

U.S. Posture of Integrated Deterrence: China's Response and Implications for the Asian Security

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Abstract

As the world is drawn increasingly into a web of shifting geopolitics, battle lines are being drawn and alliances are re-orienting themselves. Working from the premise that the competition between the United States (U.S.) and the People's Republic of China will define the dynamics of the international system for the foreseeable future, this paper takes a look at the U.S.'s evolving posture of Integrated Deterrence and the likely Chinese response, which would have implications for Asian security. It reviews the contours of 'Integrated Deterrence' as it is laid out in the U.S. National Security Strategy 2022 and how this may shape the policy decisions of the U.S. and its partners, especially Taiwan, as well as how major U.S. regional allies, including India are likely to play their role in support of the U.S. interests. The paper also analyses China's strategic thinking, national defence policy and national security objectives that are likely to influence its choices in the evolving great power competition. Taking Taiwan as the case study, the paper finds that in addition to pursuing more traditional approaches, both the U.S. and China will consider influencing domestic public opinion in China and Taiwan as a key focus of their respective policy considerations; it also finds convergences in the related responses of South Asia's two major players, India and Pakistan.

Keywords: *Integrated Deterrence, Asia, Taiwan, U.S., China, India.*

Introduction

The U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) released in October 2022 is a clear and unambiguous declaration of intent regarding American policy for the next decade. It highlights two primary challenges, the immediate one

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posed by Russia, and the long-term one, considered more dangerous, in the form of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Russia is represented as an immediate but lesser threat, in comparison to the PRC, which poses formidable competition to the prevailing Western powers in an international environment that has hitherto been shaped by and is favourable to America and its allies; this is due to the fact that China is believed to have both the will and the capacity to execute a re-ordering of the status quo.¹

A key component of the NSS is the 'Integrated Deterrence', an American framework for engaging allies to secure themselves against challenges to their positions in the international arena. While the concept is not at odds with American policy as it has stood for years, and the terminology itself has been part of strategic discourse since at least late 2021, the NSS 2022 is the first to lay out what integrated deterrence clearly means for the United States (U.S.) and its partners around the world. Given that the primary thrust of the strategy is to restrain Chinese ambitions and shape its policies, there will be clear implications of integrated deterrence for relations between China and the U.S. and their respective partner and allies. In order to understand what shape these developments may take; the Taiwan issue serves as an example.

Agreement on an unconditional One China policy was fundamental to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China. The common theme in the secretive, arduous and long-drawn-out outreach and negotiation process, which eventually culminated in the U.S. recognition of the Communist nation, was Mao Zedong's and the CPC leadership's insistence on the matter of Taiwan; progress was contingent on the Nixon administration's unambiguous commitment to upholding China's conditions on the issue. In the years since their historical rapprochement, however, Taiwan has been an area over which the U.S. and China have butted heads regularly. While this has primarily been over the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, Beijing has also lodged complaints over what it asserted were Washington's attempts to extend legitimacy to Taiwanese leadership, tantamount to interference in China's internal affairs.

¹ "National Security Strategy," Government of the United States, October 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>

In recent years, under both the Trump and Biden administrations, the Taiwan issue has taken on added energy, and Chinese protests have grown equally vociferous. In August 2022, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi conducted a much publicised visit to Taiwan, in defiance of Beijing’s very clear and adamant objections to what they believed was flagrant disregard for the Chinese position and Chinese sentiments.² While the aftermath of the visit included displays of Beijing’s displeasure in the form of sanctions against Taiwanese exports and conducting a comprehensive week-long military exercise around the island, no armed conflict erupted.³ Analysts have been divided over whether this represented China’s impotence in the face of the U.S. unilateralism or it was evidence of the Chinese leadership’s foresight to avoid being dragged into a direct armed conflict with the U.S.; in either case it marks a deliberate departure away from what was for years the traditional Washington line and has created a marked schism in a relationship that has come under increased strain in the last few years.

This paper attempts to determine how the strategy of Integrated Deterrence, under America’s broader stated policy of Chinese containment, will impact Chinese responses and how it could impact the balance of power struggle in the broader Asian region.

