central and South Asian nations in September, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Beijing in November, the G20 Summit in Australia in November, and Premier Li Keqiang’s attendance at the China—Central and Eastern Europe Summit in December. In March 2015, at a press conference for the third meeting of the 12th National Congress, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was quoted as saying that the focus of China’s diplomacy this year will be the full-scale promotion of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative. It is therefore expected that the Chinese leadership will have a busier schedule this year visiting neighboring countries.

In summary, the Chinese leadership has identified three levels of significance of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative: the national level, the regional level, and the global level.

The Threefold Purpose of the Initiative

As for the purpose of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, Wang Yi noted that the initiative aims to open up China further, particularly to its neighbors to the west. Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui said it aims to, first, solve the problem of China’s neglect of economic development in the central and western parts of the country; second, to deal with the lack of transportation connections between the sub-regions of Asia; and third, to recapture and build on the spirit of the ancient Silk Road through the exchange of commodities, individuals, and ideas. Assistant to China’s Foreign Minister, Liu Jianchao, further expressed that by connecting the country’s development with that of other countries in Asia and other regions, it would link the “China Dream” with the “Asian Dream” and “European Dream.” At the APEC Summit in 2014, Xi stated that China has the responsibility and willingness to create and realize the “Asia-Pacific Dream” for people in the region, and advocated realization of the dream through interconnectivity. In summary, the Chinese leadership has identified three levels of significance of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative. The first is the national level, where the initiative which seeks to further open up the country and meet its requirement for growth. The second is the regional level, where it seeks to connect hardware, software, and individuals across Asia, and so drive the comprehensive development and integration of the region. The third is the global level, where it seeks to link Asia with other continents, so as to facilitate prosperity throughout the world.

In *China’s Regional Security Environment Review 2015*, which was published by the Institution of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Science, the “One Belt, One Road” initiative is further identified as a part of the country’s grand strategy. The report states that, while its implementation focuses largely on trade and economics, it must also attach importance to political relations and security cooperation with

other countries. The report further illustrates that a new maritime order must be advocated and established for the sake of the Maritime Silk Road. By integrating its economic strategies by means of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative and revealing its security strategy via maritime issues, China is gradually showing the outline of a regional grand strategy.

No policy is without some challenges, however, and with a policy so ambitious and involving so many countries as the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the challenges can be huge, complex, and daunting.

From China’s perspective, the “One Belt, One Road” initiative will have several favorable effects. First and foremost, it will help to build a positive image for China. Most of the countries along the routes are developing countries and have relatively weak finances. China’s provision of loans and funds to build infrastructure within their borders will be eagerly welcomed by these countries. By offering much-needed financial assistance, China expects to convince neighboring countries that its rise is not a threat; instead, all can share the benefits of a stronger China if they do not oppose it. Shannon Tiezzi, the associate editor of *The Diplomat*, further predicts that China’s financial aid may spark a “bidding war” that encourages other regional powers such as India to devote funds and diplomatic attention to other developing Asian countries.¹ Second, improved transportation connections will not only encourage trade and economic activity, but may also facilitate China’s effort to control areas prone to turmoil, particularly the Xinjiang area.² Third, trade and economic integration between China and countries along the route may facilitate the internationalization of the Renminbi. For example, the National Bank of Kazakhstan and the People’s Bank of China

have signed an agreement concerning currency swaps between Kazakh tenge and Renminbi.³ If more countries in the region follow suit and rely on exchange of their national currencies and Renminbi for settlements, in the words of Nasser Saidi, the former chief economist and head of external relations of Dubai International Financial Centre, a Renminbi Zone may be formed in the area.

Challenges Facing the Initiative

No policy is without some challenges, however, and with a policy so ambitious and involving so many countries as the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, the challenges can be huge, complex, and daunting. The first challenge involves money. All the infrastructure projects connected with the initiative will require huge amounts of funds over an extended period of time. China has committed USD 40 billion to kick off the initiative, but this will be insufficient in the long run. China’s wish to establish the AIIB consequently reflects its need to raise more funds for the various projects connected with the initiative. In the future, China must work with countries along the routes to determine mechanisms for raising capital and sharing of profits, and participants must also find ways of strengthening financial risk supervision measures. Thus far, given that most of the countries along the routes lack funds, China is the major and ready investor and fund provider for relevant construction works. Fortunately, the AIIB has attracted increasing interest in the international community as over 50 countries have applied for membership. This possibly means a promising amount of investment for infrastructure in Asia. Nevertheless, before the AIIB is mature enough, China is still the major economy driving the implementation of infrastructure in Asia.

