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Master's Thesis of International Cooperation

**Taiwan's Defense Policy Toward
Mainland China in the Ma and Tsai
Administrations**

마잉주와 차이잉원 정부 시기의 대만의 대중
방위정책에 대한 연구

August 2020

**Graduate School of International Studies
Seoul National University
International Cooperation Major**

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Abstract

Although the Ma Ying-jeou and Tsai Ing-wen administrations diverge in the approach to dealing with the relationship with the mainland, their defense policies both regard China as the primary threat to Taiwan's security interests. Scholars of cross-Strait relations have generally focused on the political struggles over the 1992 Consensus. So far limited attention has been paid to the study of Taiwan's defense policy toward China. This paper tries to unpack the rationale behind Taiwan's defense policy making since 2008 through referencing defense reports released by the two sides, speeches on the Taiwan issue by Chinese leaders, and military reports from third parties. It finds that Taiwan holds a pessimistic interpretation of China's defense policy and force buildup. From Taiwan's perspective, China's defense policy is offensive in nature in dealing with cross-Strait relations and will ultimately break the *status quo* and undermine Taiwan's security interests. Adhering to such belief, Taiwan's defense policies under Ma and Tsai administrations both seek to preserve the *status quo* through finetuning military strategy and guidelines, promoting military reform, and developing self-reliant defense, thereby constructing a military that is resilient enough to stall enemy's invasion and hold up until U.S. military intervention arrives.

Keywords: Defense Policy, Military Strategy, Ma Ying-jeou, Tsai Ing-wen, Cross-Strait Relations

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I. Introduction

The relationship between Taiwan and mainland China has been an enduring issue in East Asia and concerns people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Over the past 6 decades, cross-Strait relations have gone through periods of both tensions and peaceful development and cooperation.

After Ma Ying-jeou was inaugurated President of Taiwan in 2008, cross-Strait relations featured intensified economic and cultural communication. Still, military tensions remained and two sides were unable to reach further political agreements. Military tensions have been aggravated since Tsai Ing-wen took power in 2016. Force buildup of the PLA, regardless of whether the cross-Strait relationship is friendly or tense, has proceeded throughout the Ma and Tsai administrations and undermined the military balance across the Taiwan Strait.

Prior literature has studied cross-Strait relations with different focuses, mainly focusing on Taiwan's mainland policy, foreign policy and domestic politics, mainland China's Taiwan policy, cross-Strait economic relations, and the role of the U.S. So far limited researches have been conducted from the national security perspective to study cross-Strait relations.

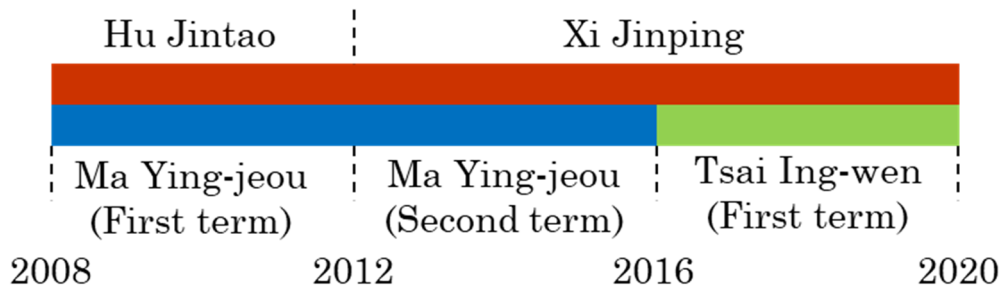
The thesis aims to examine cross-Strait relations through delving into Taiwan's defense policy toward mainland China during the Ma and Tsai administrations. China's force buildup has been proceeding throughout the period and constantly concerns Taiwan's defense, so the thesis will first analyze China's defense policy

to see how it copes with the Taiwan issue, display Taiwan's interpretation of Chinese military buildup, and then analyze Taiwan's defense policy under the two administrations.

To analyze Taiwan's defense policy, the thesis will apply David A. Baldwin's (1997) seven specifications of security, i.e. security for whom, security for which values, from what threats, how much security, by what means, at what costs, and in what time period. In addition to using defense white papers as the major source of analysis, the author will also reference military reports on Chinese military by the U.S. Department of Defense and the *Military Balance* series by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) to evaluate military power of the two sides.

The author divides the analysis of mainland China's defense policy into three timeframes: 2008-2012, 2012-2016, and 2016-2020. The first period corresponds to Ma Ying-jeou's first term. Xi Jinping in 2012 replaced Hu Jintao and in the same year Ma started to serve his second term as Taiwan's President. In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, who diverged with Ma in the opinion on the 1992 Consensus was inaugurated as the new President of Taiwan. The temporal relationship among their presidencies can be illustrated as follows.

[Figure 1] Presidents of Mainland China and Taiwan from 2008 to 2020



In the third chapter, the author will examine mainland China's defense policy in the three periods respectively, and analyze how it addresses the Taiwan issue. In the fourth chapter, the author will start with explaining how Taiwan's defense policy in general interprets China's defense policy and military buildup from Taiwan's perspective and giving brief introductions to Taiwan's defense budget and defense organization. Then, the author will provide detailed analysis of Taiwan's defense policy under each administration based on the seven specifications of security. In the last chapter, the author will answer the three research questions based on analyses in previous chapters, put forward policy implications for mainland China, and reflect on the research's limitations.

II. Research Framework

2.1 Background

2.1.1 History of Taiwan Until 1949

Cross-Strait relations have been one of the most enduring and contested issues concerning East Asian security and stability. The year 1949 marked the separation of Taiwan from mainland China, but the sovereignty dispute over Taiwan dates back to as early as the 17th century.

Initially the Taiwan Island had been inhabited by a population consisting of early Han migrants from mainland and aboriginal people before the colonial intrusion of the Spanish and the Dutch. In 1622, the Dutch forces landed in the Pend-hu Islands and established presence there. In 1626, the Spanish forces seized Keelung and began their expansion from there onto the island. In 1642, the Dutch forces managed to defeat and expel the Spanish, and thereafter established colonial ruling over the entire Taiwan Island.

Ming China, across the Taiwan Strait, was struggling against the invasion of Manchu at about the same time. The Manchurian forces captured Beijing, the then capital of Ming China, and established Qing Dynasty in 1644. Despite the collapse of Ming Dynasty, the resistance against Manchu persisted in southern China. Among the leaders of resistant forces rose Zheng Chenggong. After several failed attempts, he turned his attention to Taiwan and succeeded in expelling the Dutch in 1662, putting an end to the Dutch colonial rule over the

Taiwan Island.

Zheng founded a government on the island trying to promote Chinese culture and restore Ming rule in China. But His unexpectedly early death in 1662 and subsequent internal intrigue gave the Manchurian China an opportunity to annex the island in 1683. The Taiwan Island has since then become governed as part of Fujian province, Qing China for the next two centuries.

In 1895, Qing China lost the First Sino-Japanese war, and was forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The treaty ceded the Taiwan and Peng-hu Islands to Japan, and marked the beginning of Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan for the next half a century.

50 years later, Japan's defeat in the Second World War terminated its colonial rule in Taiwan. At the same time, the Chinese civil war between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Kuo-Ming Tang (KMT) resumed, as their common enemy, Japan, had surrendered. CPC eventually declared victory, and founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) on mainland China in 1949. KMT, as the loser of the Chinese Civil War, had no choice but moved its government to the Taiwan Island.

2.1.2 Struggling Cross-strait Relations After 1949

Both mainland China and Taiwan claimed to be the legitimate government of China. A volatile cross-Strait relationship has been developed since then. Cross-Strait relations have fluctuated over the past 6 decades with recurring military tensions on one hand and economic rapprochement on the other hand.

The military tensions featured two Taiwan Strait Crises during the 1950s. The first crisis took place in 1954 when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of mainland China began to bombard the Kinmen and Mutsu Islands. The bombardment lasted for around 7 months until mainland China was forced to cease fire under the U.S. military pressure. The year 1958 saw the second Taiwan Strait Crisis. The PLA of mainland China shelled Kinmen and Matsu islands again and the Taiwanese forces returned fire. The fire exchanges lasted for 4 weeks or so. Sporadic exchanges of fire continued since then, but none of them had escalated into larger-scale conflicts. The third crisis broke out in 1995 and was regarded as mainland China's protest against the then Taiwanese President, Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S.

In terms of economy Taiwan has achieved enormous progress in economic development and become one of the four Asian tigers since the 1970s. Across the strait the Chinese mainland has benefited from the reform and open-up policy and grew to become the world's second largest economy in 2010. With further integration into the global market and economy mainland China has been and become the largest trade partner of numerous countries or regions including Taiwan. The Chinese mainland, as a lucrative market with huge potential, has also attracted a large amount of foreign investments including those from Taiwan. In 2010, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement removed the barriers to trade between the two sides, and the cross-Strait economic ties were further strengthened by the agreement.

The U.S. has been playing an indispensable role in shaping cross-Strait dynamics since 1949 (Shlapak, Orletsky & Wilson, 2000; Ross, 2002). At the very

beginning, the U.S. did not recognize the legitimacy of mainland China, and dispatched the 7th fleet to the Taiwan Strait to defend Taiwan during the first Taiwan Strait crisis. Although the U.S. in 1979 pivoted to acknowledge and established diplomatic relations with mainland China, the U.S. Congress in the same year passed the Taiwan Relations Act assuring the U.S. commitment to protecting Taiwan's security. The U.S. recognized Taiwan as an essential component of the first island chain and intended to contain the Communist expansion during the Cold War period through maintaining arms sales to Taiwan to keep in check the military balance of power across the Strait (Garver, 2015). From 1970 to 2019, over 75% of Taiwan's imported weapons came from the U.S. according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's database.¹ The U.S.-Taiwan ties under the Trump Administration were strengthened when President Tsai Ing-wen spoke by phone with President Trump before his inauguration which marked the first top-level communication between the two sides since 1979.

Cross-Strait tensions mounted after Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016. The president, belonging to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), overtly denied the 1992 Consensus and repudiated the principle of "One Country, Two Systems". In the meantime, there has been a rise of Taiwanese identity in the 1990s. The annual surveys conducted by the Election Study Center, National Chengchi University have suggested a trend of constantly increasing Taiwanese identification.² According to the survey as of 2019, 58.5 percent of the island's

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research database.

<https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>

² Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=166>

residents identified themselves as only Taiwanese, up from 17.6 percent in 1992. The sentiment of Taiwanese identity has been further instigated by the aggressive posture and coercive approaches toward Taiwan taken by the Chinese government in the international arena since Tsai Ing-wen's inauguration. Across the strait the Chinese government has been sticking to a dual track, or "carrot and stick" approach to the Taiwan issue by offering economic benefits on one hand and increasing military and political pressure on the other hand (Qiang, 2019).

2.2 Literature Review

Scholars have researched cross-Strait relations from a variety of perspectives. Their studies so far can be divided into 5 categories below:

(1) Scholars probed into Taiwan's mainland policy, foreign policy and military spending (Wu & Chou, 2012; Tan 2014; Cabestan, 2014; Wu, 2018). For example, in his paper Cabestan (2014) argued that Ma Ying-jeou's rapprochement policy toward mainland was responsible for Taiwan's restrictive defense budget. Wu (2018) pointed out that Tsai Ing-wen adopts two approaches to increase Taiwan's security and reduce Taiwan's dependency on China: one is to enhance indigenous defense industry and the other is the New Southward Policy.

(2) Scholars also paid close attention to Taiwan's domestic politics and especially the 2016 presidential election. They discussed a range of Taiwan's internal issues including the Taiwanese identity, the mired economy, and domestic voices seeking *de jure* Taiwanese independence (Subba, 2016; Wu, 2016; Hsieh, 2017). Hickey and Emerson (2017) studied Taiwan's 2016 presidential election, diplomatic relations, and economy, and expressed a pessimistic attitude towards

the prospect of cross-Strait relations following Tsai's taking office.

(3) Scholars also looked into the other side of the Taiwan strait, and probed into mainland China's Taiwan policy, as well as how China's assertive foreign policy under Xi Jinping leadership influenced cross-Strait relations (Chang, 2014; Huang, 2017; Cabestan, 2017; Qiang, 2019). Chang (2014), for example, found that Beijing's efforts to use ties with President Ma to bring Taiwan closer to the PRC orbit backfired which resulted in a weakened presidency in Taiwan. Huang (2017) pointed out what Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping share in common is to prevent Taiwan's *de jure* independence. Qiang (2019) argued that Beijing has adopted a dual-track approach to Taiwan containing Taiwan militarily and politically while engaging Taiwan economically and culturally.

(4) Scholars focused on the economic relations between mainland China and Taiwan, and many argued that the deepened economic ties and intensified economic integration actually have compromised Taiwan's national security (Acharya, 2005; Magcamit, 2015; Weng, 2017). Some scholars expressed concern over Taiwan's economic dependence on China which makes Taiwan's economy vulnerable when cross-Strait relations deteriorate (Chen & Cohen, 2019).

(5) The role of the United States was also taken into consideration to analyze the dynamics across the strait. These researches mainly covered the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and the unofficial relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan (Hu, 2013; Hickey, 2015; Chen, Kastner & Reed, 2017). For example, Chen, Kastner and Reed (2017) investigated the trilateral relations between China, Taiwan, and the US, and argued that if the US terminated arms sales to Taiwan, cross-strait

relations would be shifted from a deterrence dynamic to a compellence dynamic.

So far, there has been limited research dedicated to the studies of Taiwan's defense policy especially since 2008 when Ma Ying-jeou assumed presidency. Ma's acknowledgement of the 1992 Consensus has paved the way for the improvements of cross-Strait relations thereafter. Meanwhile, the two sides did not reach political agreements and military tensions remained. It is worthwhile to look into the characteristics of Taiwan's defense policy since 2008, and to find out what Taiwan has done and what it is doing to ramp up military preparedness toward the rising mainland China.

2.3 Research Questions

As the title suggests, the thesis studies Taiwan's defense policy toward mainland China under the Ma and Tsai administrations. To better understand the rationale of Taiwan's defense policy, mainland China's defense policy regarding the Taiwan issue will be examined as well. The research questions are as follows.

- First, how does China's defense policy since 2008 deal with the Taiwan issue?
- Second, what are the key features of Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administrations respectively?
- Third, compared with the Ma administration, what policy refinements and modifications have the Tsai administration made?

To address the three questions the author adopts text analysis and looks into defense white papers released by mainland China and Taiwan.

2.4 Theory and Methodology

2.4.1 Theory: David A. Baldwin's Seven Criteria of Security

Baldwin (1997, p.13) referred to Wolfers' (1952, p.485) characterization of security as "the absence of threats to acquired values" and put forward the seven criteria to specify the concept of security, namely Security for whom, Security for which values, How much security, From what threats, By what means, At what cost, and In what time period.

There are a wide range of answers to Security for whom. The objects of security can be the individual, the state, and the international system (Baldwin, 1997, p.13).

Security for which values refers to the specific values to be protected from potential threats. Such values often depend on the object of security and vary among physical safety, economic welfare, autonomy, psychological well-being, and so on (Baldwin, 1997, p.13).

How much security measures the degree of security due to the unattainability of absolute security (Baldwin, 1997, p.15). Therefore, it is important to specify the degree of security a country has or seeks.

From what threats seeks to identify the potential or imminent threats that undermine acquired values. Natural disasters, contagious diseases, potential burglars, military buildup of other states can all be considered threats to acquired values (Baldwin, 1997, p.15).

Regarding by what means Baldwin (1997, p.16) argued that “the goal of security can be pursued by a wide variety of means” and different policies can be adopted to pursue security.

At what costs means “the sacrifice of other goals that could have been pursued with the resources devoted to security” (Baldwin, 1997, p.16). Different means of pursuing security brings varying costs due to the scarcity of resources.

In what time period deals with the timing of adopting policy to pursue security. Baldwin (1997, p.17) pointed out that long-term policies often differ from, and sometimes are contradictory to, short-term policies.

2.4.2 Methodology

In the thesis, the author will adopt text analysis as the primary methodology to approach the three research questions.

The author will refer to defense white papers published by mainland China’s Ministry of Defense and other important official statements since 2008, and meticulously analyze the texts related to how China deals with national unification, the Taiwan issue, and territorial integrity. Based on the analysis, the author will conclude how mainland’s defense policy since 2008 addresses the Taiwan issue.

To approach the second and the third questions, the author will examine Taiwan’s defense reports released since 2008, and pinpoint the security interests of Taiwan

through applying Baldwin's seven criteria to the analysis of each document. In light of the seven specifications, the author then will compare defense policies between the Ma and Tsai administrations, and strive to identify the sameness and difference between the two administrations. In addition to the policy aspect the author also references military reports by the U.S. Department of Defense and the IISS to shed light on the actual military balance/imbalance between mainland China and Taiwan.

III. Mainland China's Defense Policy Involving the Taiwan Issue From 2008 to 2020

3.1 Defense Policy From 2008 to 2012

Ma Ying-jeou began to serve as Taiwan's president from 2008. He endorsed the 1992 Consensus and under his leadership Taiwan developed close economic relations with the mainland. During this period, mainland China released two defense whitepapers. Hu Jintao in 2009 also delivered a speech on the 30th anniversary of *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan* and made six proposals to address the Taiwan issue which was mentioned and analyzed by Taiwan's 2009 and 2011 defense reports.³

3.1.1 China's National Defense in 2008⁴

The year 2008 was a milestone for China who celebrated the 30th anniversary of reform and open-up, weathered the devastating Sichuan earthquake, and successfully hosted the Beijing Olympics. With regard to cross-Strait relations, tensions began to thaw after Ma Ying-jeou, who displayed a friendly posture toward the mainland, was elected the President of Taiwan in 2008.

³ 告台湾同胞书 [Message to Compatriots in Taiwan].

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Message_to_the_Compatriots_in_Taiwan

⁴ 2008 年中国的国防 [China's National Defense in 2008]. http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2009-01/20/content_1210224.htm

The white paper acknowledged that the security situation facing China has been ameliorated to the extent that, for one thing, attempts of the separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence” to pursue to Taiwan’s *de jure* independence has been curbed, and for another, China has maintained friendly relationships with advanced countries and neighboring countries (2009). Cross-Strait relations have been significantly improved, as the two sides were making progress in resuming dialogues based on the 1992 Consensus. Separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence”, “Tibet independence”, and “East Turkistan independence” still remained threats that undermine China’s national unity. The 2008 white paper paid equal attention to the threats created by separatist forces and other threats such as terrorism and natural disasters, suggesting that mainland China’s concern for Taiwan’s pursuit of formal independence has been reduced.

Thanks to the improved cross-Strait relations, the 2008 white paper did not mention specific measures to curb “Taiwanese independence” or to pursue national unification in the section of national defense policy and strategy. The white paper, instead, only spent a few words in defining safeguarding national security and unity as one of the fundamental missions for China’s defense policy as of 2008.

3.1.2 Hu’s 2009 Speech on Taiwan Unification

In his speech, Hu Jintao (2009) stressed that peaceful unification with Taiwan would best serve the interests of mainland China and Taiwan. He proposed 6 approaches to peaceful unification and can be summarized as below,

- Uphold the principle of “one China” and promote mutual political trust;

- Enhance economic cooperation and boost joint development;
- Carry forward the Chinese culture and strengthen spiritual ties;
- Encourage exchange of talents and expand communication of different sectors;
- Safeguard national sovereignty and consult about foreign affairs;
- End hostility and reach peace agreement.⁵

The speech signaled mainland China's intention to make full use of economic harmony during the Ma Ying-jeou presidency to further improve cross-Strait relations and establish political and economic foundation for peaceful unification.

3.1.3 China's National Defense in 2010⁶

The 2010 white paper, published in March 2011, showed considerable optimism toward the future development of cross-Strait relations. The white paper recognized the progress that has been achieved through joint efforts of the two sides. The Chinese mainland and Taiwan have been working closely to contain the activities of separatist forces of "Taiwanese independence" and to promote the "three links" across the Strait, i.e. postal, transportation, and trade links between mainland China and Taiwan. The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement signed in June 2010 further encouraged economic communication across the Strait (Tsai & Liu, 2017).

⁵ 胡锦涛：携手推动两岸关系和平发展 同心实现中华民族伟大复兴——在纪念《告台湾同胞书》发表30周年座谈会上的讲话 [Speech in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of Message of Compatriots in Taiwan].

http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/zt/hu/201101/t20110125_1732427.htm

⁶ 2010年中国的国防 [China's National Defense in 2010]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2011-03/31/content_2618567.htm

Regarding national defense policy, the white paper contended that “the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are destined to ultimate reunification in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (2011). It was the responsibility of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to confront the common enemy – separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence” – and to reach a peace agreement through consultation on an equal basis. The two sides might exchange opinions on military issues and establish military security mechanism of mutual trust to further stabilize the situation in the Taiwan Strait. Although the white paper repeated the stance on separatist threats of the previous two white papers that the PLA was resolute to battle any attempts of “Taiwanese independence”, “Tibet independence”, and “East Turkistan independence”, the Taiwan issue was no longer a major concern for the Chinese government at the time. The white paper took on an optimistic and positive standpoint toward the future of cross-Strait relations and looked forward to a peaceful unification with Taiwan.

3.1.4 Summary

National sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity have been core values that China’s defense policy strives to safeguard. After the returns of Hong Kong and Macao to mainland China, Taiwan remained the only contested territory that China aspired to reclaim in the 21st century through either peaceful or military means. The two white papers both used a separate part to discussed cross-Strait relations when analyzing the security situation facing China. Compared with “Taiwanese independence”, the threats posed by “Tibet independence” and “East Turkistan independence” were of less concern to the Chinese government. During this period, mainland China aimed to push for political agreement on the

basis of economic integration. A military mechanism of mutual trust was proposed by the 2010 white paper to further reduce military tensions and promote stability in the Taiwan Strait.

3.2 Defense Policy From 2012 to 2016

Xi Jinping in 2012 rose to power in China and proposed the “Chinese Dream” which incorporates achieving national unification as one of the ultimate goals. During this period, mainland China published 2 defense white papers - *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces*⁷ and *China’s Military Strategy*.⁸

3.2.1 Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces

Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces is the first defense white paper that has a specific topic. The white paper illuminated the principles of how China’s armed forces were to be employed in a diversified manner in light of the security situation at the time. It also unveiled the size and other details of the PLA.

In terms of the Taiwan issue, the white paper noted that “the cross-Strait relations were sustaining a momentum of peaceful development” (2013). The separatist forces in Taiwan and their activities were regarded as the primary threat and obstacle to the further development of healthy cross-strait relations. The separatist power of “Taiwanese independence” was listed alongside other issues

⁷ 中国武装力量的多样化运用 [The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2013-04/16/content_2618550.htm

⁸ 中国的军事战略 [China’s Military Strategy]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2015-05/26/content_2868988.htm

that were considered threats to China's territorial integrity and national security in the analysis of security situation at the time. Other threats included the dispute of the Diaoyu Islands with Japan, maritime disputes with neighboring countries in the South China sea, natural disasters, public security incidents and others.

The white paper did not specify a method to cope with the separatist forces in Taiwan, but sought to address the issue under a grand principle of safeguarding China's national sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. According to the white paper, China's armed forces would (2013):

“Unswervingly implement the military strategy of active defense, guard against and resist aggression, contain separatist forces, safeguard border, coastal and territorial air security, and protect national maritime rights and interests and national security interests in outer space and cyber space.”⁹

The white paper delivered a message that the Taiwanese separatist power was among the many threats to China's national security and sovereignty, and it would be countered resolutely by the diversified employment of China's armed forces. The fundamental mission for the China's armed forces is to strengthen national defense, ward off foreign intrusion, and defend the motherland. China's armed forces shall be prepared to respond to any provocative activities that jeopardize national sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. The two sides at the time were still maintaining a close relationship with growing economic and cultural

⁹ 中国武装力量的多样化运用 [Diversified employment of China's armed forces]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2013-04/16/content_2618550.htm

communication. Although “Taiwanese independence” separatist forces and sentiment remained on the island, they did not gain momentum and thus mainland China was still inclined to achieving unification by peaceful means.

