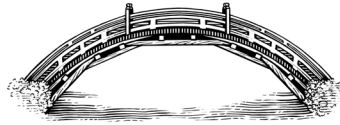


ESSAY SERIES ≈ A U.S.-JAPAN PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA

The United States, Japan, and Taiwan: What Has Russia's Aggression Changed?

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KEYWORDS: U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE; CHINA; TAIWAN; RUSSIA; UKRAINE WAR; CONTINGENCY PLANNING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This essay considers Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine and analyzes similarities, differences, and lessons from that conflict to date for a cross-Taiwan Strait scenario that involves the U.S. and Japan.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sent shockwaves around the globe and upended assumptions about the likelihood of great-power war, including in the Taiwan Strait. Differences abound between the two scenarios. Yet Russia's war in Ukraine is already reshaping NATO's future and influencing alliance thinking in the Indo-Pacific. With growing Chinese military activity putting pressure on Taiwan's defenses, the U.S.-Japan alliance would be instrumental to U.S. strategy in a cross-strait crisis, and a cross-strait contingency would have widespread ramifications for the defense of Japan. The U.S. and Japan must not only develop a comprehensive strategy to deter aggression across the Taiwan Strait but also consider the risks each is willing to take should major-power conflict erupt. Even though Russia's aggression against Ukraine does not offer a parallel case study, it raises new questions that must be addressed by the U.S. and Japan as they assess how to avoid the outbreak of war around Taiwan. There is already cause for the U.S. and Japan to revisit some of their assumptions about how to prepare for a cross-strait crisis. In particular, China's use of force against Taiwan would not be a localized conflict; it would have systemic consequences. Understanding this and other risks is paramount to ensuring that such a crisis is deterred.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The U.S. and Japan must ensure sufficient capabilities to demonstrate the costs to China of a decision to use force across the Taiwan Strait.
- The U.S. and Japan must examine their assumptions about how a nuclear threat may shape a Taiwan crisis. Consideration must be given not only to warfighting doctrine but to the political factors that could shape government decision-making.
- Tokyo and Washington must also factor in the economic risks that would shape a potential crisis and plan strategies to mitigate them.
- The U.S. and Japan cannot manage a cross-strait crisis alone and should begin building the foundations for a global response to Chinese aggression should it become necessary.

Taiwan has been on the minds of many in the Indo-Pacific as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has unfolded. Russian president Vladimir Putin has demonstrated that it remains possible to attempt conquest of a sovereign state by military invasion even in the nuclear era and a globalized economy. Putin seems ready to escalate the risk of a conflict with NATO and to decouple his economy from the Western nations. Yet Ukrainians are demonstrating that they too are ready to bear a high price to repel the invasion. Many have taken up arms to defend their nation. To date, civilian casualties are mounting across the country, including reports of mass gravesites and other possible war crimes in areas that Russian forces have left, and the physical destruction has been extensive. At the time of writing, an estimated 4.3 million have left the country, mostly women and children, and over 6 million more are displaced within Ukraine.¹

What will this mean for Chinese calculations on the future of Taiwan? Is war once again to be embraced as a tool of statecraft, regardless of the cost or the danger of escalation? Even before the Russia-Ukraine crisis broke out, the increasing use of air power by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to coerce Taiwan heightened concerns about Beijing's intentions. Long-defined by Beijing as a "core interest," Taiwan is a source of dissonance in the U.S.-China relationship. The Taiwan Relations Act ensures U.S. military assistance to the island nation, and Democratic and Republican administrations alike have demonstrated their willingness to embrace this U.S. role in Taiwan's defense.²

For Japan, this flashpoint—one of two in Northeast Asia that outlasted the Cold War—is increasingly worrisome. Japan's leaders have acknowledged that peaceful relations across the Taiwan Strait are important to regional security, yet they have stopped short of offering direct assurances of assistance to Taipei should it be attacked. It was not until 2005 that Tokyo and Washington stated clearly that maintaining stable cross-strait relations was a strategic objective of the U.S.-Japan alliance.³ Today, as the regional military balance appears to be shifting in favor of China, Japanese politicians have become more outspoken

¹ The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is attempting to record civilian casualties in Ukraine but notes the difficulty amid the continued fighting there. As of April 3, it reported 3,455 casualties. The United Nations and the International Organization for Migration have compiled figures for those who have left the country and those internally displaced. See the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Ukraine: Civilian Casualty Update 3 April 2022," Press Release, April 3, 2022 ∞ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/04/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-3-april-2022>; and "How Many Ukrainians Have Fled Their Homes and Where Have They Gone?" BBC, April 7, 2022 ∞ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60555472>.

² Susan V. Lawrence, "Taiwan: Political and Security Issues," Congressional Research Service, November 29, 2021 ∞ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF1027>.

³ "Joint Statement: U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), February 19, 2005 ∞ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0502.html>.

about their concern that China may be tempted to use force against Taiwan.⁴ And while U.S. expectations of Japan have grown, it remains to be seen what Japan might be willing to do in a cross-strait scenario. The example of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has brought this possibility home for many Japanese and created new variables for Japanese policymakers to consider.

For the United States, any conflict involving Chinese military action against Taiwan would require new understandings with Japan about how the alliance might function in a crisis. The United States and Japan would need to cooperate at all stages—from deterring Chinese aggression to supporting an early U.S. response to operating alongside each other militarily should war break out. The stakes would be high for both Tokyo and Washington. Without Japanese assistance, U.S. forces would be hard pressed to operate effectively, and without U.S. attention to the way in which a Taiwan scenario might affect Japan's own defenses, Japanese forces could find it difficult to assure a full range of defense operations. Effective alliance planning prior to a crisis would go a long way in ensuring that the United States and Japan are adequately prepared for an escalation of tensions that could result in the use of force. To date, they have had most experience in developing alliance coordination through this range of crisis management for a scenario on the Korean Peninsula. But there are important differences to be considered when it comes to the possibility of a cross-strait crisis.

This essay examines the U.S.-Japan alliance and planning for a conflict scenario between China and Taiwan. It looks at the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine and analyzes similarities, differences, and lessons from that conflict to date for a cross-strait scenario that involves the United States and Japan. It is organized as follows:

- ≈ pp. 73–81 address considerations for the U.S.-Japan alliance in a Taiwan scenario, including joint planning, China's increasing military activities in nearby regions, deterrence efforts, base and facility use in Japan, and the implications of a conflict so proximate to Japan for the country's own defense.
- ≈ pp. 81–89 analyze how Russia's invasion of Ukraine might affect U.S. and Japanese thinking and planning for a cross-strait conflict scenario,

⁴ Philip S. Davidson, "Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson, U.S. Navy Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture," Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., March 9, 2021 ≈ https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Davidson_03-09-21.pdf. Admiral Davidson's congressional testimony that China might be able to succeed in taking Taiwan by force within six years is often cited by Japanese media. See, for example, Akita Hiroyuki, "Future Balance of Power Haunts U.S. as China Bulks Up," *Nikkei Asia*, March 16, 2021 ≈ <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Comment/Future-balance-of-power-haunts-US-as-China-bulks-up>.

examining the two situations and the potential role of alliances, escalation, and sanctions as well as looking at China-Russia relations.

- ∞ pp. 89–94 summarize four key considerations from the Russia-Ukraine war so far for cross-strait contingency planning.
- ∞ pp. 94–97 conclude by calling for a reassessment of the balance of risk perceived by the U.S. and by Japan should a crisis erupt across the Taiwan Strait.

THE ALLIANCE AND CROSS-STRAIT TENSIONS

U.S. and Japanese forces have long conducted planning and operational exercises together. Since early in the Cold War, the Korean Peninsula seemed the most likely location for an outbreak of war in Northeast Asia. A Korean contingency dominated the thinking of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) about how Japan's own defenses might be challenged by a limited regional war,⁵ and the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines began to explore how U.S. and Japanese forces would coordinate in that scenario.⁶ The Japanese government has repeatedly stated that relations across the Taiwan Strait must be “resolved peacefully,” but postwar leaders have not seen any military role for Japan, nor has the SDF been privy to U.S. thinking on what to do should China attempt to use force to coerce or invade Taiwan.