The U.S. Policy towards China

The Biden administration’s National Security Strategy calls the People’s Republic of China its “pacing challenge,”⁴ and is based largely on the premise that China is managing its power competition with the U.S. in an irresponsible manner. It states that the “PRC harbours intentions to re-shape the international order in its favour” and emphasises a greater need than ever for a strong U.S. role.⁵

² “Statement by China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Pelosi’s Visit to Taiwan,” *Xinhua News*, August 2, 2022,

<https://english.news.cn/20220802/df586fce79c04a9282c05cd26e997bb3/c.html>

³ Martin Quin Pollard and Yimou Lee, “China Military ‘Completes Tasks’ Around Taiwan, Plans Regular Patrols, *Reuters*, August 11, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-extends-military-drills-around-taiwan-after-pelosi-visit-2022-08-10/>

⁴ “National Security Strategy,” Government of the United States, October 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>

⁵ “National Security Strategy.”

The document highlights that the current U.S. administration's decision to resist what it calls the efforts of autocratic regimes to reshape the international order is one that has bipartisan support domestically and increasing support internationally. It is presented as a necessary measure in order to protect the ability of the U.S. and its allies to enjoy democratic values and uphold the principles they are guided by, particularly in light of attempts by any "highly personalised and repressive type of autocracy"⁶ to re-make the international order with a different vision. Therefore, it argues, a coalition of like-minded partners is needed to counter it, as this serves the collective interests of all and should not be viewed as a favour that is being offered to the U.S. It also underscores the U.S. commitment to its allies, reassuring them that they must "never doubt our will and capacity to stand with them against aggression and intimidation."⁷

The NSS 2022 specifically addresses the Taiwan issue by simultaneously reiterating American support for the island at the same time that it rejects any renunciation of the One China policy:

*We oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side, and do not support Taiwan independence. We remain committed to our one China policy, which is guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances. And we will uphold our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act to support Taiwan's self-defence and to maintain our capacity to resist any resort to force or coercion against Taiwan.*⁸

In essence, this statement cautions both China and Taiwan against any adventurism and refuses to offer the PRC an opportunity to suggest the U.S. has reneged on the commitment their bilateral relations are based on.

Integrated Deterrence and Its Impact on Policies of the U.S. and Allies

This section looks at the contours of Integrated Deterrence and how this will shape the policies of the U.S. and its allies. The Taiwan issue is used as an example to better understand how Integrated Deterrence will likely determine state behaviour.

⁶ "National Security Strategy."

⁷ "National Security Strategy."

⁸ "National Security Strategy."

Dimensions of Integrated Deterrence in the NSS 2022

The document describes Integrated Deterrence (ID) as a “seamless combination of capabilities to convince potential adversaries that the costs of their hostile activities outweigh their benefits,”⁹ couching it regarding a dissuasive policy. However, in light of the stated intentions of the NSS 2022, it can be argued that ID is, in fact, a strategy of denial about China, strengthening the capacity of the U.S. and its allies to exercise a web of collective capabilities that will constrict China’s ability to assert itself as a regional power and as the status quo challenger on the global stage.

The integrated deterrence outlined in the strategy document identifies five key dimensions:

- i. Integration across domains, highlighting military and non-military capabilities.
- ii. Integration across regions, emphasizing the threat to the U.S. interests at home and abroad in key regions.
- iii. Integration across the spectrum of conflict, aimed at preventing any changes to the status quo.
- iv. Integration across the U.S. Government, specifying the use of all platforms, channels and policies and.
- v. Integration with allies and partners to adopt a coordinated approach in pursuit of stated objectives.¹⁰

Strategic Options for the U.S. and its Allies

Essentially, exercising integrated deterrence in the case of Taiwan would intensify current American strategy, but now with the engagement of supporting actors to strengthen the U.S. position further and give teeth to the effort of dissuading China from unilateral action. It is also important to note rising perceptions that America’s traditional policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’ in the Taiwan matter is believed to have faded as it takes a more assertive stance to counter China.