3.2.2 China’s Military Strategy

China’s Military Strategy reiterated that China firmly adheres to “an independent foreign policy of peace” and “a national defense policy of defensive nature” (2015). The white paper dedicated more length than the 2013 paper to addressing threats posed by separatist forces, especially Taiwanese independence (2015):

“The Taiwan issue bears on China’s unification and long-term development, and unification is an inevitable trend in the course of national rejuvenation. In recent years, cross-Taiwan Straits relations have sustained a sound momentum of peaceful development, but the root cause of instability has not yet been removed, and the “Taiwan independence” separatist forces and their activities are still the biggest threat to the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations. Further, China faces a formidable task to maintain political security and social stability. Separatist forces for “East Turkistan independence” and “Tibet independence” have inflicted serious damage, particularly with escalating violent terrorist activities by “East Turkistan independence” forces. Besides, anti-China forces have never given up their attempt to instigate a “color revolution” in this country. Consequently, China faces more challenges in terms of national security and social stability.”¹⁰

¹⁰ *中国的军事战略* [China’s military strategy]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2015-05/26/content_2868988.htm

Compared with the 2013 white paper, *China's Military Strategy* spent more length on territorial integrity in the analysis of national security situation. Rather than list separatist threats alongside with other threats at equal length, the 2015 white paper expounded on the separatist threats including “Taiwan independence”, “Tibet independence”, and “East Turkistan independence.” The white paper reiterated that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan have been maintaining healthy and friendly relationship, but cross-Strait relations were still being undermined by separatist forces of “Taiwan independence” and their activities. Mainland China’s concern for cross-Strait relations recurred mainly as the result of the 2014 Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan which was aimed at obstructing the enforcement of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement.

Moreover, the white paper also mentioned the “color revolution” which was orchestrated by the separatist power of “East Turkistan independence”. Against the backdrop of a security situation complicated by insidious separatist threats, the white paper stipulated that the PLA shall conduct a wide array of missions including but not limited to responding to emergent security incident, safeguarding national unification, participating in regional and international security cooperation.

3.2.3 Summary

Mainland China faces more complicated internal challenges to its national unity and territorial integrity during this period. Separatist power in Taiwan, though it still undermined China’s security interests, was no longer a major concern for China’s defense policy. The activities of the “East Turkistan independence”

power have troubled China and led it to pay more attention to its Northwestern territory.

3.3 Defense Policy From 2016 to 2020

Since 2016 Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party has served as Taiwan's President. Her repudiation of the 1992 Consensus caused the Chinese government to sever formal communication across the Strait and take economic retaliation such as imposing restriction of tourists to Taiwan (Chen & Cohen, 2019). During this period, mainland China released only one defense white paper – *China's National Defense in the New Era*.¹¹ To better understand Xi's Taiwan policy, the author also refers to two important speeches by Xi, one at the 19th National Congress of CPC,¹² and the other on the 40th anniversary of the *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan*.

3.3.1 Xi's 2017 Speech at the 19th National Congress of CPC

The speech includes thirteen chapters covering the achievements over the past five years, existing issues and problems, and grand plans for the future. Xi (2017) pointed out in the second chapter that the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and set forth fourteen fundamental strategies of China's socialist construction in the new era. Among the fourteen strategies, one is dedicated to achieving national unification and unity. According

¹¹ *新时代的中国国防* [China's national defense in the new era].

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-07/24/content_5414325.htm

¹² 习近平：决胜全面建成小康社会 夺取新时代中国特色社会主义伟大胜利——在中国共产党第十九次全国代表大会上的报告 [Report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China] http://www.gov.cn/zhuanti/2017-10/27/content_5234876.htm

to this chapter, the principle of “one China” would be unwaveringly upheld in any circumstances, and the “one country, two systems” framework which has fostered the prosperity of Hong Kong and Macao and would be a viable and ideal solution to accomplishing unification with Taiwan.

Xi (2017) elaborated on the national unification issue in the eleventh chapter titled “stick to ‘one country, two systems’ and push for national unification.” The first half of the chapter affirmed that the implementation of the “one country, two systems” framework in Hong Kong and Macao has been a success. The framework has preserved the institutions in Hong Kong and Macao and allowed for sustainable and stable development of the two regions. The second half turned to Taiwan and argued that resolving the Taiwan issue and achieving complete national unification are the fundamental interest of the Chinese nation. The endorsement of the 1992 Consensus has laid a solid foundation for dialogues between the two sides and thus is integral to the healthy development of cross-strait relations. Based on the consensus, the “one country, two systems” framework is to be applied to Taiwan under which people on the island would be offered the same benefits as their counterparts on the mainland. On the contrary, those who reject the principle of “one China” and continue to pursue formal independence and separation from the mainland shall not be tolerated. Xi (2017) pledged that the Chinese government would never allow any individual, any organization, or any political organization to separate any territory of China at any time or in any form.

3.3.2 Xi's 2019 Speech on Taiwan Unification¹³

Xi (2019) recalled at the opening of his speech the colonial history of Taiwan and the progress that has been achieved in cross-Strait relations. He emphasized the inseparable ties between the unification with Taiwan and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and repeatedly stressed that unification is an irresistible trend of history. The speech also delivered other important messages regarding the Taiwan issue directly or indirectly.

First, the principle of “one China” should never be breached. Taiwan is and will always be an integral part of China. Both mainland China and Taiwan belong to “one China.” Both sides shall acknowledge and adhere to the 1992 Consensus.

Second, the “one country, two systems” framework is a feasible solution to settling disputes and peaceful unification is an ideal outcome. The differences in political systems are the root of the Taiwan issue, but should never constitute an excuse to reject unification. The political, ideological, and cultural differences can be addressed by the “one country, two systems” framework, which has worked well on Hong Kong and Macao and ensured their prosperity for the last twenty years.

Third, people living on both sides of the Taiwan strait are homogeneous. Chinese people on the mainland will always be ready to help and support “Chinese people on the Taiwan Island” who will enjoy further economic and cultural prosperity

¹³ 习近平：为实现中华民族伟大复兴 推进祖国和平统一而共同奋斗——在《告台湾同胞书》发表40周年纪念会上的讲话 [Speech in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of Message to Compatriots in Taiwan]. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-01/02/content_5354223.htm

under the principle of “one China.”

Fourth, Chinese do not fight Chinese. But if people residing on the Taiwan Island denied their Chinese identities, and even committed to separating Taiwan and pursuing *de jure* Taiwanese independence, the Chinese government would take every measure necessary to counter their efforts.

Fifth, the Taiwan issue is a domestic affair of China, and the Chinese government will never tolerate any intervention of foreign powers, especially the U.S. who has been supplying Taiwan with weapons for decades. The Chinese government makes no promise to renounce the use of force in Taiwan unification. Military actions would be taken, whenever necessary, in response to any attempt to separate Taiwan from the Chinese mainland.

Lastly, the speech did not set forth a clear deadline for Taiwan unification, but made it as an ultimate goal, one that would be achieved in tandem with the realization of the Chinese dream. In other words, although the Chinese government is resolute in addressing the separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence,” it is not pushing for an immediate unification with Taiwan.

3.3.3 China’s National Defense in the New Era

China’s National Defense in the New Era published in 2019 is a defense white paper that specifies China’s national defense policy in the “new era”, a concept put forward in 2017 in President Xi’s report to the 19th Party Congress.

In the section of international security situation, the white paper spent an entire

paragraph describing the threat posed by the separatist power of the DPP which refuses to endorse the 1992 Consensus. The white paper denounced the DPP for they have attempted to “sever the connection with the mainland in favor of gradual independence, push for *de jure* independence, intensify hostility and confrontation, and borrow the strength of foreign influence” (2019). Since the inauguration of Tsai Ing-wen, the Chinese government has suspended official communication of all levels with Taiwan, exhibiting resolute opposition against the DPP government. The separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence” and their campaigns have been regarded as the primary threat to the stability of the Taiwan Strait and the principal obstacle to national unification. By contrast, “Tibet independence” and “East Turkistan Independence” were only briefly mentioned by the white paper (2019).

“Resolutely safeguarding China’s sovereignty, security and development interests” is the “fundamental goal of China’s national defense in the new era” according to the 2019 white paper (2019). Apparently, the Taiwan Island ruled by the DPP has become a major concern for the Chinese government. To illuminate the goal of China’s national defense and the mission for the PLA, the white paper reiterated the stance of the Chinese government on “Taiwanese Independence” that it would not allow any individual, any organization, or any political organization to separate any territory of China at any time or in any form (2019). The PLA is ready to respond to and crack down any attempts by either separatist forces in Taiwan or foreign powers to separate Taiwan from the Chinese mainland at all costs.

3.3.4 Summary of Xi's Unification Policy

The threat of Taiwanese separatist power has come to the forefront since 2016 from mainland's perspective. The 2019 white paper paid close attention to "Taiwanese independence," and pledged that the PLA would take every means necessary to prevent "Taiwan's *de jure* independence" and defend territorial integrity. Although determined to prevent *de jure* Taiwanese independence, the Xi administration does not intend to push hard for an immediate unification with Taiwan, either. Instead, Xi has repeatedly stressed that the unification with Taiwan is the ultimate goal of China's socialist construction in the new era and it is a great trend of history that is irresistible.

3.4 Mainland China's Defense Policy Involving the Taiwan Issue

Based on analyses in previous sections, it can be concluded that China's defense policy involving Taiwan from 2008 to 2020 possess 4 characteristics below.

First, China's defense policy is defensive in nature. Each defense white paper has stressed the defensive nature of China's defense policy. China's national defense is aimed at safeguarding its own security interests, although its defense budget keeps growing at a fast pace.¹⁴

Second, a peaceful approach is preferred and prioritized to achieving unification with Taiwan. The white papers emphasized the paramount importance of the 1992 Consensus that it is the foundation for cross-strait economic and political

¹⁴ CSIS China Power Project (2020). *What does China really spend on its military?*. <https://chinapower.csis.org/military-spending/>

dialogues. Also, the “one country, two systems” framework is proposed as a solution to the Taiwan issue. When Ma Ying-jeou was in power, mainland China’s 2010 white paper expressed an interest in building a military system of mutual trust with Taiwan to promote peace in the Taiwan Strait. After Tsai Ing-wen assumed presidency in 2016, China’s defense policy exhibited a resolute stance to crack down any separatist activities of the DPP government. Still, the possibility of resuming peaceful dialogues was not precluded, as the Chinese government has been persistently urging Tsai to recognize the 1992 Consensus and consider accepting the “one country, two systems” framework.

Third, the Chinese military does not target Taiwan as a whole, but only the “Taiwanese independence” power. The white papers have specified national unity and territorial integrity as critical security interests for mainland China. The Taiwan issue directly concerns China’s national unity and territorial integrity – security interests the Chinese military has pledged to safeguard. Since it is the activities of “Taiwanese independence” power that undermine these security interests, the PLA only target this group of people rather than those who uphold the “one China” principle in Taiwan.

Fourth, Chinese military modernization and force buildup are a deterrent to any attempt to seek *de jure* Taiwanese independence by promising not to renounce the use of force. Although Xi Jinping does not push hard for unification in the short term, he does inherit the legacy of Hu Jintao’s Taiwan policy to the prevention of *de jure* Taiwanese independence (Huang, 2017, p. 246). Constantly increasing defense budget has allowed mainland China to construct a modernized military far more powerful than the ROC Armed Forces in both absolute and relative terms (IISS, 2019).

IV. Taiwan's Defense Policy Under the Ma and Tsai

Administrations

4.1 Taiwan's National Defense at a Glance (2008-2020)

This section illuminates Taiwan's defense policy's general perception of mainland China's military and provides information about Taiwan's defense budget and structure before diving into the analyses of Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administrations respectively.

4.1.1 Taiwan's Interpretation of China's Defense Policy

The previous chapter has examined mainland China's defense policy and paid close attention to how it addresses the Taiwan issue. The key features are summarized as follows.

- China's defense policy is defensive in nature.
- A peaceful approach to unification is prioritized.
- Only the separatist power of "Taiwanese independence" is the target of the PLA.
- The purpose of Chinese force buildup regarding the Taiwan issue is deterrence.

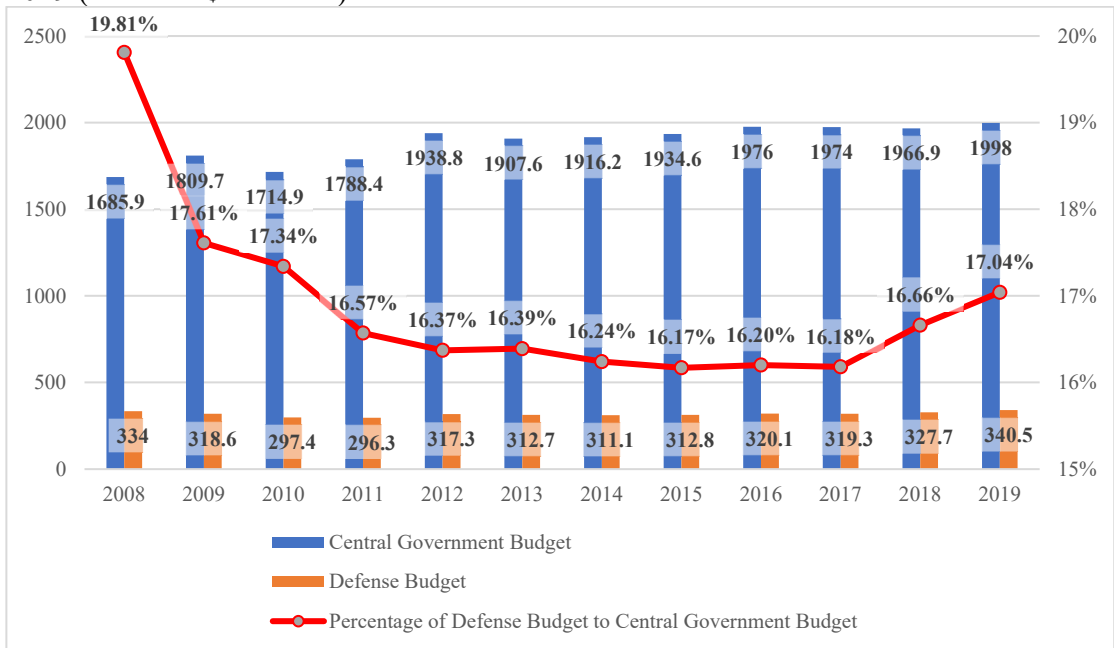
Taiwan's defense policy has its own interpretation of mainland China's defense policy which differs from what mainland has claimed. Defense policies under

both the Ma and the Tsai administrations regard mainland China as the greatest threat, even though cross-Strait relations were significantly improved during Ma's presidency. The starting point is that mainland China is reluctant to renounce the use of force. Although mainland China sticks to the claim that its force buildup is defensive in nature, Taiwan's defense policy considers it offensive in addressing cross-Strait relations as well as in asserting China in East and Southeast Asia. Taiwan's defense reports, with mainland's no promise of renouncing use of force in mind, alleged that the Chinese military is under construction toward the goal of quickly taking over the Taiwan Island. Also, Taiwan's defense reports also denounced mainland China for obstructing U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and the purpose is to further jeopardize cross-Strait military imbalance. Ultimately, Taiwan's security interests will be compromised in the face of a formidable and modernized Chinese military.

4.1.2 Taiwan's Defense Budget

Figure 1 below illustrates the trend of Taiwan's defense budget, central government budget, and the proportion of defense budget to central government budget from 2008 to 2019. In absolute terms, there was a significant decrease in defense budget from NT\$ 334 billion in 2008 to NT\$ 296.3 billion in 2011. The defense budget then returned to and maintained stable at a range between NT\$ 310 and 320 billion until the end of Ma's presidency. In relative terms, the proportion of defense budget to total government budget showed a constantly declining trend throughout Ma's presidency.

[Figure 2] Taiwan’s Defense Budget vis-à-vis Central Government Budget, 2008-2019 (Unit: NT\$ 1 billion)¹⁵



After Tsai took office, Taiwan’s defense budget started to rise in both absolute and relative terms. The defense budget is expected to continue to increase, as the 2019 defense report set forth 3 principles to plan for future defense budget (2019):

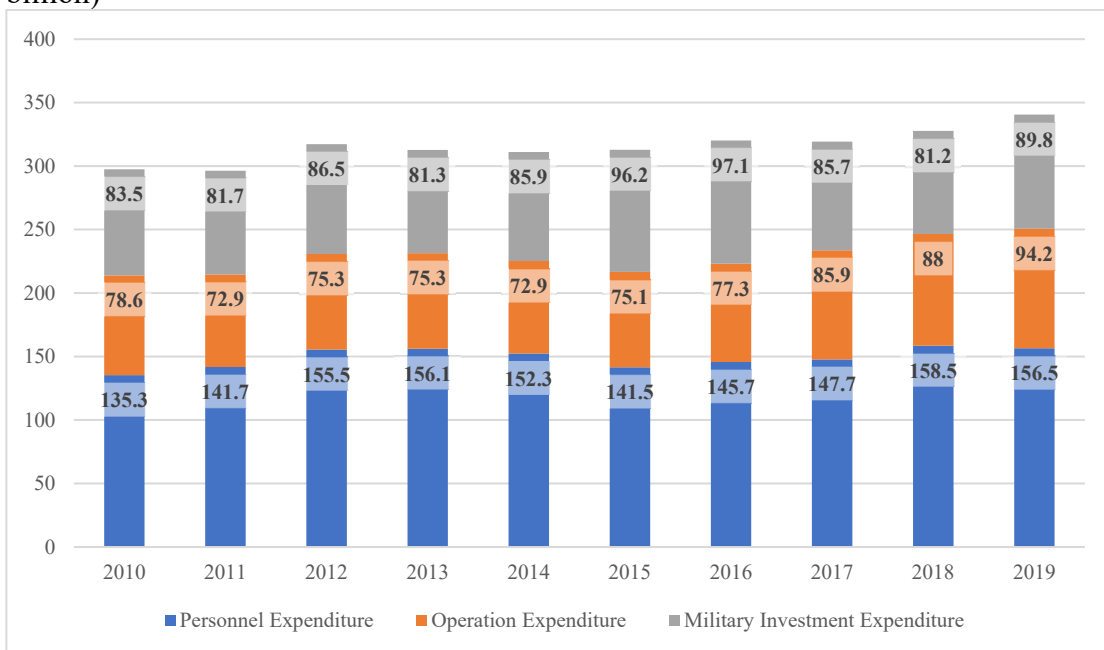
- “(1) Defense budget shall grow with GDP proportionally.
- (2) On principle, annual defense budget increase shall not go below 2% of that of previous fiscal year (FY) with a flexible cap of 1%.
- (3) If a major acquisition is pending, the MND shall demand an additional special budget from the government.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

¹⁶ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2019). *2019 National Defense Report*

Taiwan's defense budget is allocated into three categories, i.e. personnel expenditure (salaries, funds, subsidies), operations expenditure (training and drill, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, living facilities), and military investment expenditure (arms acquisition, base infrastructures, R&D). Figure 2 shows the allocation of defense budget in the past decade. From 2010 to 2019, personnel expenditure increased by 15.7% and operation expenditure by 19.8%. Military investment expenditure remained stable.

[Figure 3] Allocation of Taiwan's Defense Budget, 2010-2019 (Unit: NT\$ 1 billion)¹⁷



4.1.3 Structure of Taiwan National Defense

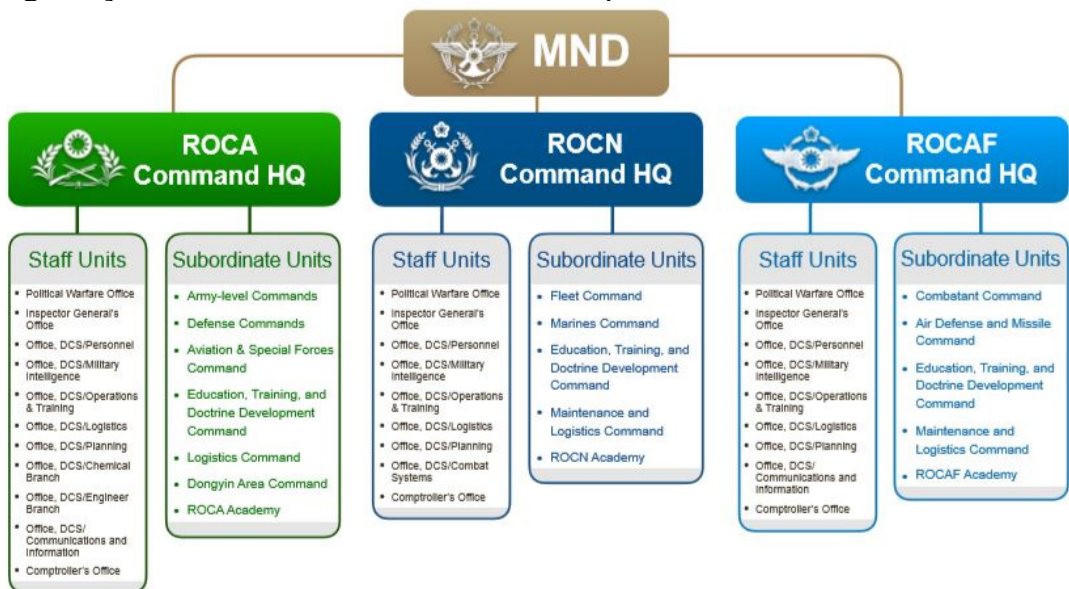
Taiwan's defense organization currently consists of the President, the National

¹⁷ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

Security Council, the Executive Yuan, and the Ministry of National Defense.

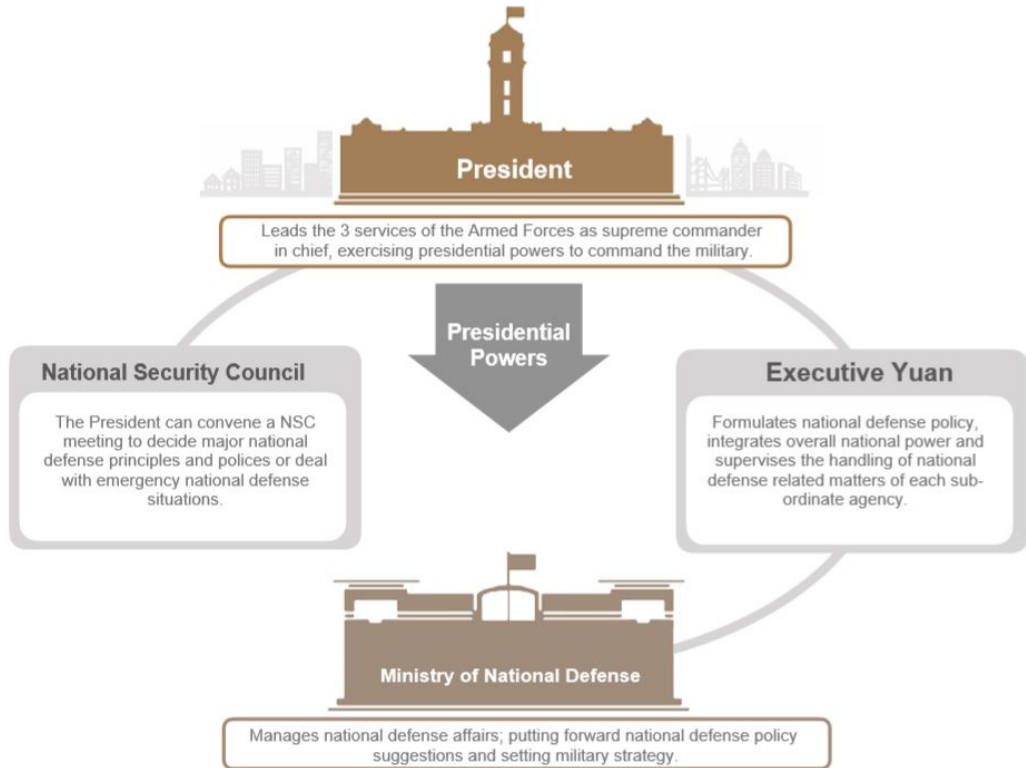
The President serves as the commander-in-chief of the ROC Armed Forces and exerts executive authority over the Ministry of National Defense. The National Security Council is convened by the President to consult defense policies. The Executive Yuan is in charge of the formation of defense policies, the consolidation of overall national power, and the supervision of subordinate agencies. The Ministry of National Defense is responsible for overall defense affairs, advising defense policies, and formulating military strategies. Figures 4 and 5 below illustrates service command headquarters under the MND and the overall structure of Taiwan national defense.

[Figure 4] Structure of Service Command Headquarters¹⁸



¹⁸ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

[Figure 5] National Defense Organization¹⁹



¹⁹ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

4.2 Defense Policy Under the Ma Administration (2008-2016)

President Ma Ying-jeou served as the President of Taiwan from 2008 to 2016. Throughout his entire presidency, the Ministry of National Defense (MND), Taiwan released 4 defense reports, i.e. *2009 National Defense Report*, *2011 National Defense Report*, *2013 National Defense Report* and *2015 National Defense Report*. The MND also published *2009 Quadrennial Defense Review* and *2013 Quadrennial Defense Review* that followed the example of *Quadrennial Defense Reviews* by the U.S. Department of Defense to envision defense policy in the next 4 years.