China's Increasing Military Pressure

The United States and Japan have begun to take notice of the significant uptick in PRC military activities in and around Taiwan. China's demonstrations of intent, not just the country's growing military capabilities, are now a focus of alliance planners. At the Biden administration's first U.S.-Japan 2+2 meeting in March 2021, U.S. secretaries of state and defense visited Tokyo to meet with their Japanese counterparts. In their joint statement, Taiwan and China featured conspicuously:

⁵ For a discussion of the evolution of Japan's contingency planning, see Sheila A. Smith, *Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

⁶ This consultative process to define the operational cooperation between U.S. and Japanese forces began in 1978 at Japan's request and was updated at the United States' request in 1997 to address North Korea's nuclear ambitions. A second revision was undertaken in 2018, based on changes in the regional military situation. See “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” National Diet Library (Japan), Web Archiving Project, November 27, 1978 ∞ https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/us/anpo/pdf/19781127.pdf; and “The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” National Diet Library (Japan), Web Archiving Project, September 23, 1997 ∞ https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/us/anpo/pdf/19970923.pdf.

The Ministers underscored the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. They reiterated their objections to China's unlawful maritime claims and activities in the South China Sea and recalled that the July 2016 award of the Philippines-China arbitral tribunal, constituted under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, is final and legally binding on the parties.⁷

A month later, then Japanese prime minister Yoshihide Suga visited Washington, D.C. Once more, China's increasingly worrisome behavior featured prominently in the joint communiqué issued by President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Suga. In a long paragraph dedicated to their "shared concerns over Chinese activities that are inconsistent with the international rules-based order, including the use of economic and other forms of coercion," the two leaders "underscore[d] the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and encourage[d] the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues."⁸ However, Biden and Suga stopped short of predicting a cross-strait conflict and did not offer any clues to how the alliance would respond. The U.S.-Japan 2+2 in January 2022 also noted cross-strait tensions and the two governments' concerns over China's behavior:

The Ministers expressed their concerns that ongoing efforts by China to undermine the rules-based order present political, economic, military, and technological challenges to the region and the world. They resolved to work together to deter and, if necessary, respond to destabilizing activities in the region.... They underscored the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and encouraged the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.⁹

Beyond the cross-strait issue, the Japanese government has been outspoken on China's increasingly provocative behavior in the East and South China Seas. Even though Taiwan shares Beijing's position on the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands, Japan and Taiwan set aside their differences to conclude a bilateral fisheries agreement in 2013 that allows Taiwanese fishermen access to waters adjacent to Japan's territorial waters. Japan and Taiwan have no direct dialogue on Taiwan's defenses, nor do their militaries have a formal channel of communication. Instead, Tokyo relies on Washington to deter aggression by China.

⁷ "U.S.-Japan Joint Press Statement Released by the Security Consultative Committee," U.S. Department of State, Press Release, March 16, 2021 ~ <https://www.state.gov/u-s-japan-joint-press-statement>.

⁸ "U.S.- Japan Joint Leaders' Statement: 'U.S.-Japan Global Partnership for a New Era,'" White House, April 16, 2021, Press Release ~ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/16/u-s-japan-joint-leaders-statement-u-s-japan-global-partnership-for-a-new-era>.

⁹ "Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Joint Consultative Committee (2+2)," U.S. Department of State, January 6, 2022 ~ <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-of-the-u-s-japan-security-consultative-committee-22>.

Some Japanese politicians have voiced concern about alliance coordination should conflict erupt. Yasuhide Nakayama, state minister for defense and a political appointee beneath the minister, has been quoted in the media for calling on the Biden administration to declare a “red line” on Taiwan.¹⁰ Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, a strong supporter of Taiwan, has also not hesitated to demonstrate his interest. While then prime minister Suga was in Washington in April 2021, Kishi took the opportunity to visit Yonaguni Island, the closest Okinawan Island to Taiwan, and noted on Twitter that on a clear day you could see Taiwan from that tiny Japanese island. Even Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso began to speculate over Japan’s position, noting to donors to the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that he thought a military conflict across the strait would influence Japan’s survival, a scenario that would allow the SDF to operate alongside the U.S. military.¹¹ Military tensions around Taiwan are viewed as a contingency that would draw in U.S. forces rather than Japanese, but Japan’s defense planners understand the United States would need Japan’s help.

On the other hand, China features prominently in Japan’s defense planning. The 2013 National Security Strategy mentions China’s growing military capabilities and Beijing’s willingness to deploy its maritime forces around the region to challenge the status quo. Japan’s concerns about Beijing’s future intentions are clear. On Taiwan, however, the National Security Strategy is judicious: “The relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait has deepened in recent years, primarily in economic areas. Meanwhile, the military balance between the two sides has been changing. Thus, the cross-strait relationship contains both orientations toward stability and potential instability.”¹²

In fall 2022, Tokyo will revise the National Security Strategy, and undoubtedly relations between Taipei and Beijing will be described differently.

¹⁰ For Yasuhide Nakayama’s remarks, see Ju-Min Park, “Japan Official, Calling Taiwan ‘Red Line,’ Urges Biden to ‘Be Strong,’” Reuters, December 25, 2020 ~ <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/japan-official-calling-taiwan-red-line-urges-biden-be-strong-2020-12-25>. Nakayama later reiterated his concerns over the U.S. position on Taiwan in a speech at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. For the transcript of this speech, see Yasuhide Nakayama, “The Transformation of Japan’s Security Strategy” (event transcript, June 28, 2021, online and Washington, D.C.) ~ <https://www.hudson.org/research/17059-transcript-the-transformation-of-japan-s-security-strategy>. The U.S. and Japanese militaries are aware of the proximity of Okinawa’s outlying islands to Taiwan, and Japan’s chief of the Joint Staff invited the U.S. Indo-Pacific commander, Admiral John Aquilino, to join him on Yonaguni to discuss the implications in November 2021.

¹¹ Japan’s 2015 reinterpretation of the right of collective self-defense now allows the SDF to operate with and use force on behalf of other nations if necessary for Japanese security and survival. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), “Japan’s Legislation for Peace and Security,” September 19, 2015 ~ https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we_000084.html.

¹² Prime Minister of Japan, *National Security Strategy*, provisional translation (Tokyo, December 2013) ~ https://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/documents/2013/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/18/NSS.pdf.

The U.S. role in deterring China is paramount. The basic division of labor in the U.S.-Japan alliance remains the same: the United States oversees strategic offensive capabilities, while the SDF maintains capabilities necessary for the defense of Japan.¹³ Command structures remain separate, but the two militaries increasingly share missions that would be important in the case of a conflict with China over Taiwan. Ballistic missile defenses, sea lane protection, maritime presence operations, and now cyber and space domains require bilateral military coordination. New weapons platforms, such as the F-35, also improve the potential for interoperability between the two militaries.

Proximity to Taiwan makes any military conflict a problem for Japan's own defenses. As noted above, Okinawa Prefecture's southern island Yonaguni is only 223 kilometers away, and just 626 kilometers separate Taipei and Naha, Okinawa's capital. The Ministry of Defense closely monitors China's growing military presence in the East China Sea, especially in contiguous waters around Japan's Senkaku Islands. Over the past decade, Chinese military activities have driven adaptations in the SDF force posture.¹⁴ Maritime surveillance has been strengthening across the East China Sea, with the Maritime Self-Defense Force taking the lead. The Southwestern Strategy, largely developed by the Ground Self-Defense Force but implemented jointly with the Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces, includes greater deployments across the Okinawa islands. In particular, the SDF has increased its presence on the outlying islands in the East China Sea, including Yonaguni, Miyako, and Ishigaki. Once quiet outposts, these islands now constitute an important front line of Japan's early-warning systems and a setting in which to deploy the forward positioning of offshore defense capabilities.¹⁵ Thus, the use of force by China against Taiwan would not only engage U.S. forces in Okinawa and other facilities in Japan but would almost certainly trigger a full mobilization of the SDF for defense of Japan operations (see **Table 1**).