⁹ “National Security Strategy.”

¹⁰ “National Security Strategy.”

Keeping in view the broader objectives stated in America's National Security Strategy 2022 regarding the containment of China, there are following likely areas where efforts could be focused on in this regard:

Coordinating with Allies on the Diplomatic Front to Entrench Opposition

This can be expected in the shape of policy declarations by the U.S. allies to reiterate America's position in the NSS 2022, aimed primarily at deterring China from what would be considered an armed attack on Taiwan and backed with the threat of necessary use of force.

To an extent, this has already begun to take place. Canada released its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) at the end of November 2022. The sections of the IPS pertaining to China closely mirror the NSS 2022 in content and tone. China is called "an increasingly disruptive power", and it is stated that in cases of deep disagreement between the two countries, Canada will challenge China in response to any coercive activity as well as in case of Chinese efforts to undermine Canada's national security interests "and those of partners in the region."¹¹ On Taiwan, the document categorically refutes any attempts to change the status quo by either Taiwan or the PRC. It states that even as Canada upholds its One China policy, it remains committed to supporting the island's self-defence under the Taiwan Relations Act.¹²

Japan's National Security Strategy (JNSS), released in December 2022, lists its intention to uphold a "free and open international order, especially in the Indo-Pacific region"¹³ as one of its three broad national interests. It asserts that China is working to capacitate itself in order to challenge the existing international order and criticises the PRC for its lack of cooperation with the international community on a wide range of issues. It claims that Chinese policies and military activity present "the greatest strategic challenge in ensuring the peace and security of Japan"¹⁴

¹¹ "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy," Government of Canada, November 2022, <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/assets/pdfs/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique-en.pdf>, accessed 28th November 2022.

¹² "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy."

¹³ "National Security Strategy of Japan," *Government of Japan*, December 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/pdf/security_strategy_en.pdf

¹⁴ "National Security Strategy of Japan."

and of the international community as a whole. Laying out Japan's national security objectives, it states that it will work with like-minded nations to achieve balance in the Indo-Pacific and will prevent any circumstances from arising where the status quo can easily be altered by any state. While reiterating its One China policy, in the same vein as the American and Canadian strategies previously issued, the JNSS eschews the more aggressive language of the former two and instead reiterates its position for cross-strait issues to be resolved peacefully.¹⁵

Undermining the Domestic Standing of the Communist Party of China

This can conceivably be achieved with three different and concurrent approaches.

- a. One would target the perceptions of China's domestic population in an effort to undermine Beijing's position and resolve on Taiwan. Measures could bear similarity to Pelosi's much hyped visit to Taiwan in the second half of 2022, creating the appearance of upgrading relations with Taiwan with frequent and more high-profile interactions among officials from Taiwan, the U.S. and American allies.
- b. Another would be strengthening the denouncement of alleged human rights abuses in China. The NSS 2022 asserts its intention to continue to "hold Beijing accountable"¹⁶ for repression in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, while the Canadian IPS also promises to raise a voice for the universal human rights of minorities such as Tibetans and Uyghurs, while standing "shoulder to shoulder"¹⁷ with the Hong Kong population.
- c. A third approach would involve exploiting any demonstration of anger of the Chinese domestic public with the CPC, over any given issue, to heighten the image of dissatisfaction with the regime; it can be done both through statements by political leadership, via popular media platforms and through online publications. An example of this was seen in the protests that broke out in several Chinese cities in December

¹⁵ "National Security Strategy of Japan."

¹⁶ "National Security Strategy."

¹⁷ "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy."'

2022, with the people calling for an end to severely restrictive government measures aimed at containing the spread of Covid-19. Prominent Western media houses such as *Bloomberg* and the *Iled the Charge* — beginning mere hours after protests broke out — with a slew of articles and even *Twitter* spaces to discuss the development. *Bloomberg* called the protests extraordinary for taking place in a country where people “can face grave danger”¹⁸ for speaking against the authorities and termed them “one of the most significant challenges to Communist Party rule”¹⁹ since the Tiananmen protests of 1989. Ambassador Nicholas Burns, the American envoy to China called for China to resist interference and to let the demonstrations continue.²⁰ The *BBC* said the protests were shocking and “a huge challenge”²¹ for the Chinese leadership, referencing protestors who were calling for President Xi to step down.