The defense reports in general covered an extensive range of topics including global and regional security situation, security challenges to Taiwan, Taiwan's defense policies and strategies, and specific plans for the MND to implement and carry out these policies and strategies.

4.2.1 Security for Whom

The defense reports explicitly stated that Taiwan's national defense is aimed at safeguarding the security of the nation and its people.

4.2.2 Security for Which Values

The values that Taiwan's national defense pledged to safeguard are the security of Taiwan and its people. The security of Taiwan, to be more accurate, is the *de facto* independence of Taiwan, or the Republic of China, which is the *status quo*.

The Constitution, promulgated on January 1, 1947, has already declared that Taiwan is independent as the Republic of China which was initially founded by Sun Yat-sen in 1912. Although in 1971 mainland China replaced Taiwan to be the legitimate representative of “China” in the United Nation and continued to gain clout in the international community, the fact that the Republic of China (Taiwan) is independent from the People’s Republic of China remained unchanged. The Taiwanese government still functions and devises policies under the Constitution. Taiwan’s defense policy is formulated in pursuant to the Article 137 of the Constitution, “the national defense of the Republic of China shall have as its objective the safeguarding of national security and the preservation of world peace.”²⁰ Also, Taiwan’s defense reports often use the term “our nation” to denote Taiwan. Since Taiwan’s defense policy is formulated in accordance with the 1947 Constitution, the term “nation” that frequently appears in the defense reports in essence refers to the Republic of China, the *de facto* independence of which is declared and endorsed by the Constitution. In practice, Ma Ying-jeou during his presidency upheld the principles of the Constitution, and put forward a “three Nos” principle of “no unification, no independence, and no use of force” to endorse the *status quo* (Matsuda, 2015, p.8).

Another important value is the security of Taiwanese people. This value was not brought to the front until the 2011 report stated that Taiwan’s national defense is aimed at safeguarding the security of Taiwan and its people (MND, 2011). Subsequent reports under the Ma administration all followed this statement. The security of Taiwanese people, by analyzing the defense reports, specifically refers

²⁰ Laws & Regulations Database of the Republic of China. *The Constitution of the Republic of China*. Retrieved at <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=A0000001>

to their health and property safety. The defense reports all shed light on climate changes in the analysis of non-traditional security challenges and suggested that Taiwan is vulnerable to the impact of climate changes. It is natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes – rather than the attacks of the PLA – that are responsible for the injuries, deaths, and property damage of Taiwanese people. The well-being and property of Taiwanese people, therefore, are an important value that Taiwan’s national defense is to safeguard.

4.2.3 From What Threats

Regarding the security challenges to Taiwan, the defense reports during the first term of Ma’s presidency mainly focused on traditional security challenges especially the threat of mainland China. The defense reports during Ma’s second term paid more attention to non-traditional security challenges. Based on these documents, Security challenges to Taiwan during the Ma administration included the threat of mainland China, natural disasters, constrained defense resources, and maritime disputes.

The Threat of Mainland China

Since the U.S. pivoted to acknowledge the legitimacy of the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan’s representation in international affairs and its status in the international society have been increasingly compromised and waning owing to mainland China’s growing power and influence. Mainland China has been regarded as the primary threat to Taiwan’s national security, as it never promised to renounce the use of force to achieve unification. Mainland China’s threat to Taiwan’s security interests, however, cannot be simply translated into the potential to conduct military operations against Taiwan. Its threat to Taiwan is

multifaceted, however.

First and foremost, the rapid expansion of China's military strength has posed a direct threat to Taiwan's security interests. China has been pursuing military reform under the "three-step" guideline and expect to achieve informatization and mechanization of the PLA by 2020. Taiwan's defense policy was concerned that with defense budget at a high growth rate, China would be able to complete the construction of a modernized, comprehensive and formidable force to enable military operations against Taiwan by 2020 (MND, 2013, p.56). Moreover, the 2015 defense report pointed out that the PLA military exercises in the Taiwan Strait are the evidence that the PLA, as of 2015, was "capable of conducting joint military coercion, joint blockades, and joint strike operations" (MND, p. 65).

From Taiwan's perspective, mainland China's military preparedness towards the island, in addition to strengthening its own military force, included other two aspects namely to widen the imbalance of military strength between the two sides and to develop "Anti-Access/Area Denial" capabilities. These two aspects both took into consideration the role of the U.S. in cross-Strait military balance.

For one thing, China has been working to widen the military imbalance through increasing the quality and quantity of PLA military strength while obstructing the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. China continued to enhance the PLA's capabilities through pouring large amounts of investment in the R&D of such novel weapons as long-range anti-ship missiles for the PLA Navy, new generation fighters for the PLA Air Force and long-range missiles for the PLA Second Artillery.

The U.S. arms sales to Taiwan has been considered the main impediment to the

healthy development of cross-Strait relations. China has been putting pressure on the U.S. and urging it to gradually reduce and terminate arms sales to Taiwan by stressing for multiple times the three communiqués signed by the two parties. The PLA would conduct military exercises in the Taiwan Strait as a protest when Taiwan conducted arms procurement from the U.S. (MND, 2009, p. 61). Taiwan regards mainland China's such diplomatic move as an attempt to hinder the upgrade and enhancement of Taiwan's defense capabilities, given that the bulk of Taiwan's arms import comes from the U.S.

For another, China strived to enhance "Anti-Access/Area Denial" capabilities due to the belief that intervention of foreign powers, especially the U.S., would be the greatest threat when conducting military operations against Taiwan. Mainland China has developed and deployed weapons of deterring purpose including tactical ballistic missiles along the Southeastern coast, and at the same time carried out joint military exercises to bolster its preparedness against foreign intervention in the event that it resorted to use force against Taiwan. Mainland China has conducted multiple joint military exercises of Army, Navy, and Second Artillery based on a "red vs. blue" simulation model. Through curbing the U.S. role in cross-Strait relations China seeks to turn the current deterrence dynamic into a compellence one.

Second, China's military cyber capabilities have been putting Taiwan's information security at stake. The 2013 defense report acknowledged that cyberspace has become an important battlefield in modern warfare with the maturing of information and communication technology (MND, p.70). The 2015 defense report asserted that the PLA has established cyberwarfare units – large and specialized organizations – that are able to "infiltrate a target and remained

undetected for 1,700 days” (MND, p.64). China was alleged to have adopted a variety of cyber infiltration measures including social network engineering, remote infiltration, virus/malware infections, theft, and surveillance to conduct cyber invasions. Such cyber capabilities have enabled the PLA to steal confidential information in peacetime and quickly paralyze Taiwan’s military control and command system in wartime, ultimately jeopardizing Taiwan’s security interests.

Third, China has enhanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Through the construction and completion of a multi-dimensional ISR network, China has “acquired all-time surveillance capabilities in areas to the west of the first island chain”, according to the 2015 report (MND, p.60). Such capabilities would suffice in wartime to assist the PLA in carrying out long-range precision strike against high values targets such as airports and military infrastructure on the island, when mainland China deemed it necessary to apply military force to resolving the Taiwan issue and disputes in the South China Sea.

Fourth, China has been taking advantage of the relaxed cross-Strait relations and adopted the “three-warfare” strategy to weaken Taiwanese people’s awareness of threat. Cross-Strait relations have been significantly improved since 2008 thanks to the efforts by both sides. However, China attempted to seize this opportunity to reshape its image among the Taiwanese public and create advantageous conditions for political negotiations mainly through leveraging the expanded economic, trade, and cultural exchanges. By doing so, mainland China intended to undermine Taiwanese people’s threat awareness and eroding their will to resist the enemy’s invasion (MND, 2015, p.61).

Mainland China also incorporated the “three-warfare” strategy, namely public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare, into its unification policy. “Public opinion warfare” serves to raise national consciousness among mainland Chinese, gain support from the international society, and deter enemy forces” (MND, 2013, p.65). “Psychological warfare” is aimed at deterring and destroy the enemy’s will of resistance based on the two-hand strategy of peace and war (MND, 2013, p.65). “Legal warfare” helps to establish the legitimacy of China’s use of force in an attempt to win great victories with small battles or even without actual battles (2013, p.65). Through the adoption of the “three-warfare” strategy mainland China aims to induce internal faction on the island and impeded the unity of Taiwanese people.

Lastly, China has been endeavoring to weaken Taiwan’s international status and peel it away from the international society. For one thing, China continued to define the Taiwan issue as a domestic affair, so as to justify its potential use of force against Taiwan in the future. For another, China leveraged its international influence to restrict Taiwan’s representation in international affairs and institutions. The 2013 defense report, for instance, said that Taiwan had limited access to the global infectious disease prevention network due to its political status, making infectious disease prevention and control difficult on the island (MND, p.38).

Overall, mainland China remained the primary security challenge to Taiwan, despite the improvements in cross-Strait relations since 2008. The 2015 defense report vehemently argued that “mainland China’s ambition to take over Taiwan has never wavered despite the improvement of cross-Strait relations” (MND, p.48). China has been relentlessly asserting that Taiwan is vital to China’s

territorial integrity and national unity. Although mainland China's defense white papers stressed the defensive nature of its military buildup, Taiwan viewed the mainland's innovating and upgrading military technologies and strategies as preparations for unification by force in the future, if necessary. As long as China retained the option to use force against Taiwan, it would continue to be perceived as the primary threat to the island.

Natural Disaster

Climate changes have given rise to a variety of natural disasters. The geographic location has made Taiwan a frequent victim of recurrent typhoons and earthquakes as well as ensuing secondary disasters. According to the 2015 defense report, the threat posed by natural disasters to the security of Taiwanese people is "on par with that of war" (MND, p.68). Compared with mainland China, natural disasters are the actual threat to the health and property of Taiwanese people.

Constrained Defense Resources

Taiwan's national defense also faced internal challenges arising from limited financial and human resources which were closely intertwined.

The world economy was mired in the Financial Crisis and European Debt Crisis during Ma's presidency. Taiwan inevitably underwent an economic downturn, and consequently its defense budget was under higher pressure. But as mainland China persisted in military buildup, Taiwan was compelled to maintain arms procurement to try to preserve the military balance across the Strait.

Defense manpower supply has been challenged by the decreased proportion of

able-bodied individuals as the result of low birth rates in Taiwan. The insufficiency of defense manpower made it necessary for the ROC Armed Forces to adjust its structure accordingly and implement a voluntary military system to recruit volunteers with higher quality and commitment to longer terms of service. The implementation of such a volunteer system, however, became another burden on the defense budget, because it needed to use higher salary and better welfare as incentives to appeal to capable volunteers.

Island Disputes and Maritime Interests

The Diaoyutai Islands and islands in the South China Sea were regarded as the center of dispute. In particular, the 2015 report denounced China for it has “unilaterally established an air defense identification zone in East China Sea and carried out land reclamation as well as construction of naval and air force facilities in the South China Sea” (MND, p.67). Other countries were also aggressive in asserting their maritime rights and even dispatched law enforcement vessels to the disputed water. Consequential confrontations or conflicts were hindering Taiwan’s lawful fishing activities and threatening national security of Taiwan.

4.2.4 How Much Security

The degree of security pursued by Taiwan’s defense policy are mainly reflected through its goals. Taiwan’s defense policy throughout the entire Ma administration (2008-2016) adhered to the goals of war prevention, homeland defense, contingency response, conflict avoidance, and regional stability.

With regard to war prevention it is worth noting that all the defense reports shed

lights on the prospect of constructing military mechanism of mutual trust across the Strait. From mainland's perspective, the construction of such a mechanism would reduce the likelihood of military conflicts in the Taiwan Strait and gradually dispel Taiwan's concern over mainland's military buildup (Chen, 2009). Defense reports between Ma's two terms had different evaluations on this issue, however. The 2009 report expected to establish cross-Strait military mechanism of mutual trust step by step in parallel with the progressive relationship between the two sides (MND, 2009). More importantly, the premise of the mechanism, from Taiwan's point of view, should be the withdrawal of missiles targeting Taiwan by mainland China (Lee, 2011). The 2013 and 2015 defense reports, by contrast, displayed a more cautious stance than the previous two. They both contended that the conditions at the current stage did not suffice to construct the mechanism and instead the two sides should continue to prioritize economic communication (2013; 2015).

In terms of homeland defense, Taiwan's defense policy envisions the construction of a small but elite force capable of disaster relief in peacetime and combat in wartime. Defense reports during the Ma administration referred to such defense as "hard ROC." The original Chinese text of "hard ROC" can be literally translated into "as strong and tough as a rock," which indicates the defensive nature of Taiwan's defense policy and demonstrates the commitment to enabling Taiwanese people to live in peace and prosperity and allowing the nation to sustain economic development. In the event of foreign aggression, the ROC Armed Forces must "survive the first strike, avert the enemy's decapitation attacks, maneuver forces to counter strikes, and sustain all ongoing operations" (2015, p. 84). Moreover, the ROC Armed Forces during peacetime should be fully prepared to respond to contingencies such as terrorist attacks and natural

disasters.

The goals of Taiwan's defense policy are determined by a variety of factors. As the defense reports suggested, mainland China is the fundamental threat, but natural disasters are directly jeopardizing the well-being of Taiwanese people and the nation's economic development. Restricted defense financial and human resources make defense policy making more difficult. Since the size of the ROC Armed Forces will inevitably become smaller, it is necessary to transform it into an elite force that is competent to maintain credible deterrence, ward off aggression, and conduct disaster relief.

4.2.5 By What Means

A small yet elite "hard ROC" force needs to be built to meet Taiwan's defense requirements. The defense reports have set forth detailed guidelines on how to construct such an elite defense force. The guidelines can be further synthesized and concluded into 4 respects – military strategy of "resolute defense and credible deterrence", "innovative/asymmetric" capabilities, self-reliant national defense, and military reform.

"Resolute Defense and Credible Deterrence"

Apply the military strategy of "resolute defense and credible deterrence" to the construction of "hard ROC" defense. "Resolute defense" is an aim while "credible deterrence" is the means to reach the aim (MND, 2009). "Resolute defense" required the ROC Armed Forces to avoid decapitation and withstand the PLA's first round of strike during wartime and maneuver forces to organize a counterstrike, while "credible deterrence" refers to combining firepower, jointed

operations, and training to compel mainland China to think twice before taking military actions (2009).

The doctrine of “Innovation/Asymmetry”

Develop and reinforce “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities. “Innovation/asymmetry” first appeared in the 2011 defense report (MND, p.71). Later, the doctrine of developing “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities was formally endorsed by the *2013 Quadrennial Defense Review* under the second term of Ma’s presidency (MND, p.8). According to the 2015 defense report, “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities refer to (MND, p.256),

(1) “Establishing an ability to unleash decisive strikes on hostile military operational centers and key weaknesses. During the establishing process, it is expected to work together with existing and projected basic military power of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, using innovative strategies and tactics to strike at enemy weaknesses or suppress their strengths in order to counter enemy incursions and effectively achieve the missions set forth for decisive warfare.

(2) Asymmetric capability of the ROC Armed Forces refers to military capabilities other than those of the Army, Navy, or Air Force. Such capabilities are employed in a flexible fashion in order to maximize the country's relative advantages to suppress enemy's operational capabilities or activities, thus giving our forces more operational freedom and achieving victory for our military operations.”²¹

²¹ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2015). *2015 National Defense*

Such capabilities should be concealed during peacetime and be revealed during wartime to enable the ROC Armed Forces to flexibly combine conventional and non-conventional tactics and strategies to achieve the goal of homeland defense. The 2011 defense report acknowledged that Taiwan’s military power has fallen behind the PLA in absolute terms of both manpower and equipment, especially ballistic missiles, and stated that “attention shall be drawn to the dire imbalance” (2011, p.68). Bearing in mind the military imbalance across the Strait Taiwan has been persistently developing indigenous military technologies, such as Hsiung Feng III which was developed to destroy naval-based targets, and procuring advanced weapon systems in order to enhance “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities which would be decisive in winning a war with a “behemoth enemy” (2015, p.88). During the second term of the Ma Administration, the priorities of developing “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities were to strengthen mine-laying capabilities by introducing air-drop sea mines, and to develop crucial items such as precision strike weapons, unmanned aerial systems, and electronic surveillance countermeasure system. These measures were prepared to detect and ward off aggression by the “behemoth enemy” – mainland China.

Self-Reliant Defense

Uphold the principle of self-reliant national defense and continue military buildup. An elite military force needs not only capable personnel, but advanced weapons and equipment. In accordance with the notion of maintaining “fundamental” capabilities and focusing on developing “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities, Taiwan adopted a dual-track method in acquiring advanced and

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modernized weapons, namely domestic production and foreign procurement. Taiwan prioritized indigenous development and production of core military technologies and equipment, so as to enhance domestic military R&D capacities. Taiwan would only procure weapons that were proved impossible for domestic production (MND, 2015). The rationale behind the dual-track method is that Taiwan has realized that it should rely on itself rather than the U.S. for defense taking into account the fact that mainland China has been persistently hindering the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Through adopting the dual-track method, Taiwan aspired to accumulate indigenous military technologies, gradually reduced dependence on the U.S., and achieve defense self-reliance.

Military Reform

Military reform was underway to optimize the structure of the ROC Armed Forces, so as to allow for more reasonable allocation of defense resources and the construction of a small but elite force. Military reform during the Ma administration included mainly the Jingjin and Jingsui programs as well as the transition to a voluntary military system. The MND aimed at cutting down the number of military personnel and refining the structure of the ROC Armed Forces through the Jingjin and Jingsui programs to flatten command hierarchy, increase command speed and facilitate logistics support.

The Jingjin program was initially set forth in 2004 under the Chen administration. It ended in 2011 and was followed by the Jingsui program. The two successive programs managed to reduce the total number of military personnel from 385,000 in 2004 to 215,000 by the end of 2014 (MND, 2015). “The 6 headquarters – Army, Navy, Air Force, Combined Logistics, Reserve, and Military Police – were merged into 3 headquarters – Army, Navy, and Air Force,” which flattened

command hierarchy, increased command speed, and facilitate logistics support (MND, 2013, p.130). Downsizing military personnel and streamlining organizational structure enable the ROC Armed Force to increase efficiency of command and joint operation, fostering its transformation to a small but elite force.

Military reform also incorporates the transition to the voluntary military system. The purpose of the voluntary system is to recruit and cultivate able-bodied and motivated individuals with high qualities and strong commitment to long-term service. Under the old conscription system, capable personnel left the military after their terms of service ended. Only a few service members remained, making it difficult to accumulate military talents and competences. The benefits of the voluntary military system include improving the overall operational capacity of the ROC Armed Forces, allowing rational personnel deployment, and reducing social costs (MND, 2015, p.93). The system is critical to accomplishing the goal of building a small but elite defense force. As of 2015, the MND was working on a transitional conscription mechanism to ensure a smooth transition to the voluntary military system. The voluntary military system uses strong incentives to secure the source of volunteers such as raising salaries and allowances, providing housing solutions, and refining services for military families.

4.2.6 At What Costs

The construction of an elite defense force places more burden on the defense budget, so the MND must allocate its limited defense resources in a more optimal and reasonable manner.

Under the principle that the ROC Armed Forces will neither establish production capabilities nor conduct foreign procurement of weapons and equipment that can be supplied by domestic manufacturers, the MND has been encouraging private companies to participate in the R&D and production of weapons components. The MND has undertaken a resources-outsourcing approach to releasing non-sensitive, non-crucial, and low-priority capabilities to the private sector. By doing so, a stable supply chain of military products and relevant components can be secured. Furthermore, more job and market opportunities will be created in tandem and relevant industries can be vitalized.

4.2.7 In What Time Period

Taiwan's defense policy pursues long-term goals, envisioning a "hard ROC" elite force capable of safeguarding the security of Taiwan and its people. The ongoing military reform during the Ma administration was one that can be traced back to 1997 when the Jingshi program was conducted. The following programs – Jingjin and Jingsui – continued to optimize the structure of the ROC Armed Forces and gradually transform it into a small yet elite force. Furthermore, the defense reports set forth the concept of "self-reliant" national defense, demonstrating Taiwan's determination to develop indigenous military technologies and rely primarily on its own power to secure itself in the future, although Taiwan was still rather dependent on the U.S. arms sales during the time the reports were published.

4.2.8 Summary: Taiwan's Defense Policy Toward Mainland China Under the Ma Administration

Despite improved economic and cultural relations, Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma administration did not exhibit optimistic views in general on cross-Strait relations.

Mainland China's defense white papers contended that the country's defense policy is defensive in nature. With regards to the Taiwan issue, China's white papers since 2010 sent friendlier and more optimistic signals than before as previously discussed. Still, Taiwan's defense undertook a fairly skeptical posture. From Taiwan's perspective, the continuous and unrelenting military buildup by mainland China has compromised the military balance across the Strait; mainland's deployment of missiles along the Southeastern coast is perceived as military preparedness toward the island. Taiwan's defense reports also denounced mainland China's reluctance to promise not to use force against Taiwan (MND, 2009; MND, 2011; MND, 2013). In short, regardless of the strengthening of economic and cultural ties during Ma's presidency, mainland China remained the primary security challenge to Taiwan as long as it refused to renounce the use of force in the Taiwan issue. In addition to mainland China, other security challenges facing Taiwan during this period were maritime disputes, natural disasters, and constrained defense resources.

Taiwan's national defense was defensive in nature as its policy goals suggested. The degree of security that Taiwan's national defense pursued was influenced by the constantly growing military strength of mainland China and restricted by

defense resources. Also, Taiwan deemed it too early to establish the military mechanism of mutual trust with the mainland especially during Ma's second term. In general, Taiwan's national defense aimed at building a "hard ROC" force – a small but elite force capable of credible deterrence, resolute defense, and disaster relief. The military strategy of "resolute defense and credible deterrence," the doctrine of "innovation/asymmetry," the notion of self-reliant defense, and military reform are specific instruments for building the "hard ROC" defense.

4.3 Defense Policy Under the Tsai Administration (2016-2020)

Tsai Ing-wen, the leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), replaced Ma Ying-jeou in 2016 to serve as the new President of Taiwan. Her repudiation of the 1992 Consensus, the basis for cross-Strait communication, irritated the Chinese government and caused military tensions to mount in the Taiwan Strait.

During the first term of Tsai's presidency, the MND released three defense white papers, i.e. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*, *2017 National Defense Report*, and *2019 National Defense Report*. These reports probed into the security situation facing Taiwan, unpacked the threat of mainland China, articulated defense policies and military strategies, and set forth plans and guidelines for continuous defense reforms as previous reports did.

Compared with previous reports, the three defense reports show following characteristics in terms of contents arrangement:

First, defense reports during Tsai's tenure set themselves apart from previous reports by adding the evaluation of national security strategies of major actors in

the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific region as well as the analysis of the geographic significance of Taiwan.

Second, *2017 National Defense Report* and *2019 National Defense Report* both focused only on foreign threats in the investigation of Taiwan's security environment, and were more elaborate on unravelling mainland China's military strength and actions than preceding reports did. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*, illuminated both foreign military threats and other security challenges, such as natural disaster.

Last, it is also worth mentioning that the 2019 report distinguished itself from the other 2 reports by shifting the scope of analysis of security situation from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific in line with U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy under the Trump Administration.

4.3.1 Security for Whom

Taiwan national security policy is formulated to safeguard Taiwan and its people from threats, according to the three defense reports.

4.3.2 Security for Which Values

Taiwan's defense policy inherited the legacy of the Ma administration to preserve Taiwan's *de facto* independence and protect the well-being of its people. Additionally, *2019 National Defense Report* brought to the forefront the importance of democracy and liberty by declaring "Absolutely No Concession on Sovereignty; No Backing Away from Democracy and Freedom" (MND, p.51).

That Tsai rejects the 1992 Consensus does not necessarily mean that she seeks formal dependence, or *de facto* independence of Taiwan. Like her predecessor, Tsai aims at preserving the *status quo*, i.e. the *de facto* independence. For one thing, Tsai as the President shall abide by the Constitution that endorses the “Republic of China.” For another, although the DPP in the early 1990s did put forward an “Independent Clause” which advocated for *de facto* dependence, it suspended the clause by adding the “Resolution on Taiwan’s Future” into its charter in 1999. The Resolution requires the DPP to acknowledge “Republic of China” as the official name for Taiwan and the governing system, hence no need for Tsai to declare formal independence since Taiwan is already independent as the Republic of China founded in 1912 (Nachman & Hioe, 2020).