¹³ The sword and shield metaphor has long been used to describe this division of labor, and yet significant changes have been made to how the United States and Japan see their militaries operating together. For a closer look at whether this division of labor still makes sense, see Paul Midford, "China Views the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines: Popping the Cork?" *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 4, no. 1 (2004): 113–45; and Ankit Panda, "U.S.-Japan Alliance: Still 'Sword and Shield?'" *Diplomat*, November 5, 2014 ~ <https://thediplomat.com/2014/11/us-japan-alliance-still-sword-and-shield>.

¹⁴ Japan's territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands (known as the Diaoyu Islands in China), which flared up in 2010, remains a front burner issue in the Sino-Japanese relationship. For Japan's position, see Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), "Japanese Territory," March 17, 2022 ~ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/territory/index.html>.

¹⁵ For details on the growing importance of these remote islands in Japan's defense planning, see Ministry of Defense (Japan), *Defense of Japan 2021* (Tokyo, 2021), 261–65 ~ https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp2021/DOJ2021_EN_Full.pdf.

TABLE 1
U.S. and Japanese Forces in Southwest Japan

		United States			Japan		
	Location	Service	Division	Location	Service	Division	
Okinawa Island mainland	Camp Courtney	U.S. Marines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters • 3rd Marine Division Headquarters 	Camp Chinen	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Air Defense Artillery 	
	Camp Hansen	U.S. Marines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12th Marine Regiment (Artillery) • 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Headquarters 	Camp Katsuren	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Air Defense Artillery 	
	Camp Foster	U.S. Marines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Headquarters 	Camp Minami Yoza	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Air Defense Artillery 	
	Camp Kinser	U.S. Marines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Marine Logistics Group Headquarters 	Camp Naha	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Brigade Headquarters • 51st Infantry • Other units 	
	Camp Schwab	U.S. Marines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Marine Regiment (Infantry) 	Camp Shirakawa	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Air Defense Artillery 	
	Kadena Air Base	U.S. Air Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th Wing 	Camp Yaese	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th Air Defense Artillery 	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleet Activities Okinawa Patrol Squadron 	Katsuren Base	JMSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub Area Activity Okinawa 	
	MCAS Futenma	U.S. Marines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-1 Air Defense Artillery 	Naha Base	JMSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleet Air Wing 5 	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Aircraft Group 36 	Sub Base Yozadake	JASDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Western Air Defense Force 	
					JASDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56th Guard 	

Table 1 continued.

	United States			Japan		
	Location	Service	Division	Location	Service	Division
Okinawa Island	Torii Station	U.S. Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10th Area Support Group • 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) 			
	White Beach Area	U.S. Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port facility • Oil storage facility 			
Other Islands in Okinawa Prefecture			No U.S. divisions	Camp Amami	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amami Area Security Force
				Camp Ishigaki	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ishigaki Area Security Force (under construction)
				Camp Miyako	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miyako Area Security Force
				Camp Yonagumi	JGSDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yonaguni Coast Observation Unit
				Sub Base Amami	JASDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amami Signal Unit
				Sub Base Miyako	JASDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53rd Guard
				Sub Base Kumejima	JASDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54th Guard
			Sub Base Okinoerabujima	JASDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55th Guard 	

Source: Government of Japan.

Note: JGSDF is Japan Ground Self-Defense Force; JMSDF is Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force; and JASDF is Japan Air Self-Defense Force.

U.S. Base Use in Japan

Beyond mobilizing for its national defense, Japan's role in supporting U.S. operations during a Taiwan contingency would be vital. The U.S. military would need access to a host of bases and facilities in Japan should military conflict erupt between China and Taiwan. Here U.S.-Japan consultations on base use during a Korean contingency are informative. Bases in Japan play a critical support role not only for U.S. forces but also for the UN command on the Korean Peninsula, including noncombatant evacuation should it become necessary. Many Japanese airfields and facilities have a dual designation that would permit these planned UN operations, which could involve both U.S. and other national forces if necessary.¹⁶ A Taiwan contingency could require similarly comprehensive and immediate access to facilities and bases in Japan for many forces. And, like a Korean contingency, a cross-strait crisis would require Washington and Tokyo to consult on the potential evacuation of Japanese and other nationals from Taiwan. Japan's territory thus plays a crucial supporting role for both combat and noncombat missions. The U.S. and Japanese governments will need to carefully consider planning for base access as well as public support for use of Japanese civil facilities.

Within Japan, the use of bases and facilities by the U.S. military remains politically sensitive. This is particularly true in Okinawa, where the bulk of U.S. forces are stationed. Anti-base activism is closely connected to the devastation of Okinawa during World War II. Moreover, protests have emphasized the forcible expropriation of land for the construction of U.S. military bases there during the Korean War while the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands remained under U.S. occupation. After reversion, prefecture-wide protests erupted once more after a twelve-year-old girl was raped by U.S. military personnel in 1995, severely complicating Tokyo and Washington's effort to address the growing challenge of North Korea.¹⁷ This year is the 50th anniversary of the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty, a commemoration that undoubtedly will showcase how Okinawans suffered and the popular disgruntlement that remains over the concentration of U.S. military bases there. Tokyo and

¹⁶ Ministry of Defense (Japan), *Defense of Japan 2021*, 59, 121.

¹⁷ Sheila A. Smith, "Shifting Terrain: The Domestic Politics of the U.S. Military Presence in Asia," East-West Center, Special Report, no. 8, March 2006. See also Andrew Yeo, *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-U.S. Base Protests* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Masamichi Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Washington have worked to reduce the U.S. footprint on the island.¹⁸ However, the government's growing worries about Chinese activities in and around its southwestern region have prompted an increased SDF presence as well as more exercises between the U.S. and Japanese militaries. Okinawa's governor, Denny Tamaki, continues to caution Tokyo that he will not approve additional U.S. deployments, including intermediate-range missiles, in the prefecture.¹⁹ A gubernatorial election in fall 2022 will also likely highlight the dangers associated with the U.S. bases, particularly if Tokyo and Washington are attempting to coordinate militarily on a cross-strait crisis. The Taiwan issue thus reignites concerns in Okinawa about becoming a target for great-power conflict. The Japanese government will need to consider the popular reaction to expanding U.S. operations from its territory.

The two governments will need to plan for other complicating factors to base use as well. Accompanying the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty is a memorandum of understanding that pledges the United States to prior consultation with the Japanese government in the case of significant changes in deployments and operations from bases in Japan. Specifically, changes in major forces or major weapons systems would need Japanese government approval, as would the use of U.S. forces for combat elsewhere than Japan.²⁰ To date, this prior consultation mechanism has not been used in case of war, but it has been imagined for application during a Korean contingency. Opposition parties have long claimed that the Japanese and U.S. governments maintained "secret understandings" (*mitsuyaku*) about the use of nuclear weapons during a conflict. A policy review undertaken by the Democratic Party of Japan government helped ease this distrust, but the premise remains that Japan will exercise sovereign discretion over how U.S. forces use bases on their territory. Knowing how Japan will decide on base use in advance of a contingency will be important for U.S. planning.

The Korean example only goes so far in informing a Taiwan scenario, however. China's reaction to a U.S.-Japan coordinated response in a Taiwan

¹⁸ "SACO Final Report," U.S. Department of State, August 5, 1997 ~ https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/regions/eap/japan/rpt-saco_final_961202.html#:~:text=The%20Special%20Action%20Committee%20on,strengthen%20the%20Japan%2DUS%20alliance.