Strengthening Taiwan’s Deterrent Capacity Against China

The U.S. arms sales to Taiwan have long been a bone of contention between the former and the People’s Republic of China, given that the intended purpose of the weapons is to serve as a deterrent against PRC. In 2022 alone, the U.S. Department of Defence approved an arms sale to Taiwan worth U.S.\$108 million in July,²² gave approval in September to move with another sale worth U.S.\$1.1 billion,²³ and also issued

¹⁸ Rachel Chang, “China’s Covid Unrest is Raising Piercing Questions,” *Bloomberg*, November 28, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2022-11-28/china-s-covid-unrest-is-raising-piercing-questions>

¹⁹ Colum Murphy and Rebecca Choong Wilkins, “Xi Has Few Good Options to End Historic China Covid Protests,” *Bloomberg*, November 28, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-28/xi-has-few-good-options-to-end-historic-china-covid-protests>

²⁰ “China Must Let ‘Extraordinary’ Protests Continue: US Envoy,” *Bloomberg*, November 30, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2022-11-30/china-must-let-extraordinary-protests-continue-us-envoy>

²¹ Stephen McDonnell, “China Covid: Shocking Protests Are Huge Challenge for China’s Leaders,” *BBC News*, November 27, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-63772365>

²² Erin Hale, “\$108 Million Weapons Sale to Taiwan Moves Forward,” *Voice of America*, July 19, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/million-weapons-sale-to-taiwan-moves-forward-/6664796.html>

²³ “US Approves US\$1.1 Billion Taiwan Arms Sale, Angering China,” *BBC News*, September 3, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-62775544>

approval in December 2022 for two additional sales with a combined worth of U.S.\$425 million.²⁴

Also, in October 2022, it was reported that the U.S. government was considering jointly producing weapons with Taiwan.²⁵ While Taiwan would not be able to, eventually, overcome Chinese military might, the weapons sold are intended to capacitate it to resist and make any attack on it a costly venture.

In December 2022, days after the release of the Canadian Indo-Pacific Strategy, the Canadian government announced that it would be sending more warships into the Taiwan Strait to reiterate that the Strait constituted international waters,²⁶ a position not accepted by China. Under the current Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, the UK government has not committed to Taiwan's defence; however, Sunak refused to take the options of arms sales to Taiwan off the table.²⁷

China's Response Options

Chinese Strategic Thinking

Seeking peace and unity are central elements often highlighted in Chinese strategic culture, and use of armed force is believed to be a final recourse, always with restraint. Significantly, this links strategic culture to socialism with Chinese characteristics, the heart of Chinese national policy. Ensuring national development and upholding national security are the two core elements of China's overall national strategy, which aims at utilising all the

²⁴ "U.S. Approves US\$425 Million in Arms Sales to Taiwan", *AP News*, December 7, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/biden-taiwan-business-china-xi-jinping-ee81302800a9121614140683ff31e0ca>

²⁵ "U.S. Considering Joint Weapons Production with Taiwan," *Reuters*, October 19, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-government-considering-joint-production-weapons-with-taiwan-nikkei-2022-10-19/>

²⁶ Demetri Sevastopulo, "Canada to Send More Warships Through Taiwan Strait in Signal to China," *Financial Times*, December 5, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/b19721e8-7bfc-44f2-9f72-971a63d2bfac>

²⁷ Kitty Donaldson, "UK's Sunak Keeps Option of Sending Arms to Taiwan on the Table," *Bloomberg*, November 15, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-15/uk-s-sunak-keeps-option-of-sending-arms-to-taiwan-on-the-table?leadSource=uverify%20wall>

strengths at its disposal — political, economic, cultural, military, scientific and technological — to achieve its national objectives. China’s military strategy has been described as “restrained and guided by national interest”²⁸ and is subservient to the latter. The essential purpose of China’s military capability is to serve the pursuit of the nation’s strategic objectives, therefore, decisions regarding the investment in building military forces and their use in time and space must be made from a “political vantage point.”²⁹