Democracy and freedom, in contrast to the authoritarian government across the Strait, are the values that Taiwan’s national defense pledges to defend. The Hong Kong crisis in 2019 further prompted Taiwan’s national defense to attach more importance of the value of democracy and freedom. Unification is part of the Chinese dream, but realizing the dream means a compromise on democracy and freedom from Taiwan’s perspective.

4.3.3 From What Threats

Mainland China has severed official communication with Taiwan at different levels since Tsai assumed office in 2016. Mainland China has also intensified military drills in the Taiwan Strait to put pressure on Taiwan since then. Mainland China’s military threat aside, natural disasters and constraints on defense resources still pose challenges to Taiwan’s security interests. In addition, a side effect of Tsai’s presidency is that it becomes more difficult for Taiwan to acquire

weapons and equipment from other countries. Cyber security and receding threat awareness among the Taiwanese public are also concerns for Taiwan's defense policy.

Mainland China's Military Threat

Taiwan's concern over China has been growing, as the latter persisted in researching and developing advanced weapons and equipment. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* still stuck to the belief that one of the core goals of mainland China's military buildup is to conduct military operations against Taiwan (MND, p. 20). *2019 National Defense Report* further divided China's military threat into 7 aspects (MND, p. 46).

(1) Enhanced ISR capabilities. China has been upgrading and perfecting its ISR network by deploying a variety of equipment including reconnaissance satellites, over-the-horizon radars, novel airborne early warning aircrafts, vessel monitoring and alert systems. The PLA's monitoring scope has been expanded to the second island chain. Enhanced ISR capabilities would provide firm support for PLA's maritime operation in the South China Sea, and more importantly, enable the PLA to launch long-range precision strike against military assets on the island.

(2) Integrated Cyber and Electronic Warfare platform. With the development and deployment of malware, electronic jamming sites, interference equipment, signals reconnaissance aircraft, and anti-radiation unmanned aerial vehicles, the PLA has become capable of compromising Taiwan's nodes of command, control, communications, cyberspace, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance as well as initiating cyberattacks during wartime to paralyze Taiwan's crucial

political, economic, and military facilities.

(3) Refined command and communications. The PLA has conducted multiple joint military exercises, so as to finetune the horizontal and vertical communications throughout its command and control mechanisms.

(4) Blockade operations. The PLA has acquired the ability to conduct both air and maritime blockade in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait through multiple sea control exercises and deployment of anti-ship missiles, air defense missiles, surface and underwater vessels.

(5) Strengthened firepower strikes. PLA's firepower has reached the entire main island of Taiwan. PLA Army along the Southeastern coast of China has been outfitted with long-distance multiple rocket launchers. The PLA Air Force and the PLA Navy have been equipped with air-to-ground missiles, anti-ship missiles, and cruise missiles. The PLA Rocket Force has displayed a multi-wave launching mode in multiple drills. With the assistance of advanced ISR capabilities, PLA has acquired the ability to strike with precision political, economic, and military HVTs on Taiwan's soil.

(6) Joint landing. The 2009 defense report found that PLA's amphibious equipment did not suffice to support joint landing operations. But after 10 years, *2019 National Defense Report* came to realize that the PLA has acquired the ability to seize offshore islands of Taiwan through the upgrade of weapons and equipment (MND). The PLA has been equipped with assault amphibious vehicles and landing platform docks to strengthen its joint landing capabilities.

(7) “Anti-Access/Area Denial” capabilities. DF-21D and DF-26 anti-ship ballistic missiles, combined with CJ-10 cruise missile, are able to cover a large area to the west of the second island chain. The DF-21D missile is designed to target the U.S. aircraft carrier, while the DF-26 missile is able to reach Guam. Furthermore, the PLA Navy and Air Force have carried out multiple joint maritime and air drills. In the event of armed conflicts in the Taiwan Strait, “Anti-Access/Area Denial” capabilities would effectively prevent the U.S. from intervening in time.

In addition to the seven aspects specified, the military imbalance across the Strait is also worth attention. As of 2019, the total Ground Force personnel of the mainland significantly outnumbered that of Taiwan – 1,020,000 for the mainland while 140,000 for Taiwan (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2019). Mainland China has also poured more resources into the R&D of advanced weapon systems – budget allocated for equipment started to account for the largest part of the aggregate defense budget in 2012.²² Due to the mainland’s constant military modernization, according to the *Military Balance 2019*, Taiwan’s weapons and equipment have fallen behind those of mainland China in terms of both quality and quantity (IISS, 2019). In particular, the PLA Navy so far has been commissioned two aircraft carriers, the Liaoning in 2012 and the Shandong in 2019. The PLA Navy has become the largest navy in the region with strong nuclear submarines and surface vessels, and is capable of conducting more assertive operations in the South China Sea and of course in the Taiwan Strait (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2019).

²² CSIS China Power Project (2020). *What does China really spend on its military?*. <https://chinapower.csis.org/military-spending/>

In sum, the PLA has further strengthened the ability to take over the Taiwan Island in a quick manner. For one thing, it is able to paralyze Taiwan's military assets and infrastructure through long-range precision attacks guided by advanced ISR. For another, it is able to delay or even deny U.S. intervention with weapons targeting the U.S. military. The *2019 Annual Report to Congress* acknowledged that the military superiority that Taiwan enjoyed in the past has been offset by mainland China's decades-long military modernization efforts (Office of the Secretary of Defense, p.83). Xi Jinping (2019), in the speech on the 40th anniversary of *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan*, has pledged to use military force if the Taiwanese government took further steps to declare formal independence.

Difficulty in Acquisition of Advanced Weapons

China has been leveraging its international influence to cripple Taiwan's international status. Confined by diplomatic and financial realities, Taiwan faces difficulties in procuring advanced weapons necessary to meet its defense needs. Taiwan at the moment is unable to build advanced and sophisticated weapon systems independently, and has to rely on import from foreign sources. The imbalance of military strength between Taiwan and mainland China would further deteriorate if Taiwan failed to develop indigenous capabilities of manufacturing key components of critical weapons and equipment. Once the U.S. arms sales were terminated, cross-Strait relations would shift to a compellence dynamic, placing Taiwan in a more disadvantageous position (Chen, Kastner & Reed, 2017).

Natural Disasters

2017 Quadrennial Defense Review acknowledged that "our country is located

within the western Pacific typhoon zone and Pacific Ring of Fire seismic zone, and is categorized as a highly hazardous area with frequent typhoons and earthquakes” (MND, p. 28). Natural disasters such as typhoon and earthquake are still the direct threat to the lives and property of Taiwanese people and domestic economic activities.

Constrained Defense Resources

Low birth rate is still a problem constraining human resources for defense. The slowdown of economic growth also places more pressure on government budget, as Taiwan needs to procure more modernized weapons to meet its security demand (MND, 2017). *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* pointed out the major issue at the moment was to “make the best of limited defense resources to strengthen comprehensive military capabilities and ensure sustainable force buildup and operational readiness” (MND, p. 26). Taiwan’s economic dependence on the mainland makes its economy vulnerable when tensions mount in the Strait (Albert, 2020). The Chinese government can commit retaliation such as reducing mainland Chinese tourists to Taiwan to put pressure on Taiwan’s economy (Chen & Cohen, 2019). The pressured economy then constrains Taiwan’s defense budget, which would hinder Taiwan’s efforts to keep up with mainland’s military buildup and to further support the voluntary military system.

Cyber Security

The rapid development of information communication technology has brought not only opportunities but risks. A leak of either military or civilian classified information may cause tremendous damage to economic activities, social stability, and national security. Hackers may locate vulnerabilities of Taiwan’s security network and implant backdoor program to steal sensitive information.

Receding Threat Awareness

In spite of a growing “Taiwanese” identification, the threat awareness among the Taiwanese public were waning – they were gradually becoming less conscious of the fact that “the two sides of the Strait remain military adversaries, and that the risk of war still exists,” warned by *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* (MND, p. 28). Mainland China continued to employ the “three-warfare” strategy to deliberately create a peaceful atmosphere and undermine Taiwanese people’s awareness of threat. Also, mainland China has bypassed the Taiwanese government and provided economic benefits to Taiwanese businesses and civil groups to marginalize the role of the DPP government in cross-Strait economic and cultural activities (Chen & Cohen, 2019).

4.3.4 How Much Security

The goals of defense policy during the Tsai administration has been adjusted to safeguarding national security, cultivating a professional military, implementing defense self-reliance, protecting the well-being of Taiwanese people, and strengthening regional stability (MND, 2017, p.55). The relentless military buildup of mainland China, the increasing difficulty in arms acquisition, and constrained defense resources have compelled the MND to adjust its policy objectives.

The MND set achieving self-reliant defense as a goal of Taiwan’s defense policy, having realized that indigenous arms R&D and production should be expedited in response to the increasing difficulty in arms acquisition (2017). In the long run, Taiwan must develop and possess critical military technologies, otherwise it is likely to be placed in an unfavorable position in the face of the rapidly growing

military power of mainland China. In particular, Xi has repeatedly stressed that national unification is an irresistible historical trend and shall be achieved in tandem with the realization of the Chinese dream. The setting of the goal of achieving self-reliant defense is forward-looking, although currently Taiwan's defense still relies on the U.S. and Trump's Taiwan policy seems beneficial to Taiwan (Gitter & Sutter, 2016; Copper, 2017). Taiwan, determined to shield the values of democracy and freedom during the Tsai administration, aspires to acquire indigenous military technologies and attain defense self-reliance, so as to prepare for security challenges in the future.

Another shift of policy objective is the construction of a professional military in line with the new military strategy – resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence – adopted by the MND since 2017 in response to the looming tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The ROC Armed Forces should be built as a professional, agile, and resilient force capable of carrying out the new military strategy (MND, 2017, p. 55).

4.3.5 By What Means

Taiwan's efforts to construct a professional military to reach its defense policy goals against mainland China mainly include the update of military strategy and guidelines, the upgrade of weapons and equipment, expediting the development of self-reliant defense, and military reform.

Update of Military Strategy and Guidelines

The military strategy during the Tsai administration has been modified as “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence” (MND, 2017, p. 56). “Resolute

defense” remains the same, indicating the resilience of the ROC Armed Forces. “Multi-domain deterrence”, compared with the previous “credible deterrence”, further divided Taiwan’s defense into multiple domains. “Multi-domain deterrence” endorses the doctrine of “innovation/asymmetry” which leverages large numbers of small yet agile weapons, such as sea mines, and the island’s geographic advantages to create huge obstacles in multiple domains for the invading enemy. The enemy must overcome the obstacles before it reaches the Taiwan Island. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* elaborated on multi-domain deterrence (MND, p.39):

“Resist the enemy on the other shore, attack the enemy on the sea, destroy the enemy in the littoral area, and annihilate the enemy on the beachhead, impose multiple interdictions and joint fire strikes to degrade enemy capabilities, disrupt its offensive and prevent the enemy from landing.”²³

The MND in 2019 set forth an Overall Defense Concept (ODC). The ODC consists of “force protection²⁴, decisive battle in littoral zone²⁵, and destruction of enemy at landing beach²⁶” (MND, 2019, p.68). The ODC was formulated as a

²³ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2017). *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*.

²⁴ Force Protection: Force protection is the key to exert the combat strength at the full length of the operation. The ROC Armed Forces may employ tactics of mobility, concealment, dispersion, deception, camouflage, escort, shrewdness, and misleading, as well as a swift and effective damage control, to contain the initial destruction caused by the enemies, and ensure the integrity of military power, so as to effectively support the follow-on operations.

²⁵ Decisive Battle in Littoral Zone: The ROC Armed Forces shall choose an area of water, which is within the coverage of their air assets and shore-based firepower, for a decisive campaign, so as to gain a partial superiority, and employ integrated capabilities of three services to destroy enemies’ vessels at sea.

²⁶ Destruction of Enemy at Landing Beach: The ROC Armed Forces may tap the occasions

guidance to the military strategy of “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence”, aspiring to effectively defend the island in the event of military aggression by the mainland.

The diagram below, taken from *2019 National Defense Report*, further illustrates the “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence” under the guidance of the ODC. The ODC divides Taiwan’s defense into two stages. At the first stage, the enemy’s power must be reduced, or at best be eliminated in littoral areas. Sea mines and large surface vessels are mainly employed at this stage. If the enemy manages to break through, further approaches the island, and makes attempts at landing, the ROC Armed Forces will strive to destroy enemy’s vessels with precision missile strikes and to annihilate the enemy at beach areas through joint operations.

during enemies’ landing and maneuvering operations onshore, destruct them at berthing, landing beach, and coastal areas by integrating forces, firepower, and prepositioned barriers of three services, and give them no places to set foot on

[Figure 6] Overall Defense Concept and “Resolute Defense and Multi-Domain Deterrence”²⁷



The main purpose of the ODC is to deploy large amounts of inexpensive weapons that are able to avoid complete destruction by enemy’s early strike and to target invading naval and air assets, so as to “make an invasion from China prohibitively timely and costly” (Bell, 2020). Ideally, the ODC should suffice to deter mainland China from taking military actions against Taiwan. In the event that mainland China uses force to take over Taiwan, Taiwan’s defense guided by the ODC should be able to stall the PLA’s aggression and more importantly, buy time for the U.S. military to intervene.

Upgrade of Weapons and Equipment

Taiwan shall continue force buildup and facilitate arms acquisition. 2017

²⁷ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Taiwan

Quadrennial Defense Review stipulated that force buildup of ROC Armed Forces shall be fulfilled in a pragmatic manner – the MND will formulate practical plans of force buildup and allocate limited financial resources accordingly (p.33). The MND also has been finetuning processes of arms acquisition to secure stable supply chains of crucial weapons and equipment. Upholding the spirit of “pragmaticism,” ROC Armed Forces have built a comprehensive arsenal (MND, 2017, p.76):

- “Army: M60A3 Tank, AH-1W Attack Helicopter, AH-64E Attack Helicopter, UH-60M Utility Helicopter, and M998 Avenger Air Defense System.
- Navy: Keelung-class Guided Missile Destroyer, Kangding-class Guided Missile Frigate, Chiyang-class Guided Missile Frigate, Jianlong-class Submarine, Yongjing-class Minehunter, AAV7 (RAM/RS) Amphibious Assault Vehicle.
- Air Force: F-16 Fighter, Mirage 2000-5 Fighter, AWACS E-2K Airborne Early Warning Aircraft, EC225 Helicopter, C-130 Transport Aircraft, P-3C Anti-submarine Aircraft, Patriot Missile Defense System.”²⁸

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The MND also put forward specific plans to reinforce “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities of the ROC Armed Forces. Focuses of future arms acquisition will be precision strike weapons, high performance anti-armor missiles, portable shortrange air defense missiles, light, fast and multiple-purpose high performance warships, smart mines and fast minelayers, unmanned aerial vehicles for ISR purpose, and information, communications and electronic countermeasure

²⁸ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2017). *2017 National Defense Report*.

equipment (MND, 2017, p.87).

Promoting Defense Self-reliance

Tsai's government aims to promote defense self-reliance through fostering domestic defense industry. So far, Taiwan's military has developed a considerable number of indigenous weapons and equipment, including CM11 Tank, CM32/CM33 Armored Vehicle, Field Air Defense Phased Array Radar, Panshi Fast Combat Support Ship, Chengkung-class Guided Missile Frigate, Jinjiang-class Patrol Vessel, Tuojiang-class Corvette, Kuanghua VI-class Missile Motorboat, Albatross Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, Cardinal Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, AIDC F-CK-1 Chingkuo Fighter.

Yet, more efforts need to be expended in developing domestic defense industry which lays the foundation for defense self-reliance. The MND must combine military capacities and resources with those from the private sector, thereby reinvigorating defense industries, stimulating economic growth, and accomplishing the goal of indigenous arms production.

The MND has taken multiple specific measures to boost military-civil cooperation to bolster defense technological development and foster the growth of defense industries:

- Establish a defense technology development mechanism to incorporate multiple high-tech capacities from industries and academia to develop advanced defense technologies.
- Outsource forward-looking, potential-driven and research-worthy programs to civilian academic or scientific research institutions through academic

cooperation.

- Propose bills for the development of defense industries to encourage and finance domestic industries to join R&D in defense technologies.
- Improve interagency coordination and cooperation mechanisms to help transfer defense technologies to defense industries and generate add-on results for them.
- Create a security control mechanism to prevent theft or improper transfer of key R&D results.²⁹

The development of defense industries focuses on three areas, namely aerospace, shipbuilding, and information security. The MND began with a new indigenous Advanced Trainer Jet program and transferred matured technologies to the private sector with the purpose of securing a stable supply chain for the aerospace industry. The first prototype of the program came out on September 24, 2019 and the MND expected the production of a total number of 66 advanced trainer jets to be completed by 2026 (2019, p.107).

Regarding the shipbuilding industry, the MND endeavored to raise self-production rate of shipborne equipment and allowed key technologies to be rooted in the shipbuilding industry. From 2016 through 2019, the MND launched 7 shipbuilding programs successively for “indigenous submarine, amphibious transport dock, high-performance frigate, high-speed minelayer, new rescue vessel, Micro-class missile assault boat, and next generation guided-missile frigate” (2019, p.107).

²⁹ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2017). *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*.

The MND also worked closely with research institutions and relevant enterprises to upgrade the information security industry. The National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology has been outsourcing declassified military cyber security programs to interlink with domestic supply chain of cyber security industry. The MND has been advocating industrial and academic cooperation to upgrade the overall information security network.

Taiwan in June, 2019 enacted the National Defense Industry Development Act which is aimed at facilitating public-private cooperation on developing defense-related technologies. By strengthening military-civil connections, the MND aims to pool together R&D resources and capacities to gradually acquire the capability of indigenous arms production and at the same time vitalize the entire defense industry. The pressure on defense budget can be reduced, and in the long run, Taiwan's military buildup will not be hindered by the difficulty in arms acquisition as it develops the ability to research, develop, and produce weapons and equipment domestically.

Military Reform

Defense reform under the Tsai Administration is implemented through three aspects, namely adjusting organization and force structure, perfecting recruitment mechanism, and streamlining administrative procedures.

First, national defense organization and force structure has been further refined in accordance with changing security situation facing Taiwan and domestic resources allocation, and arms acquisition. The Information, Communications, and Electronic Force Command was established on July 1, 2017 with the purpose of integrating information, communications, and electronic capabilities of

Taiwan Army, Navy, and Air Force. It is an institution created to prevent possible cyberattacks by the PLA. The mission of the institutions in general is to secure command and control networks, ensure proper functioning of ISR systems, and to protect information security crucial to homeland security. In addition, the Air Defense Artillery Command and the Air Defense Missile Command were merged on September 1, 2017 into the ROCAF Air Defense and Missile Command to support joint air defense operations. Following a series of Jingshi, Jingjin, and Jingsui streamlining programs, the ROC Armed Forces keep refining its organization and force structure to meet new challenges.

Second, continue to optimize the recruitment mechanism to promote the voluntary military system. The MND has been conducting a variety of supporting measures including hosting advertising and promotional events, refurbishing military installations, revising selection processes, and refining military pay. It also encourages service members to continue further studies and has set up special programs to provide support for veterans. Up until 2019, the ROC regular forces have been mainly comprised of volunteer service members – the ratio of volunteers is 84.91% and the retention ratio is 75% (MND, p.123). Under the voluntary system, service members go through a 4-month training to obtain acquire basic combat and military occupational specialties (MOS) skills. They will be listed in a pool of reservists upon the completion of training and can be recalled to the military during wartime.

Third, keep streamlining administrative procedures to improve efficiency of day-to-day operations. This measure is guided by the principle of “being horizontally combined and vertically integrated with distinctive authorities and accountabilities” and is assisted by introducing advanced information

communication technologies and modern management concepts (MND, 2017, p.70).

In addition to the preparedness toward mainland China, Taiwan's defense policy seeks to reaching the goal of protecting the well-being of Taiwanese people through the enhancement of civilian protection cooperation. Taiwan's defense policy specified two other missions for the Armed Forces other than combat, namely securing legitimate civilian maritime activities, and disaster relief. The Navy and the Air Force shall secure the sea line of communication, escort Taiwanese fishing vessels in conducting rightful maritime activities, and assist in scientific maritime researches.

In terms of disaster relief, the MND founded an "Emergency Operation Center" to coordinate relief resources to conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Additionally, the MND has been working with civilian institutions to put together rescue and medical resources in an attempt to further strengthen disaster relief capabilities.

4.3.6 At What Costs

Compared with defense policy under the Ma administration, the defense reports during Tsai's tenure have delivered a stronger message that Taiwan will never yield in securing its *de facto* independence by setting forth the goal of self-reliant defense. The 2019 defense report also pledged to unswervingly defend the values democracy and liberty. Such a posture makes the situation in the Taiwan Strait more precarious and is likely to incur retaliation by mainland China.

Also, Taiwan's defense budget has been on a rise in both absolute and relative terms since Tsai took office in 2016. The increase of defense budget translates into the decrease of budget in other sectors.

4.3.7 In What Time Period

Taiwan's defense policy during Tsai's presidency continue to pursue long-term goals. Self-reliant defense, initially introduced during the Ma administration, is a good demonstration. The current Tsai administration, taking into consideration the uncertainty of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan in the long run, have further stressed the importance of defense self-reliance and implemented policies such as the National Defense Industry Development Act to bolster indigenous R&D capabilities of critical and advanced weapon systems and to gradually reduce Taiwan's military dependence on the U.S.

4.3.8 Summary: Taiwan's Defense Policy Toward Mainland China Under the Tsai Administration

President Tsai's denial of the 1992 Consensus and repudiation of "one country, two system" have infuriated the Chinese government. The direct consequence is a more aggressive posture displayed the mainland, whose fury takes on mainly two forms: economic retaliation and military drills in the Taiwan Strait. With regard to defense, the military power of mainland China remains the primary threat to Taiwan' security interests and such a threat grows stronger during the Tsai administration. The Tsai administration also faces constrained defense resources and natural disasters as the previous government did. Difficulty in arms acquisition, cyber security, and receding threat awareness among Taiwanese

civilians undermine Taiwan's security interests. To respond to the increasingly complex and precarious security situation,

Tsai's government tackles the challenges that undermine the security of Taiwan mainly through four sets of efforts: the update of military strategy and guidelines, the upgrade of weapons and equipment, promotion of defense self-reliance, military reform. Additionally, Taiwan's defense policy looks to the enhancement of civilian protection cooperation.

V. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings

Mainland China's defense policy is defensive in nature, and prioritizes addressing the Taiwan issue and achieving national unification through peaceful dialogues. Although reluctant to renounce the use of force, mainland China repeatedly assured that it would only apply military force to crashing attempts to pursue formal Taiwanese independence, which would constitute a deterrent the separatist power in Taiwan.

Taiwan's defense policy displays a different view on mainland's force buildup. Mainland's reluctance to promise not to use military means against Taiwan deeply concerns Taiwan's defense policy, leading it to consider mainland China as the primary threat to its security interests. In this context, defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administrations exhibited 6 characteristics as follows.

(1) "Innovation/asymmetry" has been a doctrine of great significance from the Ma administration through the Tsai administration. The doctrine reflects Taiwan's calculation of military imbalance across the Strait and its own military realities. The PLA is being built toward the direction that enables it to quickly take over the Taiwan Island. Long runways needed for fixed-wing aircrafts to take off can be destroyed by PLA's long-range precision strikes – the fighters may not have a chance to play a critical role in a combat with the PLA (Murray, 2008). U.S. military intervention can be stalled or denied by PLA's enhanced "Ani-Access/Area Denial" capabilities, and in light of the imbalance of military power, Taiwan must figure out a way to resist until foreign intervention arrives.

In this context, the doctrine of “innovation/asymmetry” was formulated and brought to the fore since Ma’s first term. The doctrine has been endorsed and upheld by the military strategy and the ODC during the Tsai administration.

(2) Military reform is underway throughout the period. The Jingjin and Jingsui programs, the transition to and promotion of the voluntary military system, and the ongoing military restructuring under the Tsai administration serve to reduce the number but raise the qualities of military personnel, to facilitate the efficiency of military command and communication, and to achieve functional optimization of the entire ROC Armed Forces.

(3) Defense policy under both administrations seeks to preserve the *status quo* of cross-Strait relations – Taiwan remains *de facto* independent as the Republic of China. The two presidents of opposing parties both try to preserve the *status quo*, although they diverge in the attitude toward the 1992 Consensus.