¹⁹ Denny Tamaki, "Governor Warns of 'Strong Resistance' by Okinawans to Basing U.S. Intermediate-Range Missiles in Prefecture," *Japan Times*, November 3, 2021 ~ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/11/03/national/politics-diplomacy/denny-tamaki-okinawa-us-missiles>.

²⁰ See "Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), January 19, 1960 ~ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>; and "Agreement Regarding the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), January 19, 1960 ~ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/2.html>.


contingency would likely be far different from its reaction to their response to a situation in North Korea. The risk to Japan of allowing the use of its territory for combat with China would be high, and a preemptive PRC attack on U.S. bases in Japan should not be ruled out. Thus, the scenario for the U.S.-Japan alliance would need to consider both the specific operational needs of a Taiwan contingency and a defense of Japan scenario. Active SDF engagement in supporting U.S. forces could invite direct aggression against Japan by the People's Liberation Army. Imagining how vertical or horizontal escalation by China could shape Japan's decision-making on base use will be integral to an alliance strategy. Political pressure to retain sovereign discretion could have a sobering impact on Japanese government thinking about prior approval for major military operations from its territory. An understanding with Tokyo regarding basing will be needed as the two governments consider the alliance's role in a Taiwan crisis.

THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

The newest and most complicated factor to take into consideration in a Taiwan contingency is Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how it might affect the United States and its allies in the Indo-Pacific. The differences between the two scenarios are considerable. But the fact of Russia's invasion and the Western response suggest already that this conflict will shape future global crises, including a potential clash between China and Taiwan.

Differences Abound

Although it is tempting to try to see a parallel between this conflict and a potential Chinese use of force against Taiwan, differences outweigh similarities. China and Russia have independent national interests that shape decisions on the use of force. Yet the goals of Beijing and Moscow seemed to be increasingly aligned as they announced their desire to build a new international order at the Beijing Winter Olympics. Debate continues among China experts over just how much Xi Jinping understood Putin's ambitions in Ukraine.²¹ Officials in the Biden administration noted that they had informed Beijing about Russia's

²¹ See, for example, the excellent discussion in Evan Medeiros, Akio Takahara, and Mathieu Duchâtel, "China's Russia Strategy: The Ukraine Crisis and Beyond," moderated by Bonnie S. Glaser, German Marshall Fund of the United States, YouTube, March 17, 2022  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHGoYxzVLJs>.

troop buildup months before the invasion began.²² Once the war started, U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan and others in the administration reported that Russia had asked China for economic and military aid, including drones, for its war in Ukraine.²³

Equally important, Taiwan's status is not analogous to that of Ukraine, and the variables that might come into play only compound the complexity of comparison. Although a democracy, Taiwan is not a recognized sovereign state. In fact, it has long been formally recognized by the United States and Japan as a territory of China.²⁴ Second, as an island, Taiwan does not share a land border with China, making a conventional invasion far more challenging. Third, it is a highly integrated economic partner of China as well as the United States and Japan. Finally, although Taiwan may not have the Article 5 protections of U.S. treaty allies, through the Taiwan Relations Act the United States has played a direct role in ensuring the island's defenses.

Much depends on Washington's choices. In his first address after Russia's invasion of Ukraine began, Biden stated that U.S. forces would not be sent to Ukraine and would not play a role in its defense. But he also said that "the United States will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of American power,"²⁵ and the United States has stepped up its forces in some

²² Edward Wong, "U.S. Officials Repeatedly Urged China to Help Avert War in Ukraine," *New York Times*, February 25, 2022 ≈ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/us/politics/us-china-russia-ukraine.html>.

²³ Jim Sciutto, Sam Fossom, Kaitlan Collins, and Kylie Atwood, "Russia Has Requested Military and Economic Assistance from China, U.S. Officials Say," CNN, March 14, 2022 ≈ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/13/politics/jake-sullivan-meeting-chinese-counterpart-ukraine/index.html>.

²⁴ From the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué: "The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes." "Joint Statement Following Discussions with Leaders of the People's Republic of China," February 27, 1972, published in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972*, ed. Steven E. Phillips and Edward C. Keefer, Document 203 (Washington, D.C., 2006) ≈ <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v17/d203>.

²⁵ Joe Biden, "Remarks by President Biden on Russia's Unprovoked and Unjustified Attack on Ukraine," White House, February 24, 2022 ≈ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine>.

NATO front-line states.²⁶ In contrast, the United States would be expected to play the primary role in the defense of Taiwan. Allies in the region will be looking to Washington and gauging their responses accordingly. Yet there is no single multilateral alliance framework in Asia to integrate a uniform response. Each ally will consider its role in a Taiwan crisis differently, and the domestic politics of each will shape their response. While the U.S.-Japan alliance would have a significant role in any conflict so close to Japan's territory, it is unclear what role, if any, the U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance would play in such a regional contingency. U.S. forces in South Korea are not configured for flexible use off the peninsula but rather to deter and, if necessary, defend against aggression by North Korea against the South. Further south, Australia's ability to contribute to sea lane defense as well as broader intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in the western Pacific would undoubtedly be beneficial should a U.S.-led defense of Taiwan become necessary. Each allied capital would need to weigh the risks and benefits of military involvement in Taiwan's defense.

Conflict Escalation and the U.S.-Japan Alliance

Two dimensions of the Ukraine conflict could have a bearing on Japan's assessment. First, Putin's use of nuclear coercion raises important political questions about U.S. thinking regarding controlling escalation, both vertical and horizontal, during the war. As Russian military action against Ukraine began, Biden drew a clear line between U.S. treaty allies that have a codified promise that U.S. military power, including nuclear weapons, will be used on their behalf and nontreaty allies that have received no such commitment. Not only did this exclude U.S. direct military assistance, but it also precluded a role for NATO. As the invasion proceeded, however, and Ukrainians came under increasing fire, many in Europe and the United States began to call for greater military aid for Ukraine. When Poland offered to give its aging MiG fighters to Ukraine in return for new F-16s from the United States, the

²⁶ The U.S. Department of Defense has been reluctant to provide information on troop movements to NATO allies in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, a Pentagon spokesperson noted that 7,000 personnel have bolstered NATO's in-region defenses, and an additional 500 were sent in support of front-line NATO allies. See John F. Kirby, U.S. Department of Defense, Press Briefing, March 7, 2022 \approx <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2958302/pentagon-press-secretary-john-f-kirby-holds-a-press-briefing-march-7-2022>. On March 14, the Department of Defense clarified that despite Russian missile strikes near the Ukraine-Poland border, the United States would not at this time augment the 8,750 U.S. forces currently in Poland. See Caitlin Doornbos, "No Changes Expected for U.S. Troops in Poland despite Russian Missile Strikes Near Ukraine-Polish Border," *Stars and Stripes*, March 14, 2022 \approx <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2022-03-14/ukraine-russia-war-missile-strikes-us-troops-poland-5343711.html>.

Department of Defense rejected that offer, stating that “the decision about whether to transfer Polish-owned planes to Ukraine is ultimately one for the Polish government.”²⁷ Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has called for a no-fly zone over Ukraine as negotiations over humanitarian corridors for evacuating the country’s southern cities failed to protect residents trying to flee. Again, the Biden administration has stated that it would not participate in air defenses as that would raise the specter of direct conflict with Russia or an escalation to nuclear war. To be sure, the United States is providing considerable military assistance to Ukraine. On the same day that Zelensky spoke to the U.S. Congress, Biden also announced \$1 billion in additional assistance to Ukraine’s defenses.²⁸ The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has created deep public empathy and difficult politics for the Biden administration. The longer the conflict lasts, the greater this political pressure could become.