On challenges to China’s envisioned peaceful development, Chinese strategic thought emphasises calmness and level headedness. In the case of Taiwan, it is identified as one of the two fundamental challenges, alongside American-led Western strategic containment of China; the protracted Taiwan matter is described as a drain on China’s diplomatic, political, economic and military resources, and is a “long-term hidden danger”³⁰ preventing the PRC from realising full rejuvenation.

China’s Defensive National Defence Policy in the New Era

China’s National Defence in the New Era is a defence strategy document published in July 2019 by China’s State Council Information Office. It lays out the drivers of China’s defence strategy and its implementation. A key section is on ‘China’s Defensive National Policy in the New Era’ and explains the key dimensions of China’s approach to national defence. National defence aims include deterring and resisting aggression; safeguarding national political security, the security of the Chinese people as well as social stability; opposing and containing efforts aimed at declaring Taiwan as independent; as well as preserving national sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and security.³¹

A key highlighted feature is rejecting the pursuit of hegemony and carving out spheres of influence. China, it is stated, based on its experience of wars and aggression at the cost of national development,

²⁸ Donaldson, “UK’s Sunak Keeps Option of Sending Arms to Taiwan on the Table.”

²⁹ Donaldson, “UK’s Sunak Keeps Option of Sending Arms to Taiwan on the Table.”

³⁰ Donaldson, “UK’s Sunak Keeps Option of Sending Arms to Taiwan on the Table.”

³¹ “China’s National Defence in the New Era,” *State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China*,

https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html

has taken care to contribute towards ensuring world peace in order to secure the progress of its own development, and seeks the same for other nations. The document states that the purpose of China's national defence policy is to facilitate China's role in creating a global community of mutual progress and development, in service to the belief that stability and peace within China translates to peace and development opportunities for other countries; it is in pursuit of this commitment to "win-win cooperation"³² that the Chinese armed forces will carry out their tasks and uphold their responsibilities.

In the context of this national defence strategy, it highlights Chinese adherence to reunification that is peaceful and to developing positive cross-Strait relations. It emphasises its resolve to not brook any interference aimed at separating Taiwan from the PRC and declares its will to resort to use of force should that eventuality be made necessary. At the same time, care is taken to underscore that such measures will not be meant to target the Taiwanese people, but rather external forces and "the very small number"³³ of separatists in Taiwan.

Policy Options for China

China arguably has a range of options to consider to counter the Integrated Deterrence squeeze from the U.S. and its allies. Using the example of Taiwan, some possible Chinese responses are discussed in the section below.

Make the Taiwanese Stakeholders in Peaceful Reunification

If Western surveys are to be considered reliable, only a very small percentage of the Taiwanese public supports reunification with China. At the same time, the majority would either wish for independence or for a continuation of the status quo. A realistic assessment, considering China's stated position, its ongoing efforts toward the goal of reunification, as well as Western agendas and interests, demonstrates that maintaining the status quo indefinitely is not feasible. The only

³² "China's National Defence in the New Era."

³³ "China's National Defence in the New Era."

consideration would be whether the attempt at reunification is done by means of armed conflict or is a political choice on the part of Taiwan.

For Beijing, an armed conflict would be a last resort; given the other actors, this would drag in with it. The ideal solution would either be Taiwanese leadership that supports reunification — such as the China Unification Promotion Party — and has the support of the public majority or a regime that can be coerced into acquiescing to Beijing’s objectives. In adopting a military or economic coercive approach, Beijing is far less likely to find reunification smooth. Public support can compel a regime that may wish to choose otherwise.

The report delivered by President Xi Jinping on the occasion of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly addresses the people of Taiwan, emphasising the PRC’s desire to work in unity with them towards the goal of peaceful reunification. It refers to them as “one family bound by blood,”³⁴ appealing to the notion of common roots; simultaneously, it promises them policies that offer the Taiwanese an equal share in benefits and prosperity.