(4) Defense policy under neither administration projects the possibility of reaching political agreements with the mainland. Despite improved economic and cultural relations, defense policy under the Ma administration still held dear to the belief that the optimum conditions for a political agreement have not yet been reached in response to mainland China’s proposal of building a military mechanism of mutual trust. The Tsai Administration has taken a tougher stance – the president has already repudiated the 1992 Consensus which is the premise of cross-Strait dialogues, not to mention reaching political agreements.

(5) Efforts have been made to combine national defense with domestic industries to enhance self-reliant defense and foster domestic economy. The rationale

behind the efforts is to develop critical military technologies by pooling together public and private resources. At the same time, private companies and research institutions are granted the access to advanced yet non-sensitive technologies, thereby boosting their own production.

(6) Disaster relief has been a one of the core missions for the ROC Armed Forces throughout the two administrations. Typhoon and earthquakes visit Taiwan frequently and directly undermine the security of Taiwanese people and their property. Taiwan's defense policy has attached importance to disaster relief since 2011.

International and regional security situations keep changing constantly. In the face of growing military imbalance across the Strait, defense policy under the Tsai administration has been modified and refined accordingly.

(1) The values of democracy and freedom have been brought to the forefront since 2019. Tsai takes a different approach from her predecessor who was more inclined to maintain a friendly relationship with the mainland. She attached great importance to the values of democracy and freedom of Taiwan and has made numerous statements on both social media and public speeches endorsing these values. A Taiwan embracing the values of democracy and freedom is in sharp contrast with mainland China under authoritarian rule. As far as Tsai's concerned, accepting the "one country, two systems" framework could jeopardize the values of democracy and freedom.

(2) Defense self-reliance has been set as a policy goal. Defense reports have denounced mainland China for expending diplomatic efforts and exploiting

economic leverage to prevent other countries from supplying arms to Taiwan. The prospect of arms acquisition from foreign sources is bleak. In the long run, Taiwan must realize defense self-reliance in order to safeguard other security goals it pursues.

(3) Military strategy has been amended from “resolute defense and credible deterrence” to “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence”. The Overall Defense Concept was formulated with the goal of compelling the enemy to consider an invasion unattainable. Taiwan under the Tsai administration must ramp up military preparedness to prevent the current deterrence dynamic from deteriorating into a compellence dynamic. Taiwan’s defense still relies on the U.S. intervention in the event of mainland China’s aggression, as its own military power is no match for the formidable PLA (Gitter & Sutter, 2016). The ultimate goal of the updated military strategy and the ODC, in essence, is to buy enough time for the U.S. military to intervene. The ODC expects to constitute an effective deterrent against the mainland by compelling it to realize that it is not likely to seize Taiwan quickly enough before the U.S. intervention arrives.

5.2 Policy Implications for Mainland China

Still, mainland China is perceived as the primary threat by Taiwan national defense, even during the period of economic rapprochement. Also, the values of democracy and liberty have been stressed since 2019, suggesting the belief held by Taiwan’s defense policy that reaching political agreement with the authoritarian Chinese mainland will compromise these values. The long-lasting democracy struggles in Hong Kong, where the “one country, two systems” framework is applied, gradually push Taiwan away.

Mainland China should bear in mind that unification with Taiwan can never be

achieved without the trust and support of its people. The study of Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administration has shown that regardless of the relationship between the two sides, mainland China is invariably regarded by Taiwan's defense policy as the primary threat unless it renounces the use of force. Although since 2016 the mainland has been expending efforts to bypass the DPP government and promote cooperation with Taiwanese business, it has more to do to recast its image among the Taiwanese public. To garner trust from Taiwanese people, under no circumstances should mainland China breach its promises of the "one country, two systems" principle. Instead, it should demonstrate sincerity as well as respect for the values of democracy and freedom through practices. Only in this way can the two sides of the Taiwan Strait find a common ground and reach further dialogues.

5.3 Limitations

This research studies Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma Ying-jeou and Tsai Ing-wen administrations. The paper first examines mainland how China's defense policy deals with the Taiwan issue, which is used as the background for the analysis of Taiwan's defense policy. But as the background and literature review point out, the U.S. has been playing a significant role in the shaping and evolution of cross-Strait relations and its tacit support for Taiwan has been affecting the latter's making of security policy. Therefore, future studies can shed more light on the U.S. factor to the formulation of Taiwan's defense policy as well as the triangular security relations among mainland China, the U.S. and Taiwan.

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초록

마잉주 정부와 차이잉원 정부는 대만과 중국 본토와의 관계를 다루는 방식에서 서로 상처됨을 알 수 있으나 방위정책에서는 모두 중국이 대만의 안보 이익에 일차적인 위협이 됨을 주장하고 있다. 양안관계 학자들은 92 공식을 둘러싼 정치 투쟁에 초점을 맞춰왔다. 현재까지 대만의 대중 방위정책에 대한 연구는 제한적 관심을 받아 왔다. 본 논문은 중국-대만에서 발표한 방위 보고서, 대만 문제에 대한 중국 지도자들의 연설, 제 3 자 군사 보고서 등 자료를 근거하여 2008 년부터 대만의 방위정책 수립의 근거를 밝히려고 한다. 대만은 중국의 방위정책과 무력 증강에 대해 비관적인 해석을 갖고 있는 것으로 파악된다. 대만의 입장에서 보면 중국의 방위정책은 양안관계를 다루는 데 있어 사실상 공격적이며 이는 궁극적으로는 현상을 타파하고 대만의 안보 이익을 저해할 것이다. 이러한 주장을 고수함에 따라 마잉주 정부와 차이잉원 정부 시기의 대만의 방위정책은 군사전략과 지침의 개선, 군사개혁 추진, 자주방위 발전 등을 통해 현상 유지를 추구하는 것으로서 적의 침공을 저지하고 미군의 개입 전까지 지탱할 수 있는 군대를 건설하는 것이었다.

키워드: 방위정책; 군사전략; 마잉주; 차이잉원; 양안관계.

학번: 2018-25638



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Master's Thesis of International Cooperation

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Mainland China in the Ma and Tsai
Administrations**

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Abstract

Although the Ma Ying-jeou and Tsai Ing-wen administrations diverge in the approach to dealing with the relationship with the mainland, their defense policies both regard China as the primary threat to Taiwan's security interests. Scholars of cross-Strait relations have generally focused on the political struggles over the 1992 Consensus. So far limited attention has been paid to the study of Taiwan's defense policy toward China. This paper tries to unpack the rationale behind Taiwan's defense policy making since 2008 through referencing defense reports released by the two sides, speeches on the Taiwan issue by Chinese leaders, and military reports from third parties. It finds that Taiwan holds a pessimistic interpretation of China's defense policy and force buildup. From Taiwan's perspective, China's defense policy is offensive in nature in dealing with cross-Strait relations and will ultimately break the *status quo* and undermine Taiwan's security interests. Adhering to such belief, Taiwan's defense policies under Ma and Tsai administrations both seek to preserve the *status quo* through finetuning military strategy and guidelines, promoting military reform, and developing self-reliant defense, thereby constructing a military that is resilient enough to stall enemy's invasion and hold up until U.S. military intervention arrives.

Keywords: Defense Policy, Military Strategy, Ma Ying-jeou, Tsai Ing-wen, Cross-Strait Relations

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I. Introduction

The relationship between Taiwan and mainland China has been an enduring issue in East Asia and concerns people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Over the past 6 decades, cross-Strait relations have gone through periods of both tensions and peaceful development and cooperation.

After Ma Ying-jeou was inaugurated President of Taiwan in 2008, cross-Strait relations featured intensified economic and cultural communication. Still, military tensions remained and two sides were unable to reach further political agreements. Military tensions have been aggravated since Tsai Ing-wen took power in 2016. Force buildup of the PLA, regardless of whether the cross-Strait relationship is friendly or tense, has proceeded throughout the Ma and Tsai administrations and undermined the military balance across the Taiwan Strait.

Prior literature has studied cross-Strait relations with different focuses, mainly focusing on Taiwan's mainland policy, foreign policy and domestic politics, mainland China's Taiwan policy, cross-Strait economic relations, and the role of the U.S. So far limited researches have been conducted from the national security perspective to study cross-Strait relations.

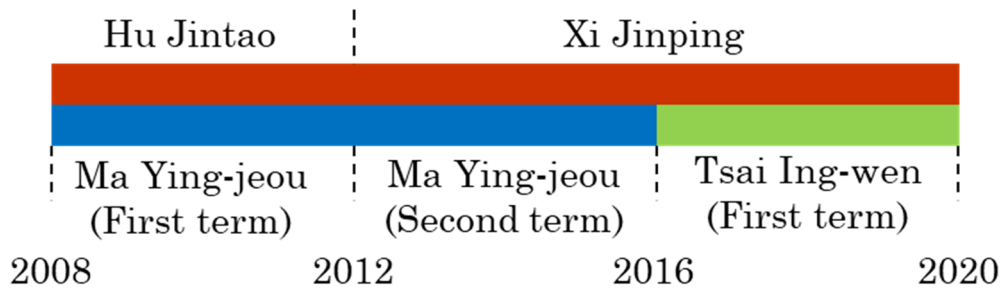
The thesis aims to examine cross-Strait relations through delving into Taiwan's defense policy toward mainland China during the Ma and Tsai administrations. China's force buildup has been proceeding throughout the period and constantly concerns Taiwan's defense, so the thesis will first analyze China's defense policy

to see how it copes with the Taiwan issue, display Taiwan's interpretation of Chinese military buildup, and then analyze Taiwan's defense policy under the two administrations.

To analyze Taiwan's defense policy, the thesis will apply David A. Baldwin's (1997) seven specifications of security, i.e. security for whom, security for which values, from what threats, how much security, by what means, at what costs, and in what time period. In addition to using defense white papers as the major source of analysis, the author will also reference military reports on Chinese military by the U.S. Department of Defense and the *Military Balance* series by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) to evaluate military power of the two sides.

The author divides the analysis of mainland China's defense policy into three timeframes: 2008-2012, 2012-2016, and 2016-2020. The first period corresponds to Ma Ying-jeou's first term. Xi Jinping in 2012 replaced Hu Jintao and in the same year Ma started to serve his second term as Taiwan's President. In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, who diverged with Ma in the opinion on the 1992 Consensus was inaugurated as the new President of Taiwan. The temporal relationship among their presidencies can be illustrated as follows.

[Figure 1] Presidents of Mainland China and Taiwan from 2008 to 2020



In the third chapter, the author will examine mainland China's defense policy in the three periods respectively, and analyze how it addresses the Taiwan issue. In the fourth chapter, the author will start with explaining how Taiwan's defense policy in general interprets China's defense policy and military buildup from Taiwan's perspective and giving brief introductions to Taiwan's defense budget and defense organization. Then, the author will provide detailed analysis of Taiwan's defense policy under each administration based on the seven specifications of security. In the last chapter, the author will answer the three research questions based on analyses in previous chapters, put forward policy implications for mainland China, and reflect on the research's limitations.

II. Research Framework

2.1 Background

2.1.1 History of Taiwan Until 1949

Cross-Strait relations have been one of the most enduring and contested issues concerning East Asian security and stability. The year 1949 marked the separation of Taiwan from mainland China, but the sovereignty dispute over Taiwan dates back to as early as the 17th century.

Initially the Taiwan Island had been inhabited by a population consisting of early Han migrants from mainland and aboriginal people before the colonial intrusion of the Spanish and the Dutch. In 1622, the Dutch forces landed in the Pend-hu Islands and established presence there. In 1626, the Spanish forces seized Keelung and began their expansion from there onto the island. In 1642, the Dutch forces managed to defeat and expel the Spanish, and thereafter established colonial ruling over the entire Taiwan Island.

Ming China, across the Taiwan Strait, was struggling against the invasion of Manchu at about the same time. The Manchurian forces captured Beijing, the then capital of Ming China, and established Qing Dynasty in 1644. Despite the collapse of Ming Dynasty, the resistance against Manchu persisted in southern China. Among the leaders of resistant forces rose Zheng Chenggong. After several failed attempts, he turned his attention to Taiwan and succeeded in expelling the Dutch in 1662, putting an end to the Dutch colonial rule over the

Taiwan Island.

Zheng founded a government on the island trying to promote Chinese culture and restore Ming rule in China. But His unexpectedly early death in 1662 and subsequent internal intrigue gave the Manchurian China an opportunity to annex the island in 1683. The Taiwan Island has since then become governed as part of Fujian province, Qing China for the next two centuries.

In 1895, Qing China lost the First Sino-Japanese war, and was forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The treaty ceded the Taiwan and Peng-hu Islands to Japan, and marked the beginning of Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan for the next half a century.

50 years later, Japan's defeat in the Second World War terminated its colonial rule in Taiwan. At the same time, the Chinese civil war between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Kuo-Ming Tang (KMT) resumed, as their common enemy, Japan, had surrendered. CPC eventually declared victory, and founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) on mainland China in 1949. KMT, as the loser of the Chinese Civil War, had no choice but moved its government to the Taiwan Island.

2.1.2 Struggling Cross-strait Relations After 1949

Both mainland China and Taiwan claimed to be the legitimate government of China. A volatile cross-Strait relationship has been developed since then. Cross-Strait relations have fluctuated over the past 6 decades with recurring military tensions on one hand and economic rapprochement on the other hand.

The military tensions featured two Taiwan Strait Crises during the 1950s. The first crisis took place in 1954 when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of mainland China began to bombard the Kinmen and Mutsu Islands. The bombardment lasted for around 7 months until mainland China was forced to cease fire under the U.S. military pressure. The year 1958 saw the second Taiwan Strait Crisis. The PLA of mainland China shelled Kinmen and Matsu islands again and the Taiwanese forces returned fire. The fire exchanges lasted for 4 weeks or so. Sporadic exchanges of fire continued since then, but none of them had escalated into larger-scale conflicts. The third crisis broke out in 1995 and was regarded as mainland China's protest against the then Taiwanese President, Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S.

In terms of economy Taiwan has achieved enormous progress in economic development and become one of the four Asian tigers since the 1970s. Across the strait the Chinese mainland has benefited from the reform and open-up policy and grew to become the world's second largest economy in 2010. With further integration into the global market and economy mainland China has been and become the largest trade partner of numerous countries or regions including Taiwan. The Chinese mainland, as a lucrative market with huge potential, has also attracted a large amount of foreign investments including those from Taiwan. In 2010, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement removed the barriers to trade between the two sides, and the cross-Strait economic ties were further strengthened by the agreement.

The U.S. has been playing an indispensable role in shaping cross-Strait dynamics since 1949 (Shlapak, Orletsky & Wilson, 2000; Ross, 2002). At the very

beginning, the U.S. did not recognize the legitimacy of mainland China, and dispatched the 7th fleet to the Taiwan Strait to defend Taiwan during the first Taiwan Strait crisis. Although the U.S. in 1979 pivoted to acknowledge and established diplomatic relations with mainland China, the U.S. Congress in the same year passed the Taiwan Relations Act assuring the U.S. commitment to protecting Taiwan's security. The U.S. recognized Taiwan as an essential component of the first island chain and intended to contain the Communist expansion during the Cold War period through maintaining arms sales to Taiwan to keep in check the military balance of power across the Strait (Garver, 2015). From 1970 to 2019, over 75% of Taiwan's imported weapons came from the U.S. according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's database.¹ The U.S.-Taiwan ties under the Trump Administration were strengthened when President Tsai Ing-wen spoke by phone with President Trump before his inauguration which marked the first top-level communication between the two sides since 1979.

Cross-Strait tensions mounted after Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016. The president, belonging to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), overtly denied the 1992 Consensus and repudiated the principle of "One Country, Two Systems". In the meantime, there has been a rise of Taiwanese identity in the 1990s. The annual surveys conducted by the Election Study Center, National Chengchi University have suggested a trend of constantly increasing Taiwanese identification.² According to the survey as of 2019, 58.5 percent of the island's

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research database.

<https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>

² Election Study Center, National Chengchi University.

<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=166>

residents identified themselves as only Taiwanese, up from 17.6 percent in 1992. The sentiment of Taiwanese identity has been further instigated by the aggressive posture and coercive approaches toward Taiwan taken by the Chinese government in the international arena since Tsai Ing-wen's inauguration. Across the strait the Chinese government has been sticking to a dual track, or "carrot and stick" approach to the Taiwan issue by offering economic benefits on one hand and increasing military and political pressure on the other hand (Qiang, 2019).

2.2 Literature Review

Scholars have researched cross-Strait relations from a variety of perspectives. Their studies so far can be divided into 5 categories below:

(1) Scholars probed into Taiwan's mainland policy, foreign policy and military spending (Wu & Chou, 2012; Tan 2014; Cabestan, 2014; Wu, 2018). For example, in his paper Cabestan (2014) argued that Ma Ying-jeou's rapprochement policy toward mainland was responsible for Taiwan's restrictive defense budget. Wu (2018) pointed out that Tsai Ing-wen adopts two approaches to increase Taiwan's security and reduce Taiwan's dependency on China: one is to enhance indigenous defense industry and the other is the New Southward Policy.

(2) Scholars also paid close attention to Taiwan's domestic politics and especially the 2016 presidential election. They discussed a range of Taiwan's internal issues including the Taiwanese identity, the mired economy, and domestic voices seeking *de jure* Taiwanese independence (Subba, 2016; Wu, 2016; Hsieh, 2017). Hickey and Emerson (2017) studied Taiwan's 2016 presidential election, diplomatic relations, and economy, and expressed a pessimistic attitude towards

the prospect of cross-Strait relations following Tsai's taking office.

(3) Scholars also looked into the other side of the Taiwan strait, and probed into mainland China's Taiwan policy, as well as how China's assertive foreign policy under Xi Jinping leadership influenced cross-Strait relations (Chang, 2014; Huang, 2017; Cabestan, 2017; Qiang, 2019). Chang (2014), for example, found that Beijing's efforts to use ties with President Ma to bring Taiwan closer to the PRC orbit backfired which resulted in a weakened presidency in Taiwan. Huang (2017) pointed out what Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping share in common is to prevent Taiwan's *de jure* independence. Qiang (2019) argued that Beijing has adopted a dual-track approach to Taiwan containing Taiwan militarily and politically while engaging Taiwan economically and culturally.

(4) Scholars focused on the economic relations between mainland China and Taiwan, and many argued that the deepened economic ties and intensified economic integration actually have compromised Taiwan's national security (Acharya, 2005; Magcamit, 2015; Weng, 2017). Some scholars expressed concern over Taiwan's economic dependence on China which makes Taiwan's economy vulnerable when cross-Strait relations deteriorate (Chen & Cohen, 2019).

(5) The role of the United States was also taken into consideration to analyze the dynamics across the strait. These researches mainly covered the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and the unofficial relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan (Hu, 2013; Hickey, 2015; Chen, Kastner & Reed, 2017). For example, Chen, Kastner and Reed (2017) investigated the trilateral relations between China, Taiwan, and the US, and argued that if the US terminated arms sales to Taiwan, cross-strait

relations would be shifted from a deterrence dynamic to a compellence dynamic.

So far, there has been limited research dedicated to the studies of Taiwan's defense policy especially since 2008 when Ma Ying-jeou assumed presidency. Ma's acknowledgement of the 1992 Consensus has paved the way for the improvements of cross-Strait relations thereafter. Meanwhile, the two sides did not reach political agreements and military tensions remained. It is worthwhile to look into the characteristics of Taiwan's defense policy since 2008, and to find out what Taiwan has done and what it is doing to ramp up military preparedness toward the rising mainland China.

2.3 Research Questions

As the title suggests, the thesis studies Taiwan's defense policy toward mainland China under the Ma and Tsai administrations. To better understand the rationale of Taiwan's defense policy, mainland China's defense policy regarding the Taiwan issue will be examined as well. The research questions are as follows.

- First, how does China's defense policy since 2008 deal with the Taiwan issue?
- Second, what are the key features of Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administrations respectively?
- Third, compared with the Ma administration, what policy refinements and modifications have the Tsai administration made?

To address the three questions the author adopts text analysis and looks into defense white papers released by mainland China and Taiwan.

2.4 Theory and Methodology

2.4.1 Theory: David A. Baldwin's Seven Criteria of Security

Baldwin (1997, p.13) referred to Wolfers' (1952, p.485) characterization of security as "the absence of threats to acquired values" and put forward the seven criteria to specify the concept of security, namely Security for whom, Security for which values, How much security, From what threats, By what means, At what cost, and In what time period.

There are a wide range of answers to Security for whom. The objects of security can be the individual, the state, and the international system (Baldwin, 1997, p.13).

Security for which values refers to the specific values to be protected from potential threats. Such values often depend on the object of security and vary among physical safety, economic welfare, autonomy, psychological well-being, and so on (Baldwin, 1997, p.13).

How much security measures the degree of security due to the unattainability of absolute security (Baldwin, 1997, p.15). Therefore, it is important to specify the degree of security a country has or seeks.

From what threats seeks to identify the potential or imminent threats that undermine acquired values. Natural disasters, contagious diseases, potential burglars, military buildup of other states can all be considered threats to acquired values (Baldwin, 1997, p.15).

Regarding by what means Baldwin (1997, p.16) argued that “the goal of security can be pursued by a wide variety of means” and different policies can be adopted to pursue security.

At what costs means “the sacrifice of other goals that could have been pursued with the resources devoted to security” (Baldwin, 1997, p.16). Different means of pursuing security brings varying costs due to the scarcity of resources.

In what time period deals with the timing of adopting policy to pursue security. Baldwin (1997, p.17) pointed out that long-term policies often differ from, and sometimes are contradictory to, short-term policies.

2.4.2 Methodology

In the thesis, the author will adopt text analysis as the primary methodology to approach the three research questions.

The author will refer to defense white papers published by mainland China’s Ministry of Defense and other important official statements since 2008, and meticulously analyze the texts related to how China deals with national unification, the Taiwan issue, and territorial integrity. Based on the analysis, the author will conclude how mainland’s defense policy since 2008 addresses the Taiwan issue.

To approach the second and the third questions, the author will examine Taiwan’s defense reports released since 2008, and pinpoint the security interests of Taiwan

through applying Baldwin's seven criteria to the analysis of each document. In light of the seven specifications, the author then will compare defense policies between the Ma and Tsai administrations, and strive to identify the sameness and difference between the two administrations. In addition to the policy aspect the author also references military reports by the U.S. Department of Defense and the IISS to shed light on the actual military balance/imbalance between mainland China and Taiwan.

III. Mainland China's Defense Policy Involving the Taiwan Issue From 2008 to 2020

3.1 Defense Policy From 2008 to 2012

Ma Ying-jeou began to serve as Taiwan's president from 2008. He endorsed the 1992 Consensus and under his leadership Taiwan developed close economic relations with the mainland. During this period, mainland China released two defense whitepapers. Hu Jintao in 2009 also delivered a speech on the 30th anniversary of *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan* and made six proposals to address the Taiwan issue which was mentioned and analyzed by Taiwan's 2009 and 2011 defense reports.³

3.1.1 China's National Defense in 2008⁴

The year 2008 was a milestone for China who celebrated the 30th anniversary of reform and open-up, weathered the devastating Sichuan earthquake, and successfully hosted the Beijing Olympics. With regard to cross-Strait relations, tensions began to thaw after Ma Ying-jeou, who displayed a friendly posture toward the mainland, was elected the President of Taiwan in 2008.

³ 告台湾同胞书 [Message to Compatriots in Taiwan].

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Message_to_the_Compatriots_in_Taiwan

⁴ 2008 年中国的国防 [China's National Defense in 2008]. http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2009-01/20/content_1210224.htm

The white paper acknowledged that the security situation facing China has been ameliorated to the extent that, for one thing, attempts of the separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence” to pursue to Taiwan’s *de jure* independence has been curbed, and for another, China has maintained friendly relationships with advanced countries and neighboring countries (2009). Cross-Strait relations have been significantly improved, as the two sides were making progress in resuming dialogues based on the 1992 Consensus. Separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence”, “Tibet independence”, and “East Turkistan independence” still remained threats that undermine China’s national unity. The 2008 white paper paid equal attention to the threats created by separatist forces and other threats such as terrorism and natural disasters, suggesting that mainland China’s concern for Taiwan’s pursuit of formal independence has been reduced.

Thanks to the improved cross-Strait relations, the 2008 white paper did not mention specific measures to curb “Taiwanese independence” or to pursue national unification in the section of national defense policy and strategy. The white paper, instead, only spent a few words in defining safeguarding national security and unity as one of the fundamental missions for China’s defense policy as of 2008.