This leads to the second challenge. Many of the countries involved have shaky financial soundness, political stability, governance efficiency, and legal effectiveness, and these factors may affect the security of Chinese investments. With its solid financial capabilities, China may be able to invest



in these countries to expand role in the region and win these countries' favor. Nevertheless, in addition to political benefit, China will eventually have to calculate its economic gain. This is to say that, although China can leverage its economic strength to win support from regional countries and achieve what it intends from the initiative, it will have to quantify the return on its economic investments at certain points in time.

There will also be challenges concerning applicability of China's HSR development model to other countries in the region. Although it is a latecomer to high-speed rail, China now possesses one of the most advanced HSR industries in the world, and HSR lines within China's borders are already very extensive. The phenomenal efficiency of China's HSR development has been driven by top-down guidance from the government. In China, HSR and other large construction projects do not need environmental impact assessment or land expropriation procedures, which are necessary processes in democratic countries. It takes only the will of the government to make major infrastructure projects a reality in China, and social and environmental consequences resulting from HSR construction are rarely a focus of concern. Whether China's model of HSR development is applicable to other countries is therefore questionable. It can be expected that China will need to increase its efforts to communicate with others countries that may be involved in the initiative.

Relations with relevant neighboring countries will also be a key to the success of the initiative. In Central Asia, China generally maintains a positive relationship with potential participants, including the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In contrast, some of the countries along the maritime route of the "One Road," such as Vietnam and India, have territorial or border disputes with China. Although they may want a slice of China's booming economic development, they remain skeptical about China's true intentions. In addition, other regional powers, including the United States, India, and Russia, have their own strategies

or policies for Asia. For instance, the US has its "Rebalancing toward Asia" policy, India's answer to China's Silk Roads is the *Project Mausam: Maritime Routes and Cultural Landscapes across the Indian Ocean*,⁴ and Russia has always wanted to build a "Eurasian Union" led by itself, and may be wary of China's forays into its "backyard." Therefore, despite the good will China claims, the "One Belt, One Road" initiative will still be regarded as an effort to dominate the region.

Despite all the challenges it may face, China is poised to implement the initiative. It is nevertheless still too early to predict whether, and to what extent, the initiative will be successful. There will be a number of possible indications, though.

Possible Future Developments

Despite all the challenges it may face, China is poised to implement the initiative. It is nevertheless still too early to predict whether, and to what extent, the initiative will be successful. There will be a number of possible indications, though. The first indication consists of the detailed content of the official "One Belt, One Road" plan, which still contains much ambiguity concerning implementation of the initiative. The second will be the success of fund raising and the AIIB. The third will be the operational status and profitability of relevant infrastructure projects, particularly the cross-border HSRs. Thus far, of all the operating HSRs within China, only a few are making profits, while the rest of them are in the red. If that happens to cross-border HSRs, China and countries involved will have to determine ways of dealing with the resulting deficits. How China handles its relations with the participating countries, as well as with

regional powers, will also be a key to the successful implementation of the initiative.

It will be worthwhile to observe whether China grows more active diplomatically in the region, so as to seek strategic ties with other countries and win their support and participation. Moreover, given that the success of the initiative will require a safe and stable environment, for the land route, China may associate the “One Belt, One Road” initiative with regional security mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), so as to create a comprehensive cooperation with relevant countries. In the case of the maritime route, in light of territorial disputes between China and other claimants in the South China Sea, China may seek a two-handed approach: on the one hand, it will continue controversial

activities, including island reclamation in the contested waters, while on the other hand, it will seek to increase goodwill by proposing to build the Maritime Silk Road and a so-called new maritime order with other coastal countries in Southeast Asia. In that case, particularly for observers in Taiwan, it will be well worth watching what China means by a “new maritime order,” and what implications this new maritime order has for the South China Sea disputes.