In the preceding lines, these promises are juxtaposed against the clear declaration that the PRC will pursue and achieve reunification at all costs.³⁵

Undermine the Credibility of the U.S. and its Allies to the Cause of Taiwan

This approach is supported in a great deal by several factors:

The world’s major economies — mostly the U.S. and China — are deeply interdependent and cannot extricate themselves from each other without great cost. Further, a conflict between these two, or between either of them and another country, is a daunting prospect and would appear to be an unlikely scenario.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which does not appear to be headed to a negotiated settlement in the near future, has the U.S. stretched both economically (as it continues to pledge financial assistance and humanitarian

³⁴ “China’s National Defence in the New Era.”

³⁵ “China’s National Defence in the New Era.”

aid) as well as in terms of arms sales (with increasing commitments being made to the Ukrainian leadership). This is to be considered against the backdrop of an American economy that was badly damaged by the pandemic.

American political clout has been adversely affected due to decades of external interventions. The American people are tired of continuously being in a state at war; public support for a fresh conflict will be a hard sell, particularly after the withdrawal in defeat last year from Afghanistan at the end of a two-decade war that cost America dearly in terms of blood, treasure and lives. American allies will not take the lead unless backed by an immovable guarantee of the U.S. military support.

The Ukraine conflict has demonstrated the limits of allied support. This was seen especially when Europe plunged into freezing winters, plagued by an energy shortage due to their dependence on Russia.

Reiterate Beijing's Stance on Taiwan to the Chinese Public

President Xi's report to the CPC at the 20th Party Congress underscores the leadership's determination to achieve reunification, calling it "a historic mission and an unshakeable commitment"³⁶ of the Communist Party. The message was reiterated in August 2022, around the time of Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, in a White Paper issued by the Chinese government on the matter.³⁷ This commitment is central to the CPC's legitimacy and is considered a fundamental objective for the PRC.

Reinforce Perception for the International Community of the Chinese Peoples' Support for the CPC

In President Xi Jinping's report to the 20th National Congress of the CPC in October 2022, he refers to China as a "people's democratic dictatorship

³⁶ "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects," President Xi Jinping's Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 16th October 2022, <https://english.news.cn/20221025/8eb6f5239f984f01a2bc45b5b5db0c51/c.html>

³⁷ "The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era," *Government of the People's Republic of China*, August 2022, <https://english.news.cn/20220810/df9d3b8702154b34bbf1d451b99bf64a/c.html>

under the leadership of the working class,”³⁸ where the power of the state belongs to the people of China. An entire section of the report is devoted to this concept of what is termed as a Whole-Process People’s Democracy which reiterates throughout that all citizens are stakeholders in helping decide the development and the future of the country. These paragraphs are aimed primarily at the Chinese domestic audience, engaging them as equals in working for their collective destiny and deciding the direction they will take as a nation; they are meant to evoke a sense of cohesion and national unity which is ideally communicable to foreign publics. Additionally, they serve as a signal for the international non-Chinese audience that the CPC and the public are each committed to the other. While there may be rumblings from time to time about systems and practices more common to Western democracies, there is no gap wide enough to be exploited between the Party and the people.

This approach would also be a rebuff to the U.S. NSS and the Canadian IPS, both of which attempt to distinguish between the citizens of China and the regime that runs the country under a one-party system.

Continue to Reiterate China’s Desire for a Peaceful Approach to International Affairs

The fundamental concept that underscores all Chinese strategy shared for international public consumption is based on the condition of peaceful development. China follows a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, an approach which focuses all the capacities and strengths of the country towards stability and security, both internal and external, and towards ensuring long-lasting and peaceful politics.³⁹

The Chinese leaders see this as a crucial aspect of their foreign policy. It is intended to differentiate the path China intends to take from the traditional route taken by other great powers as they rise to power. The message is to discourage taking sides or getting involved in bloc politics.

³⁸ “The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era.”