3.1.2 Hu’s 2009 Speech on Taiwan Unification

In his speech, Hu Jintao (2009) stressed that peaceful unification with Taiwan would best serve the interests of mainland China and Taiwan. He proposed 6 approaches to peaceful unification and can be summarized as below,

- Uphold the principle of “one China” and promote mutual political trust;

- Enhance economic cooperation and boost joint development;
- Carry forward the Chinese culture and strengthen spiritual ties;
- Encourage exchange of talents and expand communication of different sectors;
- Safeguard national sovereignty and consult about foreign affairs;
- End hostility and reach peace agreement.⁵

The speech signaled mainland China's intention to make full use of economic harmony during the Ma Ying-jeou presidency to further improve cross-Strait relations and establish political and economic foundation for peaceful unification.

3.1.3 China's National Defense in 2010⁶

The 2010 white paper, published in March 2011, showed considerable optimism toward the future development of cross-Strait relations. The white paper recognized the progress that has been achieved through joint efforts of the two sides. The Chinese mainland and Taiwan have been working closely to contain the activities of separatist forces of "Taiwanese independence" and to promote the "three links" across the Strait, i.e. postal, transportation, and trade links between mainland China and Taiwan. The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement signed in June 2010 further encouraged economic communication across the Strait (Tsai & Liu, 2017).

⁵ 胡锦涛：携手推动两岸关系和平发展 同心实现中华民族伟大复兴——在纪念《告台湾同胞书》发表30周年座谈会上的讲话 [Speech in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of Message of Compatriots in Taiwan].

http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/zt/hu/201101/t20110125_1732427.htm

⁶ 2010年中国的国防 [China's National Defense in 2010]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2011-03/31/content_2618567.htm

Regarding national defense policy, the white paper contended that “the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are destined to ultimate reunification in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (2011). It was the responsibility of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to confront the common enemy – separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence” – and to reach a peace agreement through consultation on an equal basis. The two sides might exchange opinions on military issues and establish military security mechanism of mutual trust to further stabilize the situation in the Taiwan Strait. Although the white paper repeated the stance on separatist threats of the previous two white papers that the PLA was resolute to battle any attempts of “Taiwanese independence”, “Tibet independence”, and “East Turkistan independence”, the Taiwan issue was no longer a major concern for the Chinese government at the time. The white paper took on an optimistic and positive standpoint toward the future of cross-Strait relations and looked forward to a peaceful unification with Taiwan.

3.1.4 Summary

National sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity have been core values that China’s defense policy strives to safeguard. After the returns of Hong Kong and Macao to mainland China, Taiwan remained the only contested territory that China aspired to reclaim in the 21st century through either peaceful or military means. The two white papers both used a separate part to discussed cross-Strait relations when analyzing the security situation facing China. Compared with “Taiwanese independence”, the threats posed by “Tibet independence” and “East Turkistan independence” were of less concern to the Chinese government. During this period, mainland China aimed to push for political agreement on the

basis of economic integration. A military mechanism of mutual trust was proposed by the 2010 white paper to further reduce military tensions and promote stability in the Taiwan Strait.

3.2 Defense Policy From 2012 to 2016

Xi Jinping in 2012 rose to power in China and proposed the “Chinese Dream” which incorporates achieving national unification as one of the ultimate goals. During this period, mainland China published 2 defense white papers - *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces*⁷ and *China’s Military Strategy*.⁸

3.2.1 Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces

Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces is the first defense white paper that has a specific topic. The white paper illuminated the principles of how China’s armed forces were to be employed in a diversified manner in light of the security situation at the time. It also unveiled the size and other details of the PLA.

In terms of the Taiwan issue, the white paper noted that “the cross-Strait relations were sustaining a momentum of peaceful development” (2013). The separatist forces in Taiwan and their activities were regarded as the primary threat and obstacle to the further development of healthy cross-strait relations. The separatist power of “Taiwanese independence” was listed alongside other issues

⁷ 中国武装力量的多样化运用 [The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2013-04/16/content_2618550.htm

⁸ 中国的军事战略 [China’s Military Strategy]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2015-05/26/content_2868988.htm

that were considered threats to China's territorial integrity and national security in the analysis of security situation at the time. Other threats included the dispute of the Diaoyu Islands with Japan, maritime disputes with neighboring countries in the South China sea, natural disasters, public security incidents and others.

The white paper did not specify a method to cope with the separatist forces in Taiwan, but sought to address the issue under a grand principle of safeguarding China's national sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. According to the white paper, China's armed forces would (2013):

“Unswervingly implement the military strategy of active defense, guard against and resist aggression, contain separatist forces, safeguard border, coastal and territorial air security, and protect national maritime rights and interests and national security interests in outer space and cyber space.”⁹

The white paper delivered a message that the Taiwanese separatist power was among the many threats to China's national security and sovereignty, and it would be countered resolutely by the diversified employment of China's armed forces. The fundamental mission for the China's armed forces is to strengthen national defense, ward off foreign intrusion, and defend the motherland. China's armed forces shall be prepared to respond to any provocative activities that jeopardize national sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. The two sides at the time were still maintaining a close relationship with growing economic and cultural

⁹ 中国武装力量的多样化运用 [Diversified employment of China's armed forces]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2013-04/16/content_2618550.htm

communication. Although “Taiwanese independence” separatist forces and sentiment remained on the island, they did not gain momentum and thus mainland China was still inclined to achieving unification by peaceful means.

3.2.2 China’s Military Strategy

China’s Military Strategy reiterated that China firmly adheres to “an independent foreign policy of peace” and “a national defense policy of defensive nature” (2015). The white paper dedicated more length than the 2013 paper to addressing threats posed by separatist forces, especially Taiwanese independence (2015):

“The Taiwan issue bears on China’s unification and long-term development, and unification is an inevitable trend in the course of national rejuvenation. In recent years, cross-Taiwan Straits relations have sustained a sound momentum of peaceful development, but the root cause of instability has not yet been removed, and the “Taiwan independence” separatist forces and their activities are still the biggest threat to the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations. Further, China faces a formidable task to maintain political security and social stability. Separatist forces for “East Turkistan independence” and “Tibet independence” have inflicted serious damage, particularly with escalating violent terrorist activities by “East Turkistan independence” forces. Besides, anti-China forces have never given up their attempt to instigate a “color revolution” in this country. Consequently, China faces more challenges in terms of national security and social stability.”¹⁰

¹⁰ *中国的军事战略* [China’s military strategy]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2015-05/26/content_2868988.htm

Compared with the 2013 white paper, *China's Military Strategy* spent more length on territorial integrity in the analysis of national security situation. Rather than list separatist threats alongside with other threats at equal length, the 2015 white paper expounded on the separatist threats including “Taiwan independence”, “Tibet independence”, and “East Turkistan independence.” The white paper reiterated that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan have been maintaining healthy and friendly relationship, but cross-Strait relations were still being undermined by separatist forces of “Taiwan independence” and their activities. Mainland China’s concern for cross-Strait relations recurred mainly as the result of the 2014 Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan which was aimed at obstructing the enforcement of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement.

Moreover, the white paper also mentioned the “color revolution” which was orchestrated by the separatist power of “East Turkistan independence”. Against the backdrop of a security situation complicated by insidious separatist threats, the white paper stipulated that the PLA shall conduct a wide array of missions including but not limited to responding to emergent security incident, safeguarding national unification, participating in regional and international security cooperation.

3.2.3 Summary

Mainland China faces more complicated internal challenges to its national unity and territorial integrity during this period. Separatist power in Taiwan, though it still undermined China’s security interests, was no longer a major concern for China’s defense policy. The activities of the “East Turkistan independence”

power have troubled China and led it to pay more attention to its Northwestern territory.

3.3 Defense Policy From 2016 to 2020

Since 2016 Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party has served as Taiwan's President. Her repudiation of the 1992 Consensus caused the Chinese government to sever formal communication across the Strait and take economic retaliation such as imposing restriction of tourists to Taiwan (Chen & Cohen, 2019). During this period, mainland China released only one defense white paper – *China's National Defense in the New Era*.¹¹ To better understand Xi's Taiwan policy, the author also refers to two important speeches by Xi, one at the 19th National Congress of CPC,¹² and the other on the 40th anniversary of the *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan*.

3.3.1 Xi's 2017 Speech at the 19th National Congress of CPC

The speech includes thirteen chapters covering the achievements over the past five years, existing issues and problems, and grand plans for the future. Xi (2017) pointed out in the second chapter that the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and set forth fourteen fundamental strategies of China's socialist construction in the new era. Among the fourteen strategies, one is dedicated to achieving national unification and unity. According

¹¹ 新时代的中国国防 [China's national defense in the new era].

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-07/24/content_5414325.htm

¹² 习近平：决胜全面建成小康社会 夺取新时代中国特色社会主义伟大胜利——在中国共产党第十九次全国代表大会上的报告 [Report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China] http://www.gov.cn/zhuanti/2017-10/27/content_5234876.htm

to this chapter, the principle of “one China” would be unwaveringly upheld in any circumstances, and the “one country, two systems” framework which has fostered the prosperity of Hong Kong and Macao and would be a viable and ideal solution to accomplishing unification with Taiwan.

Xi (2017) elaborated on the national unification issue in the eleventh chapter titled “stick to ‘one country, two systems’ and push for national unification.” The first half of the chapter affirmed that the implementation of the “one country, two systems” framework in Hong Kong and Macao has been a success. The framework has preserved the institutions in Hong Kong and Macao and allowed for sustainable and stable development of the two regions. The second half turned to Taiwan and argued that resolving the Taiwan issue and achieving complete national unification are the fundamental interest of the Chinese nation. The endorsement of the 1992 Consensus has laid a solid foundation for dialogues between the two sides and thus is integral to the healthy development of cross-strait relations. Based on the consensus, the “one country, two systems” framework is to be applied to Taiwan under which people on the island would be offered the same benefits as their counterparts on the mainland. On the contrary, those who reject the principle of “one China” and continue to pursue formal independence and separation from the mainland shall not be tolerated. Xi (2017) pledged that the Chinese government would never allow any individual, any organization, or any political organization to separate any territory of China at any time or in any form.

3.3.2 Xi's 2019 Speech on Taiwan Unification¹³

Xi (2019) recalled at the opening of his speech the colonial history of Taiwan and the progress that has been achieved in cross-Strait relations. He emphasized the inseparable ties between the unification with Taiwan and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and repeatedly stressed that unification is an irresistible trend of history. The speech also delivered other important messages regarding the Taiwan issue directly or indirectly.

First, the principle of “one China” should never be breached. Taiwan is and will always be an integral part of China. Both mainland China and Taiwan belong to “one China.” Both sides shall acknowledge and adhere to the 1992 Consensus.

Second, the “one country, two systems” framework is a feasible solution to settling disputes and peaceful unification is an ideal outcome. The differences in political systems are the root of the Taiwan issue, but should never constitute an excuse to reject unification. The political, ideological, and cultural differences can be addressed by the “one country, two systems” framework, which has worked well on Hong Kong and Macao and ensured their prosperity for the last twenty years.

Third, people living on both sides of the Taiwan strait are homogeneous. Chinese people on the mainland will always be ready to help and support “Chinese people on the Taiwan Island” who will enjoy further economic and cultural prosperity

¹³ 习近平：为实现中华民族伟大复兴 推进祖国和平统一而共同奋斗——在《告台湾同胞书》发表40周年纪念会上的讲话 [Speech in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of Message to Compatriots in Taiwan]. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-01/02/content_5354223.htm

under the principle of “one China.”

Fourth, Chinese do not fight Chinese. But if people residing on the Taiwan Island denied their Chinese identities, and even committed to separating Taiwan and pursuing *de jure* Taiwanese independence, the Chinese government would take every measure necessary to counter their efforts.

Fifth, the Taiwan issue is a domestic affair of China, and the Chinese government will never tolerate any intervention of foreign powers, especially the U.S. who has been supplying Taiwan with weapons for decades. The Chinese government makes no promise to renounce the use of force in Taiwan unification. Military actions would be taken, whenever necessary, in response to any attempt to separate Taiwan from the Chinese mainland.

Lastly, the speech did not set forth a clear deadline for Taiwan unification, but made it as an ultimate goal, one that would be achieved in tandem with the realization of the Chinese dream. In other words, although the Chinese government is resolute in addressing the separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence,” it is not pushing for an immediate unification with Taiwan.

3.3.3 China’s National Defense in the New Era

China’s National Defense in the New Era published in 2019 is a defense white paper that specifies China’s national defense policy in the “new era”, a concept put forward in 2017 in President Xi’s report to the 19th Party Congress.

In the section of international security situation, the white paper spent an entire

paragraph describing the threat posed by the separatist power of the DPP which refuses to endorse the 1992 Consensus. The white paper denounced the DPP for they have attempted to “sever the connection with the mainland in favor of gradual independence, push for *de jure* independence, intensify hostility and confrontation, and borrow the strength of foreign influence” (2019). Since the inauguration of Tsai Ing-wen, the Chinese government has suspended official communication of all levels with Taiwan, exhibiting resolute opposition against the DPP government. The separatist forces of “Taiwanese independence” and their campaigns have been regarded as the primary threat to the stability of the Taiwan Strait and the principal obstacle to national unification. By contrast, “Tibet independence” and “East Turkistan Independence” were only briefly mentioned by the white paper (2019).

“Resolutely safeguarding China’s sovereignty, security and development interests” is the “fundamental goal of China’s national defense in the new era” according to the 2019 white paper (2019). Apparently, the Taiwan Island ruled by the DPP has become a major concern for the Chinese government. To illuminate the goal of China’s national defense and the mission for the PLA, the white paper reiterated the stance of the Chinese government on “Taiwanese Independence” that it would not allow any individual, any organization, or any political organization to separate any territory of China at any time or in any form (2019). The PLA is ready to respond to and crack down any attempts by either separatist forces in Taiwan or foreign powers to separate Taiwan from the Chinese mainland at all costs.

3.3.4 Summary of Xi's Unification Policy

The threat of Taiwanese separatist power has come to the forefront since 2016 from mainland's perspective. The 2019 white paper paid close attention to "Taiwanese independence," and pledged that the PLA would take every means necessary to prevent "Taiwan's *de jure* independence" and defend territorial integrity. Although determined to prevent *de jure* Taiwanese independence, the Xi administration does not intend to push hard for an immediate unification with Taiwan, either. Instead, Xi has repeatedly stressed that the unification with Taiwan is the ultimate goal of China's socialist construction in the new era and it is a great trend of history that is irresistible.

3.4 Mainland China's Defense Policy Involving the Taiwan Issue

Based on analyses in previous sections, it can be concluded that China's defense policy involving Taiwan from 2008 to 2020 possess 4 characteristics below.

First, China's defense policy is defensive in nature. Each defense white paper has stressed the defensive nature of China's defense policy. China's national defense is aimed at safeguarding its own security interests, although its defense budget keeps growing at a fast pace.¹⁴

Second, a peaceful approach is preferred and prioritized to achieving unification with Taiwan. The white papers emphasized the paramount importance of the 1992 Consensus that it is the foundation for cross-Strait economic and political

¹⁴ CSIS China Power Project (2020). *What does China really spend on its military?*. <https://chinapower.csis.org/military-spending/>

dialogues. Also, the “one country, two systems” framework is proposed as a solution to the Taiwan issue. When Ma Ying-jeou was in power, mainland China’s 2010 white paper expressed an interest in building a military system of mutual trust with Taiwan to promote peace in the Taiwan Strait. After Tsai Ing-wen assumed presidency in 2016, China’s defense policy exhibited a resolute stance to crack down any separatist activities of the DPP government. Still, the possibility of resuming peaceful dialogues was not precluded, as the Chinese government has been persistently urging Tsai to recognize the 1992 Consensus and consider accepting the “one country, two systems” framework.

Third, the Chinese military does not target Taiwan as a whole, but only the “Taiwanese independence” power. The white papers have specified national unity and territorial integrity as critical security interests for mainland China. The Taiwan issue directly concerns China’s national unity and territorial integrity – security interests the Chinese military has pledged to safeguard. Since it is the activities of “Taiwanese independence” power that undermine these security interests, the PLA only target this group of people rather than those who uphold the “one China” principle in Taiwan.

Fourth, Chinese military modernization and force buildup are a deterrent to any attempt to seek *de jure* Taiwanese independence by promising not to renounce the use of force. Although Xi Jinping does not push hard for unification in the short term, he does inherit the legacy of Hu Jintao’s Taiwan policy to the prevention of *de jure* Taiwanese independence (Huang, 2017, p. 246). Constantly increasing defense budget has allowed mainland China to construct a modernized military far more powerful than the ROC Armed Forces in both absolute and relative terms (IISS, 2019).

IV. Taiwan's Defense Policy Under the Ma and Tsai

Administrations

4.1 Taiwan's National Defense at a Glance (2008-2020)

This section illuminates Taiwan's defense policy's general perception of mainland China's military and provides information about Taiwan's defense budget and structure before diving into the analyses of Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administrations respectively.

4.1.1 Taiwan's Interpretation of China's Defense Policy

The previous chapter has examined mainland China's defense policy and paid close attention to how it addresses the Taiwan issue. The key features are summarized as follows.

- China's defense policy is defensive in nature.
- A peaceful approach to unification is prioritized.
- Only the separatist power of "Taiwanese independence" is the target of the PLA.
- The purpose of Chinese force buildup regarding the Taiwan issue is deterrence.

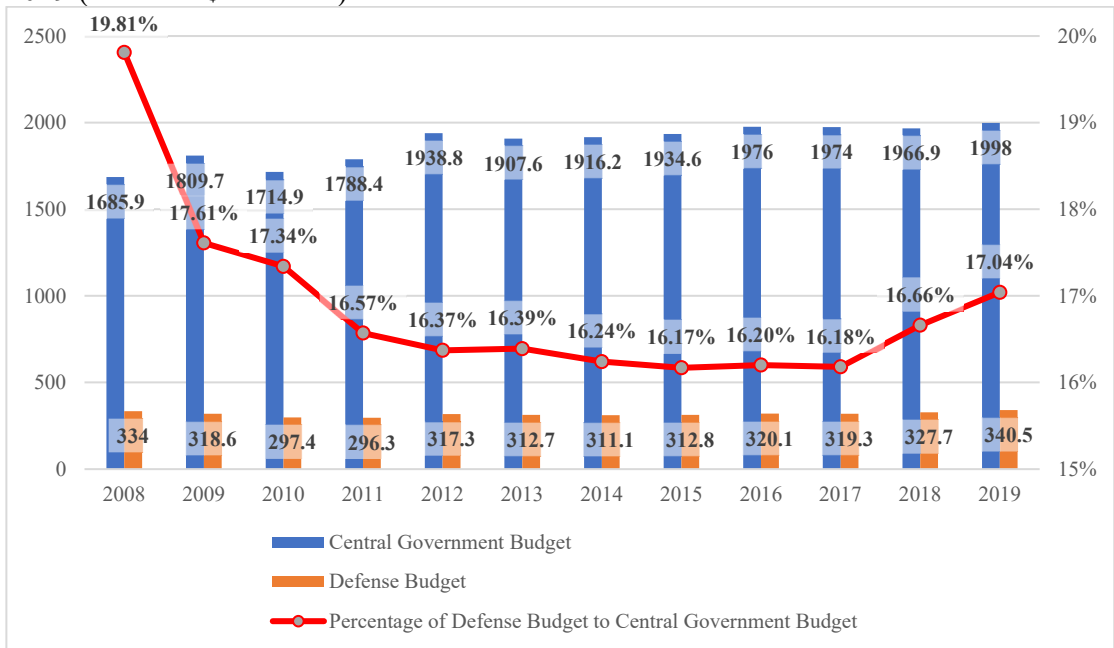
Taiwan's defense policy has its own interpretation of mainland China's defense policy which differs from what mainland has claimed. Defense policies under

both the Ma and the Tsai administrations regard mainland China as the greatest threat, even though cross-Strait relations were significantly improved during Ma's presidency. The starting point is that mainland China is reluctant to renounce the use of force. Although mainland China sticks to the claim that its force buildup is defensive in nature, Taiwan's defense policy considers it offensive in addressing cross-Strait relations as well as in asserting China in East and Southeast Asia. Taiwan's defense reports, with mainland's no promise of renouncing use of force in mind, alleged that the Chinese military is under construction toward the goal of quickly taking over the Taiwan Island. Also, Taiwan's defense reports also denounced mainland China for obstructing U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and the purpose is to further jeopardize cross-Strait military imbalance. Ultimately, Taiwan's security interests will be compromised in the face of a formidable and modernized Chinese military.

4.1.2 Taiwan's Defense Budget

Figure 1 below illustrates the trend of Taiwan's defense budget, central government budget, and the proportion of defense budget to central government budget from 2008 to 2019. In absolute terms, there was a significant decrease in defense budget from NT\$ 334 billion in 2008 to NT\$ 296.3 billion in 2011. The defense budget then returned to and maintained stable at a range between NT\$ 310 and 320 billion until the end of Ma's presidency. In relative terms, the proportion of defense budget to total government budget showed a constantly declining trend throughout Ma's presidency.

[Figure 2] Taiwan’s Defense Budget vis-à-vis Central Government Budget, 2008-2019 (Unit: NT\$ 1 billion)¹⁵



After Tsai took office, Taiwan’s defense budget started to rise in both absolute and relative terms. The defense budget is expected to continue to increase, as the 2019 defense report set forth 3 principles to plan for future defense budget (2019):

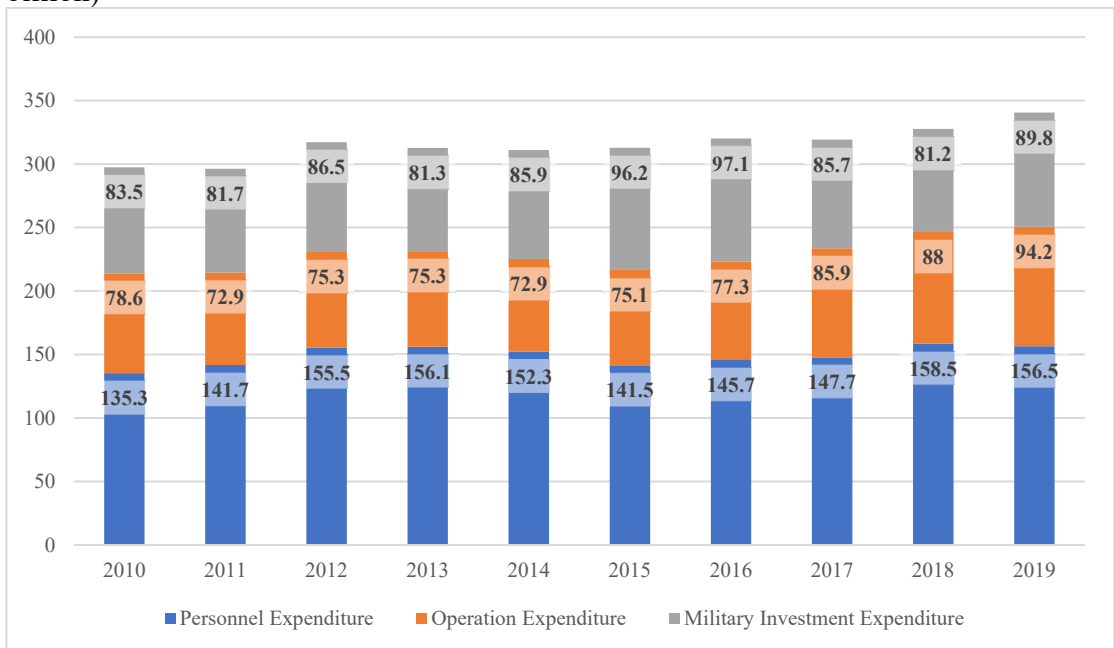
- “(1) Defense budget shall grow with GDP proportionally.
- (2) On principle, annual defense budget increase shall not go below 2% of that of previous fiscal year (FY) with a flexible cap of 1%.
- (3) If a major acquisition is pending, the MND shall demand an additional special budget from the government.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

¹⁶ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2019). *2019 National Defense Report*

Taiwan’s defense budget is allocated into three categories, i.e. personnel expenditure (salaries, funds, subsidies), operations expenditure (training and drill, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, living facilities), and military investment expenditure (arms acquisition, base infrastructures, R&D). Figure 2 shows the allocation of defense budget in the past decade. From 2010 to 2019, personnel expenditure increased by 15.7% and operation expenditure by 19.8%. Military investment expenditure remained stable.