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The Robust Capabilities of the ROC Army Aviation

In early days, Army Aviation of the Republic of China (ROC), charged with the mission of battlefield reconnaissance and firepower observation, was equipped solely with fixed-wing light aircraft. In 1969, licensed by the United States, the ROC manufactured 118 UH-1H utility helicopters capable of carrying airborne troops and air special operations forces and also providing battlefield supply support, which improved the ROC Army Aviation's airmobile operations capabilities. In 1992 and 1997, the US sold a total of 63 AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopters, 39 OH-58D Kiowa reconnaissance helicopters, and a large quantity of Hellfire anti-tank guided missiles to the ROC Army Aviation, allowing it a chance to further upgrade its weaponry and equipment. These weapons are on the same level as those used by the US Marine Corps and Army, and have significantly increased the role of Army Aviation in defense operations around the Taiwan Strait. In 1999, the ROC ordered nine CH-47SD transport helicopters from the US.

Recently, the ROC Army Aviation received a total of 30 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters in 2013 and 2014 respectively, and has begun acceptance of 60 UH-60M Black Hawk utility helicopters. Equipped with Longbow Radar and Longbow Hellfire missiles, the AH-64Es are capable of making precision strikes. The UH-60Ms will replace the aging UH-1H helicopters, and 15 of them will be allocated to disaster relief agencies during peacetime, and returned to Army Aviation for military purposes during wartime.



The AH-64E Apache attack helicopters are an important weapon platform of ROC Army Aviation. (Source: Military News Agency)

With about 90 attack helicopters, numerous reconnaissance helicopters, new-generation utility helicopters, and transport helicopters, the ROC Army Aviation has capabilities that are second to none among the democracies in Asia. In the future, the ROC Army Aviation will be fully capable of participating in rapid cross-theater maneuvers across Taiwan and in night operations. During wartime, it will not require airfields for operation, and can disperse its assets to several locations for force conservation. Moreover, by working with battlefield air defense troops, utilizing its own air defense capabilities, and applying proper tactics, the ROC Army Aviation will be able to serve as a powerful defense force against enemy attacks. Faced with emerging threats from the enemy, the ROC Army Aviation will continue to improve both equipment and training, so that it can effectively carry out missions assigned by the country.

China Coast Guard Strengthens Its Maritime Law Enforcement Capacity

As it acquires greater national power, China is devoting increasing attention and resources to the protection and management of its claimed maritime interests. In view of the fact that it is not appropriate for the PLA Navy to carry out maritime law enforcement missions, China has assigned these tasks to an agency designed exclusively for this purpose. Previously, maritime law enforcement in China was carried out by five agencies: China Maritime Surveillance, Maritime Safety Administration, Fisheries Law Enforcement Command, Public Security Border Control Department, and the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of Customs. Given the problems of overlapping authority and redundant funding, China adopted the practice of the leading countries and established the China Coast Guard under the State Oceanic Administration in 2013. As a designated agency, the China Coast Guard coordinates affairs of the other maritime law enforcement agencies. The China Coast Guard now has over 3,000 vessels. To further its ability to implement maritime law enforcement, China is currently planning to enlarge its patrol fleet.

At present, Japan possesses the most capable maritime law enforcement capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan Coast Guard possesses 14 3,000 to 7,200-ton PLH large patrol vessels with

helicopters, three PL patrol vessels, and 41 1,000 to 2,000-ton PL patrol vessels. However, China is intent on catching up with its ambitious shipbuilding plan. According to the Beijing-based *Global Times*, China is building or planning to build six 3,500-ton patrol vessels, 11 3,500-ton patrol vessels modified from the vessels of the Fisheries Law Enforcement Command, ten 4,000-ton patrol vessels, four 5,000-ton patrol vessels, four 6,000-ton patrol vessels, and four 12,000-ton patrol vessels, which will have a displacement greater than that of American Navy cruisers. With its existing and planned patrol vessels, the China Coast Guard will have three times as many patrol vessels with 1,000 tons displacement or more as Japan Coast Guard does. China Coast Guard vessels will be able to patrol larger areas and spend longer periods at sea than previously, and will be able to operate more effectively in adverse weather conditions. The dominance the China Coast Guard enjoys in terms of the number and tonnage of its patrol vessels will allow it to gain a partial advantage over Japan Coast Guard and an absolute advantage over other claimants in the South China Sea. This strengthened capability, backed up by the PLA Navy and Air Force, will lend China a powerful means of securing its maritime and economic interests.