What kind of action will the United States take in the context of war? U.S. allies in Asia are watching this carefully. The United States continues to respond to Putin’s intimation that he would escalate the conflict should NATO forces become involved. Moscow seeks to deter U.S. direct intervention in, and even material support for, Ukraine, while Washington seeks to preempt any chance of conflict between the two nuclear powers by refusing to engage. To be sure, other wars may have involved this kind of signaling, but rarely has it been so public, nor has one side so explicitly used nuclear risk to achieve its own war aims. How the United States can help Ukraine without giving Putin an opening for escalation is surely a daily calculation for U.S. policy planners.

But it is also a conversation for and among U.S. allies. Those states bordering Ukraine feel the pressure both to help sustain Zelensky and his forces and to prepare in case Putin decides to take the war to NATO. On March 15, the leaders of the Baltic States, NATO’s newest members, visited Kyiv to meet with the Ukrainian leader. Poland, as well as other European Union

²⁷ “Statement by Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby on Security Assistance to Ukraine,” U.S. Department of Defense, Press Release, March 8, 2022 ~ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2960180/statement-by-pentagon-press-secretary-john-f-kirby-on-security-assistance-to-uk>.

²⁸ “Fact Sheet on U.S. Security Assistance for Ukraine,” White House, March 16, 2022 ~ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-on-u-s-security-assistance-for-ukraine>. For a video of Zelensky’s address to a joint session of Congress, see “Ukraine President Zelenskyy’s Full Address to U.S. Congress,” NBC, March 16, 2022, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TETSeOjRU0>. This appeal has been made to a variety of democratic governments, including the United Kingdom’s parliament, Canada’s parliament, and the German parliament. Japan, too, hosted the Ukrainian president for a virtual address to the Diet in late March. Office of the President of Ukraine, “Speech by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Parliament of Japan,” Office of the President of Ukraine, March 23, 2022 ~ <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-v-parlamen-73769>.

states, is admitting fleeing Ukrainian civilians and offering them housing and support. The Czech Republic has provided Ukraine with tanks. Biden traveled to Brussels to reiterate the U.S. commitment to NATO's defenses as well as to emphasize the global consequences of Putin's aggression. In addition to stating "we are united in our resolve to counter Russia's attempts to destroy the foundations of international security and stability," the NATO leaders called on "all states, including the People's Republic of China (PRC), to uphold the international order including the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, as enshrined in the UN Charter, to abstain from supporting Russia's war effort in any way, and to refrain from any action that helps Russia circumvent sanctions."²⁹

Japan has also played a visible role in the international response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A G-7 leaders meeting was convened, which included Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida. And in a follow-on meeting of NATO foreign ministers, Japan was invited to join as a NATO "partner." Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi also visited Poland to offer assistance for Ukrainians fleeing the war. Japan has worked hard to keep pace with European nations, sending material assistance to Ukraine, providing a venue for Zelensky to speak to the Japanese parliament, offering aid to nations that border Ukraine, and admitting Ukrainians who seek refuge. Kishida's framing of Japanese cooperation with the United States and European nations has been clear from the start: Russia's invasion is a violation of the rule of law and thus affects all nations. It is a systemic threat to the postwar order that Japan relies on for its own security and prosperity. Japan's engagement thus is an investment in a possible future scenario in the Indo-Pacific that would require a coordinated and concerted response to the use of force to change the status quo.

A final question is how public opinion would shape regional attitudes toward Taiwan. Initial polling suggests that more people in the United States support a direct role in responding should China invade Taiwan.³⁰ There is no such clarity in Japanese polling, but public attitudes toward China continue to reveal distrust and uneasiness.³¹ Interestingly, a recent poll taken in Australia

²⁹ "Statement by NATO Heads of State and Government," NATO, Press Release, March 24, 2022 ~ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_193719.htm.

³⁰ See Dina Smeltz and Craig Kafura, "For First Time, Half of Americans Favor Defending Taiwan If China Invades," Chicago Council on Global Affairs, August 2021 ~ <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/2021%20Taiwan%20Brief.pdf>.

³¹ The lack of diplomatic contact during the pandemic has only increased this sense of unease. See the Genron NPO, "Japan-China Public Opinion Survey 2021," October 2021 ~ <https://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/docs/211025.pdf>.

revealed that despite the fact that their government only recognizes one China diplomatically, most Australians view Taiwan as an independent nation, and 67% said Australia should “do something” if China were to invade.³²

The Role of Sanctions

The second dimension of the Russian invasion that draws Indo-Pacific attention is the use of sanctions to punish the aggressor. As a member of the G-7, Japan has been the most forward leaning among the Indo-Pacific nations on the use of economic sanctions against Russia.³³ Tokyo aligned itself quickly with the United States and European nations and has matched their pace as sanctions were ratcheted up on Russia. Moreover, when Russian brutality was revealed as forces left the outskirts of Kyiv, Japan joined in condemning such behavior as “war crimes.” By April 12, Japan had imposed a comprehensive menu of economic sanctions on Russia. Financial sanctions on Russian banks, individuals, and the export of goods largely followed the evolving list of sanctions prepared by the G-7. In addition, the Kishida cabinet early on promised aid to Ukraine, which began as loans and humanitarian assistance and evolved into sending SDF protective gear and refugee relief for those who fled to neighboring countries.³⁴ With the allegations of Russian war crimes, Kishida announced that Japan would cut back its imports of Russian coal.

Thus, the G-7 rather than the UN Security Council has become the most effective conduit for a unified Western response. It has proved to be a comfortable setting for Japan to expand its use of sanctions in a multilateral setting. In contrast to the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Kishida cabinet moved early to sanction Russian aggression and has been able to expand those sanctions because of strong popular sympathy for the Ukrainian people’s plight. Media reports of private donations to Ukraine as well as individuals signing up to fight in Ukraine revealed a surprising shift in the tenor of public sentiment. The enactment of financial and trade sanctions on this scale in response to the use of force is unprecedented in the postwar era and demonstrates a remarkable unity of purpose among the United States, Europe, and Japan.

³² Anthony Galloway, “Most Australians Regard Taiwan as a Sovereign State,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 9, 2022 ~ <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/most-australians-regard-taiwan-as-a-sovereign-state-20220408-p5abz4.html>.

³³ Other U.S. allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific have joined in sanctioning Russia. Australia and South Korea have gradually expanded the list of individuals and organizations on their sanctions lists, and Singapore has also announced sanctions.

³⁴ For the full range of Japan’s sanctions on Russia and Belarus as well as aid to Ukraine to date, see Government of Japan, “Japan Stands with Ukraine,” April 11, 2022 ~ https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/pdf/jp_stands_with_ukraine_eng.pdf.

Yet it is unclear whether this type of response could be effectively mobilized against China. Punishing individuals and organizations may not entail a higher cost, but financial sanction of the central bank of the world's second-largest economy (with an estimated \$15.47 trillion GDP) is not the same as refusing transactions with the world's twelfth-largest economy (estimated \$1.67 trillion GDP).³⁵ A similar package of sanctions imposed on the PRC would have ripple effects across the global economy. Unlike Russia, China holds a considerable share of U.S. debt and provides capital for investment worldwide. The scale of the Chinese economy, and the degree to which Western nations are entwined with it, would likely temper U.S. and allied appetites for an abrupt end to trade. U.S. trade with China in 2021 was \$657 billion, compared to only \$36 billion with Russia.³⁶ Similarly, Japan's trade with China is more than ten times that with Russia: \$322 billion and \$20 billion, respectively.³⁷ Even Europe, which has the deepest trade ties with Russia (\$274 billion in 2021), would pause at ending \$769 billion in annual trade with China.³⁸ Thus, China's economic influence around the globe might temper the use of economic sanctions. Nonetheless, Beijing might be dissuaded from the use of force if it thought a similar Western coalition could be built in response to an invasion of Taiwan.

A Russia-China Axis?