[Figure 3] Allocation of Taiwan’s Defense Budget, 2010-2019 (Unit: NT\$ 1 billion)¹⁷



4.1.3 Structure of Taiwan National Defense

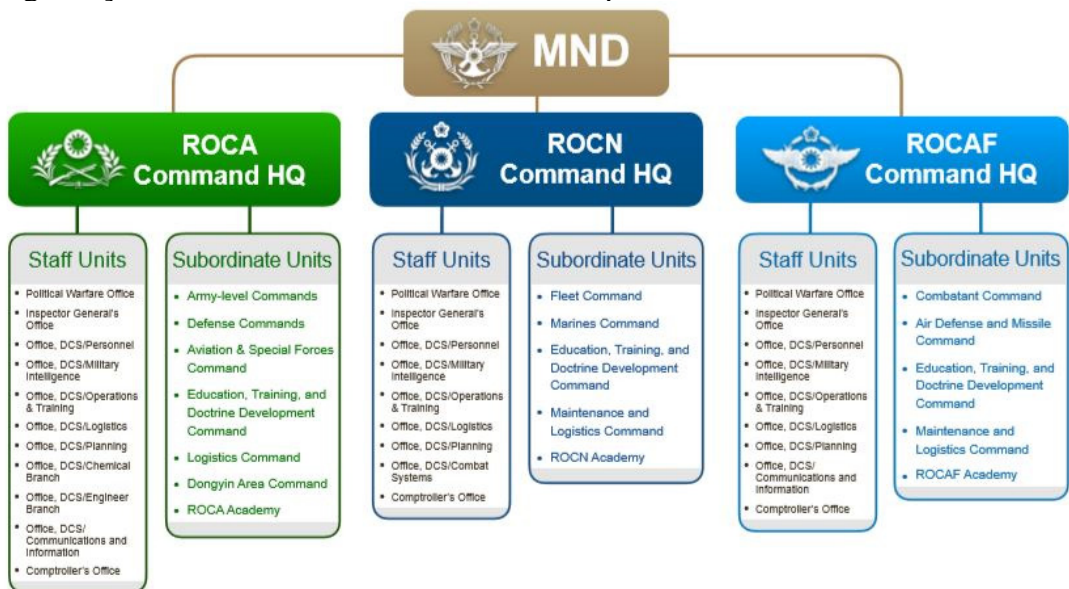
Taiwan’s defense organization currently consists of the President, the National

¹⁷ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

Security Council, the Executive Yuan, and the Ministry of National Defense.

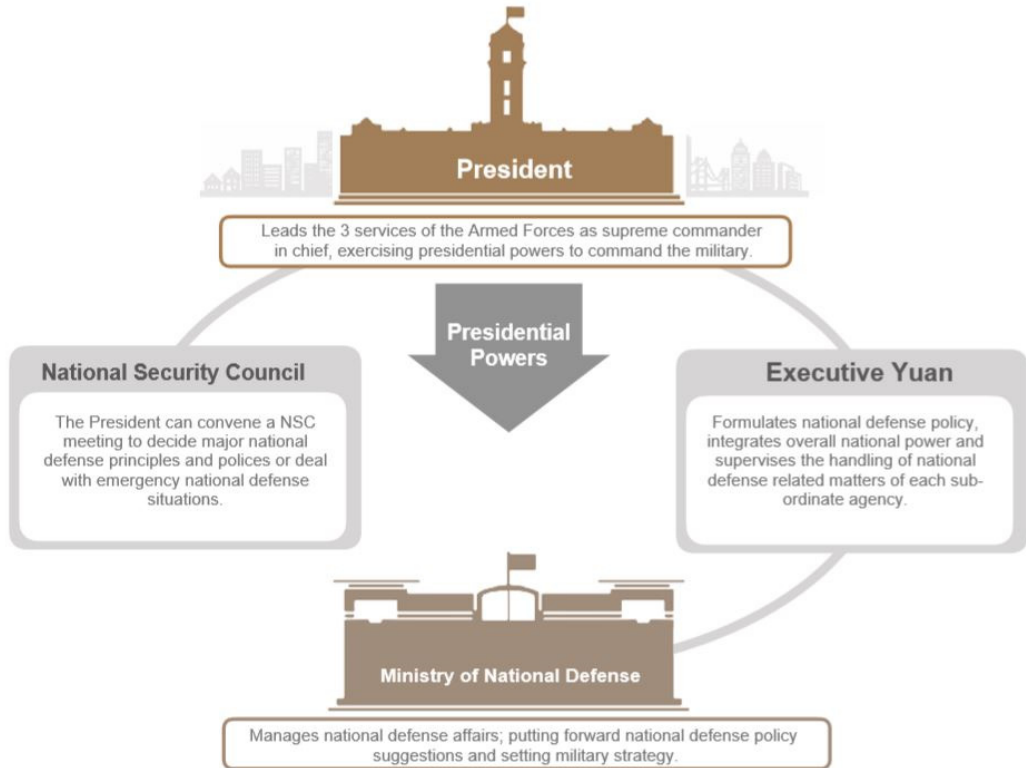
The President serves as the commander-in-chief of the ROC Armed Forces and exerts executive authority over the Ministry of National Defense. The National Security Council is convened by the President to consult defense policies. The Executive Yuan is in charge of the formation of defense policies, the consolidation of overall national power, and the supervision of subordinate agencies. The Ministry of National Defense is responsible for overall defense affairs, advising defense policies, and formulating military strategies. Figures 4 and 5 below illustrates service command headquarters under the MND and the overall structure of Taiwan national defense.

[Figure 4] Structure of Service Command Headquarters¹⁸



¹⁸ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

[Figure 5] National Defense Organization¹⁹



¹⁹ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China

4.2 Defense Policy Under the Ma Administration (2008-2016)

President Ma Ying-jeou served as the President of Taiwan from 2008 to 2016. Throughout his entire presidency, the Ministry of National Defense (MND), Taiwan released 4 defense reports, i.e. *2009 National Defense Report*, *2011 National Defense Report*, *2013 National Defense Report* and *2015 National Defense Report*. The MND also published *2009 Quadrennial Defense Review* and *2013 Quadrennial Defense Review* that followed the example of *Quadrennial Defense Reviews* by the U.S. Department of Defense to envision defense policy in the next 4 years.

The defense reports in general covered an extensive range of topics including global and regional security situation, security challenges to Taiwan, Taiwan's defense policies and strategies, and specific plans for the MND to implement and carry out these policies and strategies.

4.2.1 Security for Whom

The defense reports explicitly stated that Taiwan's national defense is aimed at safeguarding the security of the nation and its people.

4.2.2 Security for Which Values

The values that Taiwan's national defense pledged to safeguard are the security of Taiwan and its people. The security of Taiwan, to be more accurate, is the *de facto* independence of Taiwan, or the Republic of China, which is the *status quo*.

The Constitution, promulgated on January 1, 1947, has already declared that Taiwan is independent as the Republic of China which was initially founded by Sun Yat-sen in 1912. Although in 1971 mainland China replaced Taiwan to be the legitimate representative of “China” in the United Nation and continued to gain clout in the international community, the fact that the Republic of China (Taiwan) is independent from the People’s Republic of China remained unchanged. The Taiwanese government still functions and devises policies under the Constitution. Taiwan’s defense policy is formulated in pursuant to the Article 137 of the Constitution, “the national defense of the Republic of China shall have as its objective the safeguarding of national security and the preservation of world peace.”²⁰ Also, Taiwan’s defense reports often use the term “our nation” to denote Taiwan. Since Taiwan’s defense policy is formulated in accordance with the 1947 Constitution, the term “nation” that frequently appears in the defense reports in essence refers to the Republic of China, the *de facto* independence of which is declared and endorsed by the Constitution. In practice, Ma Ying-jeou during his presidency upheld the principles of the Constitution, and put forward a “three Nos” principle of “no unification, no independence, and no use of force” to endorse the *status quo* (Matsuda, 2015, p.8).

Another important value is the security of Taiwanese people. This value was not brought to the front until the 2011 report stated that Taiwan’s national defense is aimed at safeguarding the security of Taiwan and its people (MND, 2011). Subsequent reports under the Ma administration all followed this statement. The security of Taiwanese people, by analyzing the defense reports, specifically refers

²⁰ Laws & Regulations Database of the Republic of China. *The Constitution of the Republic of China*. Retrieved at <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=A0000001>

to their health and property safety. The defense reports all shed light on climate changes in the analysis of non-traditional security challenges and suggested that Taiwan is vulnerable to the impact of climate changes. It is natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes – rather than the attacks of the PLA – that are responsible for the injuries, deaths, and property damage of Taiwanese people. The well-being and property of Taiwanese people, therefore, are an important value that Taiwan’s national defense is to safeguard.

4.2.3 From What Threats

Regarding the security challenges to Taiwan, the defense reports during the first term of Ma’s presidency mainly focused on traditional security challenges especially the threat of mainland China. The defense reports during Ma’s second term paid more attention to non-traditional security challenges. Based on these documents, Security challenges to Taiwan during the Ma administration included the threat of mainland China, natural disasters, constrained defense resources, and maritime disputes.

The Threat of Mainland China

Since the U.S. pivoted to acknowledge the legitimacy of the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan’s representation in international affairs and its status in the international society have been increasingly compromised and waning owing to mainland China’s growing power and influence. Mainland China has been regarded as the primary threat to Taiwan’s national security, as it never promised to renounce the use of force to achieve unification. Mainland China’s threat to Taiwan’s security interests, however, cannot be simply translated into the potential to conduct military operations against Taiwan. Its threat to Taiwan is

multifaceted, however.

First and foremost, the rapid expansion of China's military strength has posed a direct threat to Taiwan's security interests. China has been pursuing military reform under the "three-step" guideline and expect to achieve informatization and mechanization of the PLA by 2020. Taiwan's defense policy was concerned that with defense budget at a high growth rate, China would be able to complete the construction of a modernized, comprehensive and formidable force to enable military operations against Taiwan by 2020 (MND, 2013, p.56). Moreover, the 2015 defense report pointed out that the PLA military exercises in the Taiwan Strait are the evidence that the PLA, as of 2015, was "capable of conducting joint military coercion, joint blockades, and joint strike operations" (MND, p. 65).

From Taiwan's perspective, mainland China's military preparedness towards the island, in addition to strengthening its own military force, included other two aspects namely to widen the imbalance of military strength between the two sides and to develop "Anti-Access/Area Denial" capabilities. These two aspects both took into consideration the role of the U.S. in cross-Strait military balance.

For one thing, China has been working to widen the military imbalance through increasing the quality and quantity of PLA military strength while obstructing the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. China continued to enhance the PLA's capabilities through pouring large amounts of investment in the R&D of such novel weapons as long-range anti-ship missiles for the PLA Navy, new generation fighters for the PLA Air Force and long-range missiles for the PLA Second Artillery.

The U.S. arms sales to Taiwan has been considered the main impediment to the

healthy development of cross-Strait relations. China has been putting pressure on the U.S. and urging it to gradually reduce and terminate arms sales to Taiwan by stressing for multiple times the three communiqués signed by the two parties. The PLA would conduct military exercises in the Taiwan Strait as a protest when Taiwan conducted arms procurement from the U.S. (MND, 2009, p. 61). Taiwan regards mainland China's such diplomatic move as an attempt to hinder the upgrade and enhancement of Taiwan's defense capabilities, given that the bulk of Taiwan's arms import comes from the U.S.

For another, China strived to enhance "Anti-Access/Area Denial" capabilities due to the belief that intervention of foreign powers, especially the U.S., would be the greatest threat when conducting military operations against Taiwan. Mainland China has developed and deployed weapons of deterring purpose including tactical ballistic missiles along the Southeastern coast, and at the same time carried out joint military exercises to bolster its preparedness against foreign intervention in the event that it resorted to use force against Taiwan. Mainland China has conducted multiple joint military exercises of Army, Navy, and Second Artillery based on a "red vs. blue" simulation model. Through curbing the U.S. role in cross-Strait relations China seeks to turn the current deterrence dynamic into a compellence one.

Second, China's military cyber capabilities have been putting Taiwan's information security at stake. The 2013 defense report acknowledged that cyberspace has become an important battlefield in modern warfare with the maturing of information and communication technology (MND, p.70). The 2015 defense report asserted that the PLA has established cyberwarfare units – large and specialized organizations – that are able to "infiltrate a target and remained

undetected for 1,700 days” (MND, p.64). China was alleged to have adopted a variety of cyber infiltration measures including social network engineering, remote infiltration, virus/malware infections, theft, and surveillance to conduct cyber invasions. Such cyber capabilities have enabled the PLA to steal confidential information in peacetime and quickly paralyze Taiwan’s military control and command system in wartime, ultimately jeopardizing Taiwan’s security interests.

Third, China has enhanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Through the construction and completion of a multi-dimensional ISR network, China has “acquired all-time surveillance capabilities in areas to the west of the first island chain”, according to the 2015 report (MND, p.60). Such capabilities would suffice in wartime to assist the PLA in carrying out long-range precision strike against high values targets such as airports and military infrastructure on the island, when mainland China deemed it necessary to apply military force to resolving the Taiwan issue and disputes in the South China Sea.

Fourth, China has been taking advantage of the relaxed cross-Strait relations and adopted the “three-warfare” strategy to weaken Taiwanese people’s awareness of threat. Cross-Strait relations have been significantly improved since 2008 thanks to the efforts by both sides. However, China attempted to seize this opportunity to reshape its image among the Taiwanese public and create advantageous conditions for political negotiations mainly through leveraging the expanded economic, trade, and cultural exchanges. By doing so, mainland China intended to undermine Taiwanese people’s threat awareness and eroding their will to resist the enemy’s invasion (MND, 2015, p.61).

Mainland China also incorporated the “three-warfare” strategy, namely public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare, into its unification policy. “Public opinion warfare” serves to raise national consciousness among mainland Chinese, gain support from the international society, and deter enemy forces” (MND, 2013, p.65). “Psychological warfare” is aimed at deterring and destroy the enemy’s will of resistance based on the two-hand strategy of peace and war (MND, 2013, p.65). “Legal warfare” helps to establish the legitimacy of China’s use of force in an attempt to win great victories with small battles or even without actual battles (2013, p.65). Through the adoption of the “three-warfare” strategy mainland China aims to induce internal faction on the island and impeded the unity of Taiwanese people.

Lastly, China has been endeavoring to weaken Taiwan’s international status and peel it away from the international society. For one thing, China continued to define the Taiwan issue as a domestic affair, so as to justify its potential use of force against Taiwan in the future. For another, China leveraged its international influence to restrict Taiwan’s representation in international affairs and institutions. The 2013 defense report, for instance, said that Taiwan had limited access to the global infectious disease prevention network due to its political status, making infectious disease prevention and control difficult on the island (MND, p.38).

Overall, mainland China remained the primary security challenge to Taiwan, despite the improvements in cross-Strait relations since 2008. The 2015 defense report vehemently argued that “mainland China’s ambition to take over Taiwan has never wavered despite the improvement of cross-Strait relations” (MND, p.48). China has been relentlessly asserting that Taiwan is vital to China’s

territorial integrity and national unity. Although mainland China's defense white papers stressed the defensive nature of its military buildup, Taiwan viewed the mainland's innovating and upgrading military technologies and strategies as preparations for unification by force in the future, if necessary. As long as China retained the option to use force against Taiwan, it would continue to be perceived as the primary threat to the island.

Natural Disaster

Climate changes have given rise to a variety of natural disasters. The geographic location has made Taiwan a frequent victim of recurrent typhoons and earthquakes as well as ensuing secondary disasters. According to the 2015 defense report, the threat posed by natural disasters to the security of Taiwanese people is "on par with that of war" (MND, p.68). Compared with mainland China, natural disasters are the actual threat to the health and property of Taiwanese people.

Constrained Defense Resources

Taiwan's national defense also faced internal challenges arising from limited financial and human resources which were closely intertwined.

The world economy was mired in the Financial Crisis and European Debt Crisis during Ma's presidency. Taiwan inevitably underwent an economic downturn, and consequently its defense budget was under higher pressure. But as mainland China persisted in military buildup, Taiwan was compelled to maintain arms procurement to try to preserve the military balance across the Strait.

Defense manpower supply has been challenged by the decreased proportion of

able-bodied individuals as the result of low birth rates in Taiwan. The insufficiency of defense manpower made it necessary for the ROC Armed Forces to adjust its structure accordingly and implement a voluntary military system to recruit volunteers with higher quality and commitment to longer terms of service. The implementation of such a volunteer system, however, became another burden on the defense budget, because it needed to use higher salary and better welfare as incentives to appeal to capable volunteers.

Island Disputes and Maritime Interests

The Diaoyutai Islands and islands in the South China Sea were regarded as the center of dispute. In particular, the 2015 report denounced China for it has “unilaterally established an air defense identification zone in East China Sea and carried out land reclamation as well as construction of naval and air force facilities in the South China Sea” (MND, p.67). Other countries were also aggressive in asserting their maritime rights and even dispatched law enforcement vessels to the disputed water. Consequential confrontations or conflicts were hindering Taiwan’s lawful fishing activities and threatening national security of Taiwan.

4.2.4 How Much Security

The degree of security pursued by Taiwan’s defense policy are mainly reflected through its goals. Taiwan’s defense policy throughout the entire Ma administration (2008-2016) adhered to the goals of war prevention, homeland defense, contingency response, conflict avoidance, and regional stability.

With regard to war prevention it is worth noting that all the defense reports shed

lights on the prospect of constructing military mechanism of mutual trust across the Strait. From mainland's perspective, the construction of such a mechanism would reduce the likelihood of military conflicts in the Taiwan Strait and gradually dispel Taiwan's concern over mainland's military buildup (Chen, 2009). Defense reports between Ma's two terms had different evaluations on this issue, however. The 2009 report expected to establish cross-Strait military mechanism of mutual trust step by step in parallel with the progressive relationship between the two sides (MND, 2009). More importantly, the premise of the mechanism, from Taiwan's point of view, should be the withdrawal of missiles targeting Taiwan by mainland China (Lee, 2011). The 2013 and 2015 defense reports, by contrast, displayed a more cautious stance than the previous two. They both contended that the conditions at the current stage did not suffice to construct the mechanism and instead the two sides should continue to prioritize economic communication (2013; 2015).

In terms of homeland defense, Taiwan's defense policy envisions the construction of a small but elite force capable of disaster relief in peacetime and combat in wartime. Defense reports during the Ma administration referred to such defense as "hard ROC." The original Chinese text of "hard ROC" can be literally translated into "as strong and tough as a rock," which indicates the defensive nature of Taiwan's defense policy and demonstrates the commitment to enabling Taiwanese people to live in peace and prosperity and allowing the nation to sustain economic development. In the event of foreign aggression, the ROC Armed Forces must "survive the first strike, avert the enemy's decapitation attacks, maneuver forces to counter strikes, and sustain all ongoing operations" (2015, p. 84). Moreover, the ROC Armed Forces during peacetime should be fully prepared to respond to contingencies such as terrorist attacks and natural

disasters.

The goals of Taiwan's defense policy are determined by a variety of factors. As the defense reports suggested, mainland China is the fundamental threat, but natural disasters are directly jeopardizing the well-being of Taiwanese people and the nation's economic development. Restricted defense financial and human resources make defense policy making more difficult. Since the size of the ROC Armed Forces will inevitably become smaller, it is necessary to transform it into an elite force that is competent to maintain credible deterrence, ward off aggression, and conduct disaster relief.

4.2.5 By What Means

A small yet elite "hard ROC" force needs to be built to meet Taiwan's defense requirements. The defense reports have set forth detailed guidelines on how to construct such an elite defense force. The guidelines can be further synthesized and concluded into 4 respects – military strategy of "resolute defense and credible deterrence", "innovative/asymmetric" capabilities, self-reliant national defense, and military reform.

"Resolute Defense and Credible Deterrence"

Apply the military strategy of "resolute defense and credible deterrence" to the construction of "hard ROC" defense. "Resolute defense" is an aim while "credible deterrence" is the means to reach the aim (MND, 2009). "Resolute defense" required the ROC Armed Forces to avoid decapitation and withstand the PLA's first round of strike during wartime and maneuver forces to organize a counterstrike, while "credible deterrence" refers to combining firepower, jointed

operations, and training to compel mainland China to think twice before taking military actions (2009).

The doctrine of “Innovation/Asymmetry”

Develop and reinforce “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities. “Innovation/asymmetry” first appeared in the 2011 defense report (MND, p.71). Later, the doctrine of developing “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities was formally endorsed by the *2013 Quadrennial Defense Review* under the second term of Ma’s presidency (MND, p.8). According to the 2015 defense report, “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities refer to (MND, p.256),

(1) “Establishing an ability to unleash decisive strikes on hostile military operational centers and key weaknesses. During the establishing process, it is expected to work together with existing and projected basic military power of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, using innovative strategies and tactics to strike at enemy weaknesses or suppress their strengths in order to counter enemy incursions and effectively achieve the missions set forth for decisive warfare.

(2) Asymmetric capability of the ROC Armed Forces refers to military capabilities other than those of the Army, Navy, or Air Force. Such capabilities are employed in a flexible fashion in order to maximize the country's relative advantages to suppress enemy's operational capabilities or activities, thus giving our forces more operational freedom and achieving victory for our military operations.”²¹

²¹ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2015). *2015 National Defense*

Such capabilities should be concealed during peacetime and be revealed during wartime to enable the ROC Armed Forces to flexibly combine conventional and non-conventional tactics and strategies to achieve the goal of homeland defense. The 2011 defense report acknowledged that Taiwan's military power has fallen behind the PLA in absolute terms of both manpower and equipment, especially ballistic missiles, and stated that "attention shall be drawn to the dire imbalance" (2011, p.68). Bearing in mind the military imbalance across the Strait Taiwan has been persistently developing indigenous military technologies, such as Hsiung Feng III which was developed to destroy naval-based targets, and procuring advanced weapon systems in order to enhance "innovative/asymmetric" capabilities which would be decisive in winning a war with a "behemoth enemy" (2015, p.88). During the second term of the Ma Administration, the priorities of developing "innovative/asymmetric" capabilities were to strengthen mine-laying capabilities by introducing air-drop sea mines, and to develop crucial items such as precision strike weapons, unmanned aerial systems, and electronic surveillance countermeasure system. These measures were prepared to detect and ward off aggression by the "behemoth enemy" – mainland China.

Self-Reliant Defense

Uphold the principle of self-reliant national defense and continue military buildup. An elite military force needs not only capable personnel, but advanced weapons and equipment. In accordance with the notion of maintaining "fundamental" capabilities and focusing on developing "innovative/asymmetric" capabilities, Taiwan adopted a dual-track method in acquiring advanced and

Report.

modernized weapons, namely domestic production and foreign procurement. Taiwan prioritized indigenous development and production of core military technologies and equipment, so as to enhance domestic military R&D capacities. Taiwan would only procure weapons that were proved impossible for domestic production (MND, 2015). The rationale behind the dual-track method is that Taiwan has realized that it should rely on itself rather than the U.S. for defense taking into account the fact that mainland China has been persistently hindering the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Through adopting the dual-track method, Taiwan aspired to accumulate indigenous military technologies, gradually reduced dependence on the U.S., and achieve defense self-reliance.

Military Reform

Military reform was underway to optimize the structure of the ROC Armed Forces, so as to allow for more reasonable allocation of defense resources and the construction of a small but elite force. Military reform during the Ma administration included mainly the Jingjin and Jingsui programs as well as the transition to a voluntary military system. The MND aimed at cutting down the number of military personnel and refining the structure of the ROC Armed Forces through the Jingjin and Jingsui programs to flatten command hierarchy, increase command speed and facilitate logistics support.

The Jingjin program was initially set forth in 2004 under the Chen administration. It ended in 2011 and was followed by the Jingsui program. The two successive programs managed to reduce the total number of military personnel from 385,000 in 2004 to 215,000 by the end of 2014 (MND, 2015). “The 6 headquarters – Army, Navy, Air Force, Combined Logistics, Reserve, and Military Police – were merged into 3 headquarters – Army, Navy, and Air Force,” which flattened

command hierarchy, increased command speed, and facilitate logistics support (MND, 2013, p.130). Downsizing military personnel and streamlining organizational structure enable the ROC Armed Force to increase efficiency of command and joint operation, fostering its transformation to a small but elite force.

Military reform also incorporates the transition to the voluntary military system. The purpose of the voluntary system is to recruit and cultivate able-bodied and motivated individuals with high qualities and strong commitment to long-term service. Under the old conscription system, capable personnel left the military after their terms of service ended. Only a few service members remained, making it difficult to accumulate military talents and competences. The benefits of the voluntary military system include improving the overall operational capacity of the ROC Armed Forces, allowing rational personnel deployment, and reducing social costs (MND, 2015, p.93). The system is critical to accomplishing the goal of building a small but elite defense force. As of 2015, the MND was working on a transitional conscription mechanism to ensure a smooth transition to the voluntary military system. The voluntary military system uses strong incentives to secure the source of volunteers such as raising salaries and allowances, providing housing solutions, and refining services for military families.