³⁹ “Science of Military Strategy,” *Academy of Military Science* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013), translated by the China Aerospace Studies Institute, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/CASI/documents/Translations/2021-02-08%20Chinese%20Military%20Thoughts-%20In%20their%20own%20words%20Science%20of%20Military%20Strategy%202013.pdf>

It is also aimed at demonstrating China as a viable alternative to the reigning superpower which, despite having lost much political clout in recent years, continues to determine in great deal how the international community moves forward. China acknowledges the U.S.'s capacity to exert its influence over global affairs in alignment with its own interests. However, China also recognises the significance of capitalising on the international community's adverse sentiments towards America, which have been instigated by the U.S.'s contentious and domineering policies over an extended period. China maintains its self-image as a developing country and compares itself to other nations in the global south who share similar disillusionment with the Western policies.

Implications for South Asia

As a key ally of the U.S., India has been playing an increasingly prominent role in the U.S.-led machinations in the Asia Pacific, having been projected as a counter to China in the Asian region, and has been courted accordingly by the U.S. with political, economic and military incentives. In the Integrated Deterrence posture, this would entail diplomatic coordination by New Delhi on Washington's foreign policy positions and coordinating military approaches in case of last resort. However, given India's history of political machination, it is more likely that there would be a selective implementation on its part.

The Taiwan issue again serves as an example in this area. Clues regarding India's potential role in the Taiwan situation can be found in a review of the most recent Indian statement on the issue. In the aftermath of the U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's much publicised visit to Taiwan in August 2022, India maintained a somewhat vague stance. At a briefing held by India's Ministry of External Affairs on 12 August, 2022, the spokesperson, on being asked about the visit and India's position regarding the One China policy, replied, "We urge the exercise of restraint, avoidance of unilateral actions to change the status quo, de-escalation of tensions and efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region. India's relevant policies are well known and consistent. They do not require reiteration."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ "Transcript of the Weekly Media Briefing by the Official Spokesperson," *Indian Ministry of External Affairs*, August 12, 2022, <https://www.mea.gov.in/media->

In addition to subtly declining to state India's position on the One China policy categorically, the spokesperson's reference to avoiding an alteration to the status quo and exercise of restraint is a language very much in line with the position of the U.S. and its allies, reiterated as such in the multitude of policy documents that have since been issued.

That being said, India is unlikely to take a position that would undermine its own interests. China remains an important trading partner for India. Figures released in early January 2023 show that India-China bilateral trade for 2022 climbed to U.S.\$135.98,⁴¹ while India-Taiwan trade lies at U.S.\$7.7 billion for 2021.⁴² Talks between India and Taiwan for a free trade agreement had begun but did not go anywhere conclusive. Taiwanese diplomats have argued that though they are willing to move forward with enthusiasm, New Delhi appears to be dragging its feet; and though the latter is interested in pursuing a healthier bilateral trade and investment relationship, it will not do so at the cost of offering Taiwan overt political support, which Taiwan has expressed expectation of.⁴³

It is pertinent to keep in view that India is also unlikely to offer greater political support to Taiwan beyond the generic expression of support for the status quo to remain, for fear of provoking a Chinese response. The Indo-China border clash at Galwan and its aftermath constitute a current concern in Indian strategic thinking. Additionally, adopting a stance that would seem supportive of external — non-Chinese — intervention on the Taiwan matter, whether politically or otherwise, can have implications for India's position on Kashmir, a matter on which Beijing has taken a fairly neutral stance to date.

briefings.htm?dtl/35635/Transcript_of_Weekly_Media_Briefing_by_the_Official_Spokesperson_August_12_2022

⁴¹ "Despite Frosty Relations, India's Trade with China Reaches Record Levels," *Wire*, January 13, 2023, <https://thewire.in/trade/india-china-trade-deficit-2022-imports-exports>

⁴² "How Can the 2023 Indian Budget Boost Opportunities for Taiwan Industries?," *ANI*, February 15, 2023, <https://www.aninews.in/news/business/business/how-can-the-2023-indian-budget-boost-opportunities-for-taiwan-industries20230215194301/>