The full extent of China's support for Putin's war remains to be seen. The joint announcement of the Russian and Chinese presidents on February 4 of a "no limits" friendship looks far more menacing in the wake of Russia's Ukraine invasion.³⁹ For some this joint statement suggests a concerted aim of overthrowing the U.S.-led postwar order. Others observe that Xi Jinping may have made a significant strategic error with the statement by appearing to endorse Putin's ambitions in Ukraine. Of late, there have been some small signals that China may be weighing its options carefully. In a widely circulated

³⁵ World Population Review for 2022, "GDP Ranked by Country 2022" ~ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/countries-by-gdp>.

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Foreign Trade" ~ <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/index.html>.

³⁷ Ministry of Finance (Japan), "Trade Statistics of Japan" ~ <https://www.customs.go.jp/toukei/srch/indexe.htm>.

³⁸ European Commission, "International Trade in Goods—A Statistical Picture," Eurostat ~ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_trade_in_goods_-_a_statistical_picture.

³⁹ "Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development," Kremlin, February 4, 2022 ~ <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770>.

essay, a leading establishment academic argued that China's national interests diverge from Russia's and that supporting Moscow's war on Ukraine would be costly to those interests.⁴⁰ In an op-ed in the *Washington Post*, China's ambassador to the United States, Qin Gang, made explicit Chinese views on the war in Ukraine and denied reports that China would provide military assistance to Russia, saying they were "disinformation." But notably, Qin also addressed the parallels being drawn between Ukraine and Taiwan:

Some people are linking Taiwan and Ukraine to play up the risks of a conflict in the Taiwan Strait. This is a mistake. These are totally different things. Ukraine is a sovereign state, while Taiwan is an inseparable part of China's territory. The Taiwan question is a Chinese internal affair. It does not make sense for people to emphasize the principle of sovereignty in Ukraine while hurting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity in Taiwan. The future of Taiwan lies in peaceful development of cross-strait relations and the reunification of China. We are committed to peaceful reunification, but we also retain all options to curb "Taiwan independence." We hope the United States earnestly abides by the one-China principle and does not support "Taiwan independence" separatism in any form. To ensure long-term peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, China and the United States must work together to contain "Taiwan independence."⁴¹

In talks with Chinese leaders, the Biden administration pointed out the costs of PRC assistance to Russia, especially military assistance. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan met with Chinese state councilor Yang Jiechi, and Biden spoke virtually with Xi.⁴² The White House readout of the Biden-Xi conversation emphasized a similar message on the part of the president but contained no indication that progress had been made in gaining a Chinese

⁴⁰ Hu Wei, "Possible Outcomes of the Russo-Ukrainian War and China's Choice," U.S.-China Perceptions Monitor, March 12, 2022 ~ <https://uscnpm.org/2022/03/12/hu-wei-russia-ukraine-war-china-choice>.

⁴¹ Qin Gang, "Chinese Ambassador: Where We Stand on Ukraine," *Washington Post*, March 15, 2022 ~ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/03/15/china-ambassador-us-where-we-stand-in-ukraine>.

⁴² While scheduled months in advance, the March 14 meeting between Sullivan and Yang was widely seen as an opportunity for U.S. officials to discuss China's stance on the conflict with their Chinese counterparts. See, for example, Phelim Kine, "Jake Sullivan and China's Yang Jiechi to Discuss Russia-Ukraine on Monday," *Politico*, March 13, 2022 ~ <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/03/13/jake-sullivan-china-yang-jiechi-russia-ukraine-00016831>. The White House readout after the meeting was cryptic but noted "substantial discussion of Russia's war against Ukraine." "Readout of National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's Meeting with Politburo Member Yang Jiechi," White House, Press Release, March 14, 2022 ~ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/14/readout-of-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivans-meeting-with-politburo-member-yang-jiechi-2>.

commitment to cooperate in ending the war.⁴³ China's calculations on Russia's actions will undoubtedly shape how the U.S. and Japanese governments view the possibility of conflict in the Indo-Pacific. Equally important, should Beijing team up with Moscow in the prosecution of this war, popular antipathy toward China and the Chinese people will grow in the United States, Europe, and Japan as well as among many of China's other neighbors.

Ultimately, lessons of what worked and what did not work in deterring escalation and in shaping a new postwar European order will be gleaned from how this war ends. What happens to the Ukrainian people and to the sovereignty of Ukraine will shape attitudes about the success or failure of the Western response. But allies and adversaries alike will be gauging the efficacy of NATO, the EU, and the United States once the terms of the peace are determined. Already this war in Europe has raised some profound questions about the transatlantic alliance within Europe's major capitals. Across the Indo-Pacific, there is likewise a sense that the shift in the global balance of power is accelerating. Many across the region are attuned to the lessons China learns from this conflict, lessons about the health of U.S. alliances as well as about the pros and cons of the use of force. Distrust of China, already spreading, will only deepen if Beijing backs Putin's war. Without a clear PRC rejection of the use of force by Russia, skepticism about Beijing's own calculations on the benefits of the use of force in achieving unification with Taiwan could also grow.

THE RUSSIAN INVASION AND THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

Four important considerations for the United States and Japan to consider as they look ahead at maintaining peace across the Taiwan Strait emerge from the example of Russia's invasion. The first and most obvious is how to ensure that the status quo does not change by force. Diplomatically, this has been the premise of cross-strait relations. The PRC, the United States, Japan, and Taiwan have all accepted that if unification with the mainland were to occur, it should be the choice of the people of Taiwan. To ensure this, Taiwan's ability to defend itself must be a priority. Washington, of course, can and does help—in particular, by supplying weaponry and training under the Taiwan Relations Act. Japan has assiduously avoided the impression of

⁴³ "Readout of President Joseph R. Biden Jr. Call with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China," White House, March 18, 2021 ~ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/18/readout-of-president-joseph-r-biden-jr-call-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2>.

any military engagement with Taiwan. Trilateral peacetime missions that include U.S. and Japanese forces in operation with Taiwanese forces might be helpful. Maritime law enforcement, disaster preparedness training, and other humanitarian exercises could be considered.

Washington and Tokyo together must also ensure sufficient capabilities to demonstrate the possible consequences of a use of force across the Taiwan Strait. Congress has backed the Department of Defense's Pacific Deterrence Initiative aimed at improving regional military posture, and the United States increasingly collaborates in space and cyber operations with its regional allies.⁴⁴ For many, the worry is that the United States will be distracted from its Indo-Pacific focus by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and that resources will now be directed to Europe instead of Asia. More than ever, Washington will have to signal that it is willing and able to assure its commitments in both parts of the globe. But the United States will also look to its regional allies for greater military investment. Like South Korea, Japan will need to continue to boost its military capabilities, including long-term indigenous defense technologies, to ensure that its defenses are sufficient. The missile threat persists in Northeast Asia, and Japan's ability to deter such an attack is crucial. Expanding the reach of Japan's offshore defenses as well as devising a longer-range strike capability could fill that gap. Similarly, politicians in the LDP are arguing that Japan should aspire to military investments of the same share of GDP as NATO allies. Practically speaking, however, moving the needle from roughly 1% of GDP to 2% would require a massive adjustment in Japan's national budget and is unlikely to happen soon. The political aim of limiting spending to 1% of GDP has been used as an informal assurance of Japan's limited military aims, but today a different signal might be in order. In 2021, defense spending neared 1.3% of GDP after a year-end supplemental budget was added.⁴⁵ While no new legislation would be needed to boost Japan's defense spending, the Diet would need to approve any reallocation of the budget toward the military.

After Russia's invasion, German chancellor Olaf Scholtz's speech proclaiming that Germany now must change its long-standing reluctance

⁴⁴ Andrew V. Eversden, "Pacific Deterrence Initiative Gets \$2.1 Billion Boost in Final NDAA," *Breaking Defense*, December 7, 2021 ≈ <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/12/pacific-deterrence-initiative-gets-2-1-billion-boost-in-final-ndaa>.