With its ambitious shipbuilding plan, China Coast Guard is catching up with the Japan Coast Guard in terms of its maritime law enforcement capabilities. (Source: Wu Chang-hua)

The US Reveals Next-Generation Fighter and Trainer Programs



The US Air Force's T-X Project has attracted a fair amount of attention in the aerospace industry. This picture shows the T-X Project proposed by Boeing in 2010. (Source: Boeing Aircraft Corporation)

The United States is about to start two military aircraft programs, namely the Aerospace Innovation Initiative and the Advanced Pilot Training (APT) Family of Systems (FoS). The Aerospace Innovation Initiative, which aims to develop prototypes of next-generation air superiority fighters, is spearheaded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and involves the US Navy and Air Force. In view of the fact that the F-35, a multi-purpose type designed to meet the needs of all three services, has been criticized for its skyrocketing costs, the US Department of Defense (DoD) intends to abandon the development approach used for the F-35, and have the Navy and Air Force develop their respective types of next-generation fighters, while employing common technologies, airframe elements, common avionics, common components, and common weapon systems in both services' aircraft. For the time being, the Navy has named its next-generation fighter the F/A-XX, which is expected to replace the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet; and the Air Force has named it the F-X, which will replace the F-22

Raptor. The Navy and Air Force will use the fighters for different purposes: the Navy wants the F/A-XX to serve as an air combat platform with a payload equivalent to or greater than that of the Super Hornet, and also expects it to possess some of the capabilities, such as stealth, of the F-35C. The Air Force wants the F-X to achieve air superiority over the enemy in high-intensity conflicts.

Compared with the Aerospace Innovation Initiative, the APT FoS, more commonly known as the T-X Project, is more specific. The T-X Project aims to acquire 350 next-generation trainers to replace the roughly 50-year-old T-38s. As one of the five programs on the Air Force's list of top priorities, the T-X Project has attracted a fair amount of attention in the aerospace industry. This is because not only will pilots trained on the new trainers also be able to operate advanced fighters such as the F-22 and F-35 but also because, based on requirements proposed by the Air Force, there should be room for further upgrade to the new trainers, such as the ability to replace fighters used by adversary units. The next-generation fighter is expected to be more advanced than the F-22 and F-35; however, it may also be less affordable for US allies. As a consequence, the US may wish to consider providing a more generally acceptable fighter to meet the air defense requirements of allies unable to afford advanced fighters. In this regard, the T-X Project should leave room for upgrades to meet various operational needs.

US Expected to Rename AirSea Battle "JAM-GC"

During the five years since the concept of AirSea Battle was promoted in 2009, the US military has conducted numerous exercises, experiments and war games in an effort to verify relevant concepts. For instance, at the beginning of 2015, the US Navy completed several experiments in which F/A-18s guided JSOW C-1 advanced long range cruise missiles and Tomahawk Block IV cruise missiles launched from warships against targets at sea. These experiments were part of the efforts to test the Navy's Integrated Fire Control-Counter Air (NIFC-CA) concept, which aims to improve the Navy's abilities to counter Anti-access Area-denial (A2/AD) operations. The Air Force has also dispatched F-22s to the Middle East for operations against the Islamic State (IS). In these missions, the F-22s provided protection for allied aircraft by using their advanced sensors and phenomenal situation awareness capabilities, and also helped guide the Navy in attacks on land targets. The

concept of AirSea Battle has been criticized for the fact that it does not include the role of the Marine Corps or Army. Despite this, the Army conducted experiments involving AH-64Es in the 2014 Rim of Pacific Exercise and in joint exercises with the United Kingdom with the goal of verifying the Army's maritime operation capabilities. These tests have led to a realization of the need to improve and expand the concept of AirSea Battle. After achieving a consensus among all services, the United States Department of Defense (DoD) plans to propose the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons (JAM-GC) as a replacement for the concept of AirSea Battle. The AirSea Battle Office (ASBO) will be incorporated into the Joint Staff's Joint Force Development Office (J7), which will bear responsibility for supervision and support of the development of JAM-GC. Details of the new concept are expected to be announced in the fall of 2015.



Advanced fighters such as the F-22 of the US Air Force are the core of the implementation of AirSea Battle. This picture shows an F-22 performing refueling with a KC-135 Stratotanker. (Source: US Air Force)

ODS Seminar of the Month: Military, Political, and Economic Implications of China's Two Meetings

To better understand the military, political, and economic implications of policies announced in China's Two Meetings (National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) to itself as well as the Republic of China (ROC), the Office of Defense Studies organized a seminar on March 24 and invited Professor Ming Chu-cheng of the National Taiwan University, Major General Chang Yan-ting, the superintendent of the ROC Air Force Academy, Professor Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang of Tamkang University, Professor Lin Hsien-sen of the National Normal University, and Professor Ma Cheng-kun of the National Defense University to share their insights on this topic.