⁴³ Harsh V. Pant and Shashank Mattoo, "India's Taiwan Moment," *ORF*, August 20, 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/indias-taiwan-moment/>

Further, India has a strong history of hedging its bets. From the relationships it nurtured with both the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the Cold War to the upholding of its strong ties with both the U.S. and Russia in the current Ukraine conflict, the Indian political leadership is unlikely to jettison its tradition of prioritising the Indian polity above alliance demands and expectations. This is visible even with the recent talk from the BRICS platform — of which India is a founding member — to move towards an alternative currency for cross-border trade which would reduce dependence on the U.S. dollar.⁴⁴ Even talk of such a possibility is significant, given that BRICS is composed of five of the world's leading economies.

Against this context, Pakistan's position is unlikely to change from the current stance and its unconditional support for China has been consistently reiterated. Following Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022, the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated its commitment to the One China policy, and stated that relations between states should be guided by the principles of mutual respect and adhere to non-interference in each other's internal affairs.⁴⁵ Some months later, in November, the two countries issued a joint statement in which Pakistan reaffirmed its support on all matters pertaining to China's core interests, including Taiwan.⁴⁶ In this, convergences can be found on India and Pakistan's position; the former abstaining from adopting a stance provocative to China and the latter adhering to its time-tested position, are approaches that complement each other.

In the Integrated Deterrence context, should India be persuaded to adopt a harder line on Taiwan against China, it opens up an avenue that would encourage external intervention on the Kashmir issue, possibly by China, which would in turn strengthen Pakistan's position on the same.

⁴⁴ Joseph W. Sullivan, "A BRICS Currency Could Shake the Dollar's Dominance," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, April 24, 2023,

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/24/brics-currency-end-dollar-dominance-united-states-russia-china/>

⁴⁵ "Pakistan Reaffirms One China Policy," *Express Tribune*, August 3, 2022, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2369205/pakistan-reaffirms-one-china-policy-1>

⁴⁶ "Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," *China Daily*, November 3, 2022, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202211/03/WS6362b5fca310fd2b29e7ff1b.html>

Conclusion

Integrated Deterrence, for all intents and purposes, is a continuation of American strategy as it has stood for decades. However, its representation in the U.S. National Security Strategy and its reiteration in multiple forms of official declaration since the NSS was issued are an unambiguous throwing of the gauntlet to China.

The success of 'Integrated Deterrence' is contingent upon America's ability to persuade its allies that their interests are aligned and this is not only a U.S. venture, as much as it is dependent on the U.S. credibility of remaining by allies' side should there be a conflict of interests. Intended as a strategy of denial against a great economic power in its own backyard, it is all but guaranteed to eventually invoke a conflict, particularly when it steps into territory that China considers an internal issue. In case of India, however, a key U.S. ally in the region, it is difficult to see how the latter can incentivize the former to adopt a stronger, more assertive stance against China on Taiwan, given the potential for harm that it holds for Indian interests and national security.

The success of 'Integrated Deterrence' will also be determined by America's ability to continue upholding an 'us versus them' image, where countries like China are upheld as the autocratic antithesis of the democratic and values-driven Western (largely) nations. It is largely contingent upon America's success in continuing to demonise a power that has the capacity to challenge it and convince its allies that China presents as much of a threat to their interests as it does to the U.S. In this as well, India is more likely to adopt a carefully calibrated 'non-position' on Taiwan, given that any position that New Delhi perceives as provocative for China has the potential to draw India into the line of fire, a consideration which is especially pertinent under the current Indian regime and its record of human rights abuses, and which would also have repercussions for the Pakistan-India dispute over Kashmir.

America may well adopt a strategy of needling China towards a confrontation over Taiwan at a stage in time when the PRC, its will notwithstanding, cannot yet measure up to the American military might. At the same time, there is weight to the consideration that venturing into

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this territory at a time when American diplomatic and economic resources are stretched as the war in Ukraine continues, and while American allies are still finding their path towards converging fully to serve a truly integrated deterrence posture, may well be a risk that pays off for China.