⁴⁵ The supplemental budget announced in December 2021 provided a significant boost to annual spending for the Japanese fiscal year that ended March 31, 2022. See Sebastien Roblin, "Japan to Surge \$6.8 Billion in Extra Military Spending Due to China, Taiwan, North Korea—and Covid," *Forbes*, November 30, 2021 ≈ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastienroblin/2021/11/30/japan-may-surge-68-billion-in-extra-military-spending-due-to-china-taiwan-north-koreaand-covid/?sh=21a1b2c0738e>.

to raise military spending has resonated in Tokyo. Hawks in the LDP have wanted to adjust defense spending for some time, and in last year's Lower House election the party included the aspiration of NATO's 2% goal to its platform. Kishida could consider moving the party's commitment to a greater share of defense investment from the LDP platform to the national policy agenda. This year's revision of the National Security Strategy and ten-year defense plan might offer just such an opportunity. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has become an accelerant for Japanese military reform.

Second, Washington and Tokyo must address nuclear risk not only in terms of their allied deterrence strategy but also as a possibility during a conflict. Since 2014, the two allies have had an ongoing dialogue on extended deterrence, deepening Japan's understanding of U.S. capabilities and management of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.⁴⁶ Deterrence by denial has become the guiding concept of the U.S.-Japan alliance for Japan's defenses. But talks have largely focused on strengthening extended deterrence prior to a conflict. How this understanding would be affected in a Taiwan scenario remains to be seen. Would assets needed for alliance deterrence be modified to suit the Taiwan contingency? How would an escalating conflict across the strait change thinking in Tokyo and Washington about the use of nuclear threat? Ukraine's experience has revealed that Russia is willing to use nuclear coercion to deter NATO involvement. Risking escalation to nuclear war crosses a threshold that the United States and its NATO allies thus far have been unwilling to cross. As noted above, Biden has been consistently clear that he will take no action that Putin could reasonably perceive as vertical or horizontal escalation. But as the Ukrainian conflict demonstrates, major-power war in the nuclear era creates a variety of escalatory risks.

Could China use this escalation tactic as well? China, too, could imply its willingness to escalate a military operation to the nuclear level to deter U.S. involvement. Japan is protected by Article 5 in the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and this reassures Tokyo of a U.S. response. But it also raises the prospect of a Chinese attack on the U.S. homeland, playing on long-standing fears that U.S. citizens may not be willing to risk nuclear attack for a conflict elsewhere. China may also want to threaten Japan prior to a conflict and would likely play on the deep anti-nuclear sentiment of the Japanese people. Already, Chinese Communist Party media outlets have circulated a video showing Chinese nuclear attacks against Japan to rattle

⁴⁶ "Japan-U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), Press Release, June 10, 2014.  https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000295.html.

Japanese calculations about its role in a cross-strait contingency.⁴⁷ But once a crisis erupts, and if Beijing sees war as unavoidable, then Japan's acquiescence in and support of a U.S. role in a Taiwan contingency could invite a preemptive strike against U.S. bases there. Developing an allied strategy for managing nuclear risk should be an important element of U.S.-Japan discussions over a potential Taiwan crisis.

Third, the United States and Japan must prepare to manage the economic fallout of the crisis. Should a crisis escalate to armed force, the economic ties between the West and China would be forcibly and abruptly severed, and an adjustment period to this decoupling would be painful for all involved. How could the United States and Japan mitigate this impact? Already, partners of both states such as Australia and India are beginning to consider how to develop greater resilience toward China's growing use of economic coercion. Supply chain resilience would have considerable impact on Taiwan's economy as well, and thus a first step would be developing greater supply chain diversity across the Western economies. Japan, the United States, and the EU are already starting to develop plans for critical technology protection; greater attention to and investment in these efforts are needed. On the other hand, decoupling fully from the PRC would remove one of the most important sources of leverage that the United States and Japan have on Chinese behavior. The PRC is equally dependent on the U.S. and Japanese economies, not to mention on Taiwan's capital and goods. Careful thought on whether and how the combined economic leverage of the United States and Japan—the first- and third-largest economies in the world—could deter aggression would be prudent. A serious reckoning of the impact of such loss, considering the costs imposed on Russia, might illustrate why the economic risk outweighs the use of force across the Taiwan Strait.

Finally, and relatedly, if the risk of conflict across the Taiwan Strait were to rise, the United States and Japan would need a strategy to ensure a global response, such as that which has mobilized countries to sanction Russia and aid Ukraine. The G-7 states' rapid and fulsome response to sanctioning Russia has been a hallmark of the response to Russia's invasion. The threat of sanctions was amply delivered for months prior to troops crossing the border, and the costs were understood in Moscow. Putin either doubted the ability of the Western nations to respond or decided that the cost did not matter. But given that the ruble's value plunged, trade halted, corporations boycotted the Russian market,

⁴⁷ Keoni Everington, "CCP Channel Reposts Video Threatening to Nuke Japan If It Defends Taiwan," *Taiwan News*, July 16, 2021 ≈ <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4250097>.

and financial sanctions and controls tightened living conditions for oligarchs, officials, and ordinary citizens alike, that calculus could change. Nations dependent on Russian oil and gas have cut or committed to cut their energy dependence on Russia but have yet to end their energy imports. With the revelations of Russian brutality toward Ukrainian civilians, pressure is growing on Germany and others to take more drastic action to cripple Russian energy earnings. This will take time, however, to implement. While U.S., European, and Japanese public opinion has largely favored this wholesale economic sanctions approach, it is unclear how much and for how long Western citizens will tolerate the economic pain of rising energy prices.⁴⁸

One clear legacy for U.S. and Japanese policymakers will be the changing venue for global cooperation in the face of war. The G-7, rather than the United Nations, has been the vehicle for concerted action to sanction Russia, but could this forum act similarly in the case of aggression by Beijing against Taiwan? In a UN vote, only 4 countries sided with Moscow in the General Assembly vote condemning the invasion. The 35 abstentions were significant, however, with China, India, and Cuba being among those that remained unaligned. Given that the Security Council was chaired by Russia in February when the war began, there was little chance that it would play a decisive role in ending the conflict. More recently, the effort to remove Russia from the UN Human Rights Commission in response to the allegations of war crimes by Russian troops garnered a more divided UN response.⁴⁹ Many Asian states abstained from this effort at UN censure.

Instead, the diplomatic response—and the leverage exercised on the aggressor—was crafted in the G-7, home to states that together claim a 46%

⁴⁸ For U.S. opinion, see “Public Expresses Mixed Views of U.S. Response to Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” Pew Research Center, March 15, 2022 ~ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/03/15/public-expresses-mixed-views-of-u-s-response-to-russias-invasion-of-ukraine>. In Japan, a *Nikkei Shimbun* poll revealed 61% in favor of sanctions on February 28, the conservative *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported a higher support rate of 82% on March 7, and even the liberal *Asahi Shimbun*’s March 21 poll had 62% in support. “Tairo seisai ‘beiou to hochō’ 61%, naikaku shiji 55%, 4 pointo teika, honsha yoronchosa” [Sanction against Russia, “Keep Pace with the U.S. and Europe” 61%, Cabinet Support at 55%, 4 Points Down, Headquarters Opinion Poll], *Nikkei Shimbun*, February 28, 2022 ~ https://www.nikkei.com/nkd/industry/article/?DisplayType=2&n_m_cod e=141&ng=DGKKZO58614740Y2A220C2MM8000; “Tairo seisai ‘shiji’ 82% shinko ‘Nippon ni kyoi’ 81%...honsha yoronchosa” [Sanctions against Russia: 82% “Support,” 81% Invasion a “Threat to Japan,” Headquarters Opinion Poll], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 7, 2022 ~ <https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/election/yoron-chosa/20220307-OYT1T50055>; and “Roshia keizai seisai ‘kokunai ni eikyo shitemo tsudukeru beki da’ 67%, Asahi chosa” [Russian Economic Sanctions “Should Continue Even if It Affects the Country,” 67% Asahi Survey], *Asahi Shimbun*, March 21, 2022 ~ https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASQ3P4VP9Q3PUZPS00G.html?iref=comtop_7_05.