Major General Chang commented that the Two Meetings are an annual, nation-wide political convention for the purpose of announcing the central government's policy guidelines, and thereby ensuring the consistency in thinking and statements among governmental agencies. During the recent Two Meetings, Chinese leader Xi Jinping reiterated the goal of realizing the "China Dream" and stressed the importance of a strong military to this dream. Professor Ma observed there are two drivers of the "China Dream": to restore China's historical glory and to realize the actual control of claimed maritime territories. To achieve these goals, China will continue to focus on the development of its naval and air force power. Professor Huang suggested that Xi believes a strong military must listen to the direction of the party, be able to win battles, and above all, have righteous behavior. Given that a corrupted military will not be able to grow strong and win battles, China plans to follow the principles of "comprehensively implementing the rule of law" and "comprehensively strengthening Party



Major General Chang shares his view about the functions of China's Two Meetings. (Source: ODS)

discipline" (two of the "Four Comprehensives"), and continue to rectify the military by eradicating corruption. Professor Lin stated Xi is fairly aware of the importance of combating corruption, but he also recognizes its possible consequence to military morale. The steady double-digit growth of the defense budget consequently aims not only to support the creation of a strong military but also to stabilize morale.

In the case of economic issues, China will continue to advance the implementation of its "One Belt, One Road" initiative and the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Professor Lin accordingly noted that, since such G7 members as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy, have expressed their interest in joining the AIIB, China can expect to play a greater political and economic role in the international community. Professor Huang noted the military implication of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, saying that the economic initiative seems to suggest a "going-west" strategic adjustment in China. Compared with its

maritime frontier along East Asia, where the United States and its allies dominate, China's land frontier along the Central, East, and South Asia appears less hostile. Instead of confronting the US and its allies head-on, China now appears to focus on consolidating its influence in its "strategic rear" with the help of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. In line with China's trend toward strategic adjustment, the Lanzhou Military Region, which has not received as much emphasis as the Nanjing (responsible for the Taiwan Strait) and Guangzhou (responsible for the South China Sea) Military Regions, may become more important in the future. Professor Huang believes that the connection between the development of the initiative and China's force deployment will be worth observing.

In terms of cross-Straits affairs, China reiterated the role of the "1992 Consensus" as the foundation for the development of cross-Straits relations. Addressing this point, Xi Jinping stated that "the land will shake and the mountains will tremble if the foundation is not stable." Professor Lin noted that Xi wishes to imply that the future ruling party in Taiwan must continue to comply with the "1992 Consensus." Major General Chang argued that China will implement cross-Straits affairs with a mixture of peaceful and intimidating measures based on the "1992 Consensus," the *Anti-Secession Law*, and the "three warfare" (legal, public opinion and psychological warfare) against Taiwan.



Professor Ming notes that Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign is used against officers with certain factional backgrounds. (Source: ODS)



Professor Huang observes the military implication in China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. (Source: ODS)

Analyzing this topic from another aspect, Professor Ming argued that Xi's anti-corruption campaign is aimed at political and military officers with certain factional backgrounds, and does not entail a sweeping campaign against everyone involved in corruption, which implies that the anti-corruption campaign may become a tool for political struggle.

At the end of the seminar, the presenters concluded several implications directly relevant to Taiwan. First, the "China Dream" and the dream to build a strong military poses a great threat not only to Taiwan but also to other countries in the region, given that China continues to invest heavily in its force build-up and modernization of its military without indicating any clear and transparent intentions. Secondly, the "One Belt, One Road" initiative may lead to the increased importance of the Lanzhou Military Region. The initiative may also be used as one of the measures to deal with territorial disputes in the South China Sea, given that China is trying to appeal to some of the other claimants with the initiative. Lastly, the reiteration of the *Anti-Secession Law* proves once again China's reluctance to renounce the use of military force as a possible measure for unification. This serves as a powerful explanation that despite the relaxation of cross-Straits relations, the ROC must never lay down its guard and should continue to reinforce its defense, so as to serve as the strongest backup for engagement with China.

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