⁴⁹ The outcome of the vote was 93 in favor and 24 against, with 58 abstentions. See “UN General Assembly Votes to Suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council,” United Nations, April 7, 2022 ~ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115782>.

share of the world's GDP.⁵⁰ Economic retaliation, rather than a military response, has become the means of diplomatic opprobrium. Laying the groundwork for similar coalition building in a Taiwan scenario will require European participation. The United States and Japan will need to work to develop this coalition, giving considerable attention to G-7 members' economic vulnerabilities to China and to the public sentiment that would be needed to rally around a concerted response. European condemnation of Russia has been unified, and the governments of the G-7 countries have acted in unison. Their publics have largely followed in agreement even when the prospect of severe hikes in energy costs and other economic scarcities were acknowledged. But if the conflict stretches on and the full severity of this economic impact is felt, this G-7 unity could erode. The popular tolerance for economic loss in the EU nations, the United States, and Japan during this war will undoubtedly shape the debate over the use of sanctions in any future conflict. In a possible crisis involving Taiwan, European nations would need to be willing to expend the same energy in sanctioning China if it were to resort to the use of force that they have in condemning Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

RECONSIDERING RISK IN THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

The United States and Japan, as well as other U.S. allies and partners in Asia, are watching China's role in the Russian war on Ukraine with deep interest. How China decides to act in the face of Russian aggression will reveal much about the principles and interests Beijing is willing to act upon in sustaining peace. On the one hand, should China align itself with Russia in this conflict, it will be associated with willful aggression. On the other hand, should Beijing take a constructive role in mediating between Russia and Ukraine, world opinion may be more favorable. Of course, how China responds to Russian aggression does not necessarily predict Beijing's future choices on Taiwan. China's position on Taiwan has long been that it is a part of China, but how Beijing sees the opportunity and the risk of the use of force is less certain. To be sure, the military balance has shifted in China's favor but has that changed the basic calculus in Beijing?

Russia's invasion has upended many of our assumptions about how to consider not only the risk of major power conflict but also the diplomatic,

⁵⁰ See World Population Review, "G-7 Countries" ≈ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/g7-countries>.

economic, and political tools the alliance will need to diminish that risk. Putin's gamble in Ukraine may not prove to have been wise. Yet it is deeply connected to a personal and perhaps more popular sense of grievance against a global order led by the United States and has already demonstrated the need for fundamental changes in how NATO conceives of its mandate. The Russian invasion has also revealed the need for a fresh evaluation of the balance of risk within U.S. alliances should armed conflict erupt. On the front lines, U.S. allies now face new prospects for the use of force. Proximity to war has raised the stakes for NATO nations, especially the newest members. It has also prompted new requests for membership by Finland and Sweden. Article 5 protections serve to link the United States to European defenses as they do to Japan. Asia, however, does not have a multilateral alliance that can speak with a unitary voice, even though there is increasing desire for building a coalition of like-minded nations, such as the United States, Japan, Australia and India, to offset Chinese power.

Already several opportunities for deeper alliance consultations have emerged. First, the United States and Japan must examine their assumptions about how the nuclear threat may shape a Taiwan crisis. Consideration must be given not only to warfighting doctrine but to the political factors that could shape government decision-making. Even countries with Article 5 guarantees of U.S. strategic protection could find themselves tested in unprecedented ways during a major-power conflict. The immediate task at hand is to assess whether the United States and Japan are prepared for a regional crisis of that magnitude. To do that, Tokyo and Washington must also evaluate the balance of risk in their own alliance. What costs would Japan need to be prepared to bear? What costs would the United States be willing to bear? If nothing else, Russia's invasion of Ukraine realized Europe's worst nightmare—the return of violent, interstate conflict on a scale not seen since World War II. Imagining a similar military conflagration in Asia would heighten memories of the brutality of the mid-twentieth century. Like Putin's effort to conjure up demons of the past, such as “denazification” of the Ukrainian leadership, as a pretext for his invasion, war memories could be mobilized to legitimize the use of force. Moreover, leaning into the reality that nuclear weapons must be considered as part of that nightmare will ensure that Washington and Tokyo develop a realistic assessment of what could become necessary.

In Tokyo, policy experts are publicly asking what this conflict means for extended deterrence in Asia and calling for a more frank and public

discussion of the nuclear risks.⁵¹ Should China seek to change the status quo by force as Russia has done in Ukraine, U.S. strategic protection for Japan codified in Article 5 of the bilateral treaty will be expected. China will likely emphasize the risk to Japan of supporting U.S. operations in any cross-strait conflict to weaken alliance unity. Without nuclear weapons of its own, Japan could begin to see a need for more publicly transparent demonstrations of U.S. capabilities that would deter China. How a Taiwan scenario might affect the United States' ability to simultaneously deter aggression against Japan is not only of deep concern to Japan's own defense planners but of even deeper concern to the Japanese public. Disinformation, nuclear coercion, and the continuing sensitivities to the legacy of war make for a combustible mix in imagining great-power conflict in Asia.

Second, the Russian war demonstrates the considerable economic consequences of major-power aggression. Tokyo and Washington must factor in the economic risks that would shape a potential crisis and begin to consider how to mitigate them. The economic fallout of a similar conflict across the Taiwan Strait would be catastrophic and would reshape the global economy that has been the engine of Asia's postwar growth. Already, the larger nations of the Indo-Pacific are beginning to consider protecting their strategic sectors from geopolitical competition. In Japan, new legislation focused on economic security is being prepared for Diet approval. Similarly, the U.S. Congress is beginning to expand its ability to encourage investment in and protection of U.S. technological innovation and critical manufacturing capabilities. This step takes a longer-term view on how to eradicate critical vulnerabilities to the U.S. and Japanese economies as well as to those of other allies and partners. But in the context of war, economic levers are also proving beneficial to the G-7 nations as they seek to punish Russia for its aggression. In a little over a month, the G-7 has come together to impose comprehensive sanctions on Putin, the oligarchs, and the financial and trading system of Russia. Economic sanctions, while uniform, differ on critical economic sectors, most notably Russian energy imports. Japan and the United States will need to calculate how to offset each other's vulnerabilities as well as how to pool their economic leverage if a conflict in the Taiwan Strait were to erupt. Cooperation with European nations will be essential to that task.

⁵¹ See, for example, a published conversation between some of Japan's leading security policymakers: *Honne de hanasou* [Let's Talk Honestly about Nuclear Weapons] (Tokyo: Shinsho, March 2022). Former prime minister Shinzo Abe also drew attention when he suggested publicly that perhaps Japan should consider an approach to extended deterrence more akin to that of NATO's "nuclear sharing." "Abe Suggests Japan Start 'Nuclear Sharing' Discussion," *Asahi Shimbun*, February 28, 2022. ~ <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14560003>.

Finally, deterring major-power confrontation today cannot be seen as the responsibility of one alliance alone. Nor are the consequences limited to one region of the globe. The United States and Japan should begin to build the foundations for a global response to Chinese aggression should it become necessary. Ultimately, the best strategy for the U.S.-Japan alliance is to deter the use of force across the Taiwan Strait. Bolstering Taiwan's defenses and protecting its economic vitality remain the best measures for ensuring that the people of Taiwan can continue to choose their government. Russia's invasion of Ukraine offers some new insights on how to broaden a strategy of deterrence beyond bilateral efforts to bolster the military balance. Persuading China that it cannot gain from the use of force must be a priority. As allies, the United States and Japan, informed by the lessons from this Russian war, must now concentrate on developing a comprehensive strategy to prevent a similar miscalculation by China and build the global coalition needed for success. 