4.2.6 At What Costs

The construction of an elite defense force places more burden on the defense budget, so the MND must allocate its limited defense resources in a more optimal and reasonable manner.

Under the principle that the ROC Armed Forces will neither establish production capabilities nor conduct foreign procurement of weapons and equipment that can be supplied by domestic manufacturers, the MND has been encouraging private companies to participate in the R&D and production of weapons components. The MND has undertaken a resources-outsourcing approach to releasing non-sensitive, non-crucial, and low-priority capabilities to the private sector. By doing so, a stable supply chain of military products and relevant components can be secured. Furthermore, more job and market opportunities will be created in tandem and relevant industries can be vitalized.

4.2.7 In What Time Period

Taiwan's defense policy pursues long-term goals, envisioning a "hard ROC" elite force capable of safeguarding the security of Taiwan and its people. The ongoing military reform during the Ma administration was one that can be traced back to 1997 when the Jingshi program was conducted. The following programs – Jingjin and Jingsui – continued to optimize the structure of the ROC Armed Forces and gradually transform it into a small yet elite force. Furthermore, the defense reports set forth the concept of "self-reliant" national defense, demonstrating Taiwan's determination to develop indigenous military technologies and rely primarily on its own power to secure itself in the future, although Taiwan was still rather dependent on the U.S. arms sales during the time the reports were published.

4.2.8 Summary: Taiwan's Defense Policy Toward Mainland China Under the Ma Administration

Despite improved economic and cultural relations, Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma administration did not exhibit optimistic views in general on cross-Strait relations.

Mainland China's defense white papers contended that the country's defense policy is defensive in nature. With regards to the Taiwan issue, China's white papers since 2010 sent friendlier and more optimistic signals than before as previously discussed. Still, Taiwan's defense undertook a fairly skeptical posture. From Taiwan's perspective, the continuous and unrelenting military buildup by mainland China has compromised the military balance across the Strait; mainland's deployment of missiles along the Southeastern coast is perceived as military preparedness toward the island. Taiwan's defense reports also denounced mainland China's reluctance to promise not to use force against Taiwan (MND, 2009; MND, 2011; MND, 2013). In short, regardless of the strengthening of economic and cultural ties during Ma's presidency, mainland China remained the primary security challenge to Taiwan as long as it refused to renounce the use of force in the Taiwan issue. In addition to mainland China, other security challenges facing Taiwan during this period were maritime disputes, natural disasters, and constrained defense resources.

Taiwan's national defense was defensive in nature as its policy goals suggested. The degree of security that Taiwan's national defense pursued was influenced by the constantly growing military strength of mainland China and restricted by

defense resources. Also, Taiwan deemed it too early to establish the military mechanism of mutual trust with the mainland especially during Ma's second term. In general, Taiwan's national defense aimed at building a "hard ROC" force – a small but elite force capable of credible deterrence, resolute defense, and disaster relief. The military strategy of "resolute defense and credible deterrence," the doctrine of "innovation/asymmetry," the notion of self-reliant defense, and military reform are specific instruments for building the "hard ROC" defense.

4.3 Defense Policy Under the Tsai Administration (2016-2020)

Tsai Ing-wen, the leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), replaced Ma Ying-jeou in 2016 to serve as the new President of Taiwan. Her repudiation of the 1992 Consensus, the basis for cross-Strait communication, irritated the Chinese government and caused military tensions to mount in the Taiwan Strait.

During the first term of Tsai's presidency, the MND released three defense white papers, i.e. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*, *2017 National Defense Report*, and *2019 National Defense Report*. These reports probed into the security situation facing Taiwan, unpacked the threat of mainland China, articulated defense policies and military strategies, and set forth plans and guidelines for continuous defense reforms as previous reports did.

Compared with previous reports, the three defense reports show following characteristics in terms of contents arrangement:

First, defense reports during Tsai's tenure set themselves apart from previous reports by adding the evaluation of national security strategies of major actors in

the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific region as well as the analysis of the geographic significance of Taiwan.

Second, *2017 National Defense Report* and *2019 National Defense Report* both focused only on foreign threats in the investigation of Taiwan's security environment, and were more elaborate on unravelling mainland China's military strength and actions than preceding reports did. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*, illuminated both foreign military threats and other security challenges, such as natural disaster.

Last, it is also worth mentioning that the 2019 report distinguished itself from the other 2 reports by shifting the scope of analysis of security situation from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific in line with U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy under the Trump Administration.

4.3.1 Security for Whom

Taiwan national security policy is formulated to safeguard Taiwan and its people from threats, according to the three defense reports.

4.3.2 Security for Which Values

Taiwan's defense policy inherited the legacy of the Ma administration to preserve Taiwan's *de facto* independence and protect the well-being of its people. Additionally, *2019 National Defense Report* brought to the forefront the importance of democracy and liberty by declaring "Absolutely No Concession on Sovereignty; No Backing Away from Democracy and Freedom" (MND, p.51).

That Tsai rejects the 1992 Consensus does not necessarily mean that she seeks formal dependence, or *de facto* independence of Taiwan. Like her predecessor, Tsai aims at preserving the *status quo*, i.e. the *de facto* independence. For one thing, Tsai as the President shall abide by the Constitution that endorses the “Republic of China.” For another, although the DPP in the early 1990s did put forward an “Independent Clause” which advocated for *de facto* dependence, it suspended the clause by adding the “Resolution on Taiwan’s Future” into its charter in 1999. The Resolution requires the DPP to acknowledge “Republic of China” as the official name for Taiwan and the governing system, hence no need for Tsai to declare formal independence since Taiwan is already independent as the Republic of China founded in 1912 (Nachman & Hioe, 2020).

Democracy and freedom, in contrast to the authoritarian government across the Strait, are the values that Taiwan’s national defense pledges to defend. The Hong Kong crisis in 2019 further prompted Taiwan’s national defense to attach more importance of the value of democracy and freedom. Unification is part of the Chinese dream, but realizing the dream means a compromise on democracy and freedom from Taiwan’s perspective.

4.3.3 From What Threats

Mainland China has severed official communication with Taiwan at different levels since Tsai assumed office in 2016. Mainland China has also intensified military drills in the Taiwan Strait to put pressure on Taiwan since then. Mainland China’s military threat aside, natural disasters and constraints on defense resources still pose challenges to Taiwan’s security interests. In addition, a side effect of Tsai’s presidency is that it becomes more difficult for Taiwan to acquire

weapons and equipment from other countries. Cyber security and receding threat awareness among the Taiwanese public are also concerns for Taiwan's defense policy.

Mainland China's Military Threat

Taiwan's concern over China has been growing, as the latter persisted in researching and developing advanced weapons and equipment. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* still stuck to the belief that one of the core goals of mainland China's military buildup is to conduct military operations against Taiwan (MND, p. 20). *2019 National Defense Report* further divided China's military threat into 7 aspects (MND, p. 46).

(1) Enhanced ISR capabilities. China has been upgrading and perfecting its ISR network by deploying a variety of equipment including reconnaissance satellites, over-the-horizon radars, novel airborne early warning aircrafts, vessel monitoring and alert systems. The PLA's monitoring scope has been expanded to the second island chain. Enhanced ISR capabilities would provide firm support for PLA's maritime operation in the South China Sea, and more importantly, enable the PLA to launch long-range precision strike against military assets on the island.

(2) Integrated Cyber and Electronic Warfare platform. With the development and deployment of malware, electronic jamming sites, interference equipment, signals reconnaissance aircraft, and anti-radiation unmanned aerial vehicles, the PLA has become capable of compromising Taiwan's nodes of command, control, communications, cyberspace, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance as well as initiating cyberattacks during wartime to paralyze Taiwan's crucial

political, economic, and military facilities.

(3) Refined command and communications. The PLA has conducted multiple joint military exercises, so as to finetune the horizontal and vertical communications throughout its command and control mechanisms.

(4) Blockade operations. The PLA has acquired the ability to conduct both air and maritime blockade in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait through multiple sea control exercises and deployment of anti-ship missiles, air defense missiles, surface and underwater vessels.

(5) Strengthened firepower strikes. PLA's firepower has reached the entire main island of Taiwan. PLA Army along the Southeastern coast of China has been outfitted with long-distance multiple rocket launchers. The PLA Air Force and the PLA Navy have been equipped with air-to-ground missiles, anti-ship missiles, and cruise missiles. The PLA Rocket Force has displayed a multi-wave launching mode in multiple drills. With the assistance of advanced ISR capabilities, PLA has acquired the ability to strike with precision political, economic, and military HVTs on Taiwan's soil.

(6) Joint landing. The 2009 defense report found that PLA's amphibious equipment did not suffice to support joint landing operations. But after 10 years, *2019 National Defense Report* came to realize that the PLA has acquired the ability to seize offshore islands of Taiwan through the upgrade of weapons and equipment (MND). The PLA has been equipped with assault amphibious vehicles and landing platform docks to strengthen its joint landing capabilities.

(7) “Anti-Access/Area Denial” capabilities. DF-21D and DF-26 anti-ship ballistic missiles, combined with CJ-10 cruise missile, are able to cover a large area to the west of the second island chain. The DF-21D missile is designed to target the U.S. aircraft carrier, while the DF-26 missile is able to reach Guam. Furthermore, the PLA Navy and Air Force have carried out multiple joint maritime and air drills. In the event of armed conflicts in the Taiwan Strait, “Anti-Access/Area Denial” capabilities would effectively prevent the U.S. from intervening in time.

In addition to the seven aspects specified, the military imbalance across the Strait is also worth attention. As of 2019, the total Ground Force personnel of the mainland significantly outnumbered that of Taiwan – 1,020,000 for the mainland while 140,000 for Taiwan (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2019). Mainland China has also poured more resources into the R&D of advanced weapon systems – budget allocated for equipment started to account for the largest part of the aggregate defense budget in 2012.²² Due to the mainland’s constant military modernization, according to the *Military Balance 2019*, Taiwan’s weapons and equipment have fallen behind those of mainland China in terms of both quality and quantity (IISS, 2019). In particular, the PLA Navy so far has been commissioned two aircraft carriers, the Liaoning in 2012 and the Shandong in 2019. The PLA Navy has become the largest navy in the region with strong nuclear submarines and surface vessels, and is capable of conducting more assertive operations in the South China Sea and of course in the Taiwan Strait (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2019).

²² CSIS China Power Project (2020). *What does China really spend on its military?*. <https://chinapower.csis.org/military-spending/>

In sum, the PLA has further strengthened the ability to take over the Taiwan Island in a quick manner. For one thing, it is able to paralyze Taiwan's military assets and infrastructure through long-range precision attacks guided by advanced ISR. For another, it is able to delay or even deny U.S. intervention with weapons targeting the U.S. military. The *2019 Annual Report to Congress* acknowledged that the military superiority that Taiwan enjoyed in the past has been offset by mainland China's decades-long military modernization efforts (Office of the Secretary of Defense, p.83). Xi Jinping (2019), in the speech on the 40th anniversary of *Message to Compatriots in Taiwan*, has pledged to use military force if the Taiwanese government took further steps to declare formal independence.

Difficulty in Acquisition of Advanced Weapons

China has been leveraging its international influence to cripple Taiwan's international status. Confined by diplomatic and financial realities, Taiwan faces difficulties in procuring advanced weapons necessary to meet its defense needs. Taiwan at the moment is unable to build advanced and sophisticated weapon systems independently, and has to rely on import from foreign sources. The imbalance of military strength between Taiwan and mainland China would further deteriorate if Taiwan failed to develop indigenous capabilities of manufacturing key components of critical weapons and equipment. Once the U.S. arms sales were terminated, cross-Strait relations would shift to a compellence dynamic, placing Taiwan in a more disadvantageous position (Chen, Kastner & Reed, 2017).

Natural Disasters

2017 Quadrennial Defense Review acknowledged that "our country is located

within the western Pacific typhoon zone and Pacific Ring of Fire seismic zone, and is categorized as a highly hazardous area with frequent typhoons and earthquakes” (MND, p. 28). Natural disasters such as typhoon and earthquake are still the direct threat to the lives and property of Taiwanese people and domestic economic activities.

Constrained Defense Resources

Low birth rate is still a problem constraining human resources for defense. The slowdown of economic growth also places more pressure on government budget, as Taiwan needs to procure more modernized weapons to meet its security demand (MND, 2017). *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* pointed out the major issue at the moment was to “make the best of limited defense resources to strengthen comprehensive military capabilities and ensure sustainable force buildup and operational readiness” (MND, p. 26). Taiwan’s economic dependence on the mainland makes its economy vulnerable when tensions mount in the Strait (Albert, 2020). The Chinese government can commit retaliation such as reducing mainland Chinese tourists to Taiwan to put pressure on Taiwan’s economy (Chen & Cohen, 2019). The pressured economy then constrains Taiwan’s defense budget, which would hinder Taiwan’s efforts to keep up with mainland’s military buildup and to further support the voluntary military system.

Cyber Security

The rapid development of information communication technology has brought not only opportunities but risks. A leak of either military or civilian classified information may cause tremendous damage to economic activities, social stability, and national security. Hackers may locate vulnerabilities of Taiwan’s security network and implant backdoor program to steal sensitive information.

Receding Threat Awareness

In spite of a growing “Taiwanese” identification, the threat awareness among the Taiwanese public were waning – they were gradually becoming less conscious of the fact that “the two sides of the Strait remain military adversaries, and that the risk of war still exists,” warned by *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* (MND, p. 28). Mainland China continued to employ the “three-warfare” strategy to deliberately create a peaceful atmosphere and undermine Taiwanese people’s awareness of threat. Also, mainland China has bypassed the Taiwanese government and provided economic benefits to Taiwanese businesses and civil groups to marginalize the role of the DPP government in cross-Strait economic and cultural activities (Chen & Cohen, 2019).

4.3.4 How Much Security

The goals of defense policy during the Tsai administration has been adjusted to safeguarding national security, cultivating a professional military, implementing defense self-reliance, protecting the well-being of Taiwanese people, and strengthening regional stability (MND, 2017, p.55). The relentless military buildup of mainland China, the increasing difficulty in arms acquisition, and constrained defense resources have compelled the MND to adjust its policy objectives.

The MND set achieving self-reliant defense as a goal of Taiwan’s defense policy, having realized that indigenous arms R&D and production should be expedited in response to the increasing difficulty in arms acquisition (2017). In the long run, Taiwan must develop and possess critical military technologies, otherwise it is likely to be placed in an unfavorable position in the face of the rapidly growing

military power of mainland China. In particular, Xi has repeatedly stressed that national unification is an irresistible historical trend and shall be achieved in tandem with the realization of the Chinese dream. The setting of the goal of achieving self-reliant defense is forward-looking, although currently Taiwan's defense still relies on the U.S. and Trump's Taiwan policy seems beneficial to Taiwan (Gitter & Sutter, 2016; Copper, 2017). Taiwan, determined to shield the values of democracy and freedom during the Tsai administration, aspires to acquire indigenous military technologies and attain defense self-reliance, so as to prepare for security challenges in the future.

Another shift of policy objective is the construction of a professional military in line with the new military strategy – resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence – adopted by the MND since 2017 in response to the looming tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The ROC Armed Forces should be built as a professional, agile, and resilient force capable of carrying out the new military strategy (MND, 2017, p. 55).

4.3.5 By What Means

Taiwan's efforts to construct a professional military to reach its defense policy goals against mainland China mainly include the update of military strategy and guidelines, the upgrade of weapons and equipment, expediting the development of self-reliant defense, and military reform.

Update of Military Strategy and Guidelines

The military strategy during the Tsai administration has been modified as “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence” (MND, 2017, p. 56). “Resolute

defense” remains the same, indicating the resilience of the ROC Armed Forces. “Multi-domain deterrence”, compared with the previous “credible deterrence”, further divided Taiwan’s defense into multiple domains. “Multi-domain deterrence” endorses the doctrine of “innovation/asymmetry” which leverages large numbers of small yet agile weapons, such as sea mines, and the island’s geographic advantages to create huge obstacles in multiple domains for the invading enemy. The enemy must overcome the obstacles before it reaches the Taiwan Island. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* elaborated on multi-domain deterrence (MND, p.39):

“Resist the enemy on the other shore, attack the enemy on the sea, destroy the enemy in the littoral area, and annihilate the enemy on the beachhead, impose multiple interdictions and joint fire strikes to degrade enemy capabilities, disrupt its offensive and prevent the enemy from landing.”²³

The MND in 2019 set forth an Overall Defense Concept (ODC). The ODC consists of “force protection²⁴, decisive battle in littoral zone²⁵, and destruction of enemy at landing beach²⁶” (MND, 2019, p.68). The ODC was formulated as a

²³ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2017). *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*.

²⁴ Force Protection: Force protection is the key to exert the combat strength at the full length of the operation. The ROC Armed Forces may employ tactics of mobility, concealment, dispersion, deception, camouflage, escort, shrewdness, and misleading, as well as a swift and effective damage control, to contain the initial destruction caused by the enemies, and ensure the integrity of military power, so as to effectively support the follow-on operations.

²⁵ Decisive Battle in Littoral Zone: The ROC Armed Forces shall choose an area of water, which is within the coverage of their air assets and shore-based firepower, for a decisive campaign, so as to gain a partial superiority, and employ integrated capabilities of three services to destroy enemies’ vessels at sea.

²⁶ Destruction of Enemy at Landing Beach: The ROC Armed Forces may tap the occasions

guidance to the military strategy of “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence”, aspiring to effectively defend the island in the event of military aggression by the mainland.

The diagram below, taken from *2019 National Defense Report*, further illustrates the “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence” under the guidance of the ODC. The ODC divides Taiwan’s defense into two stages. At the first stage, the enemy’s power must be reduced, or at best be eliminated in littoral areas. Sea mines and large surface vessels are mainly employed at this stage. If the enemy manages to break through, further approaches the island, and makes attempts at landing, the ROC Armed Forces will strive to destroy enemy’s vessels with precision missile strikes and to annihilate the enemy at beach areas through joint operations.

during enemies’ landing and maneuvering operations onshore, destruct them at berthing, landing beach, and coastal areas by integrating forces, firepower, and prepositioned barriers of three services, and give them no places to set foot on

[Figure 6] Overall Defense Concept and “Resolute Defense and Multi-Domain Deterrence”²⁷



The main purpose of the ODC is to deploy large amounts of inexpensive weapons that are able to avoid complete destruction by enemy’s early strike and to target invading naval and air assets, so as to “make an invasion from China prohibitively timely and costly” (Bell, 2020). Ideally, the ODC should suffice to deter mainland China from taking military actions against Taiwan. In the event that mainland China uses force to take over Taiwan, Taiwan’s defense guided by the ODC should be able to stall the PLA’s aggression and more importantly, buy time for the U.S. military to intervene.

Upgrade of Weapons and Equipment

Taiwan shall continue force buildup and facilitate arms acquisition. 2017

²⁷ Source: Ministry of National Defense, Taiwan

Quadrennial Defense Review stipulated that force buildup of ROC Armed Forces shall be fulfilled in a pragmatic manner – the MND will formulate practical plans of force buildup and allocate limited financial resources accordingly (p.33). The MND also has been finetuning processes of arms acquisition to secure stable supply chains of crucial weapons and equipment. Upholding the spirit of “pragmaticism,” ROC Armed Forces have built a comprehensive arsenal (MND, 2017, p.76):

- “Army: M60A3 Tank, AH-1W Attack Helicopter, AH-64E Attack Helicopter, UH-60M Utility Helicopter, and M998 Avenger Air Defense System.
- Navy: Keelung-class Guided Missile Destroyer, Kangding-class Guided Missile Frigate, Chiyang-class Guided Missile Frigate, Jianlong-class Submarine, Yongjing-class Minehunter, AAV7 (RAM/RS) Amphibious Assault Vehicle.
- Air Force: F-16 Fighter, Mirage 2000-5 Fighter, AWACS E-2K Airborne Early Warning Aircraft, EC225 Helicopter, C-130 Transport Aircraft, P-3C Anti-submarine Aircraft, Patriot Missile Defense System.”²⁸

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The MND also put forward specific plans to reinforce “innovative/asymmetric” capabilities of the ROC Armed Forces. Focuses of future arms acquisition will be precision strike weapons, high performance anti-armor missiles, portable shortrange air defense missiles, light, fast and multiple-purpose high performance warships, smart mines and fast minelayers, unmanned aerial vehicles for ISR purpose, and information, communications and electronic countermeasure

²⁸ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2017). *2017 National Defense Report*.

equipment (MND, 2017, p.87).

Promoting Defense Self-reliance

Tsai's government aims to promote defense self-reliance through fostering domestic defense industry. So far, Taiwan's military has developed a considerable number of indigenous weapons and equipment, including CM11 Tank, CM32/CM33 Armored Vehicle, Field Air Defense Phased Array Radar, Panshi Fast Combat Support Ship, Chengkung-class Guided Missile Frigate, Jinjiang-class Patrol Vessel, Tuojiang-class Corvette, Kuanghua VI-class Missile Motorboat, Albatross Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, Cardinal Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, AIDC F-CK-1 Chingkuo Fighter.

Yet, more efforts need to be expended in developing domestic defense industry which lays the foundation for defense self-reliance. The MND must combine military capacities and resources with those from the private sector, thereby reinvigorating defense industries, stimulating economic growth, and accomplishing the goal of indigenous arms production.

The MND has taken multiple specific measures to boost military-civil cooperation to bolster defense technological development and foster the growth of defense industries:

- Establish a defense technology development mechanism to incorporate multiple high-tech capacities from industries and academia to develop advanced defense technologies.
- Outsource forward-looking, potential-driven and research-worthy programs to civilian academic or scientific research institutions through academic

cooperation.

- Propose bills for the development of defense industries to encourage and finance domestic industries to join R&D in defense technologies.
- Improve interagency coordination and cooperation mechanisms to help transfer defense technologies to defense industries and generate add-on results for them.
- Create a security control mechanism to prevent theft or improper transfer of key R&D results.²⁹

The development of defense industries focuses on three areas, namely aerospace, shipbuilding, and information security. The MND began with a new indigenous Advanced Trainer Jet program and transferred matured technologies to the private sector with the purpose of securing a stable supply chain for the aerospace industry. The first prototype of the program came out on September 24, 2019 and the MND expected the production of a total number of 66 advanced trainer jets to be completed by 2026 (2019, p.107).

Regarding the shipbuilding industry, the MND endeavored to raise self-production rate of shipborne equipment and allowed key technologies to be rooted in the shipbuilding industry. From 2016 through 2019, the MND launched 7 shipbuilding programs successively for “indigenous submarine, amphibious transport dock, high-performance frigate, high-speed minelayer, new rescue vessel, Micro-class missile assault boat, and next generation guided-missile frigate” (2019, p.107).

²⁹ The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China. (2017). *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*.

The MND also worked closely with research institutions and relevant enterprises to upgrade the information security industry. The National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology has been outsourcing declassified military cyber security programs to interlink with domestic supply chain of cyber security industry. The MND has been advocating industrial and academic cooperation to upgrade the overall information security network.

Taiwan in June, 2019 enacted the National Defense Industry Development Act which is aimed at facilitating public-private cooperation on developing defense-related technologies. By strengthening military-civil connections, the MND aims to pool together R&D resources and capacities to gradually acquire the capability of indigenous arms production and at the same time vitalize the entire defense industry. The pressure on defense budget can be reduced, and in the long run, Taiwan's military buildup will not be hindered by the difficulty in arms acquisition as it develops the ability to research, develop, and produce weapons and equipment domestically.

Military Reform

Defense reform under the Tsai Administration is implemented through three aspects, namely adjusting organization and force structure, perfecting recruitment mechanism, and streamlining administrative procedures.

First, national defense organization and force structure has been further refined in accordance with changing security situation facing Taiwan and domestic resources allocation, and arms acquisition. The Information, Communications, and Electronic Force Command was established on July 1, 2017 with the purpose of integrating information, communications, and electronic capabilities of

Taiwan Army, Navy, and Air Force. It is an institution created to prevent possible cyberattacks by the PLA. The mission of the institutions in general is to secure command and control networks, ensure proper functioning of ISR systems, and to protect information security crucial to homeland security. In addition, the Air Defense Artillery Command and the Air Defense Missile Command were merged on September 1, 2017 into the ROCAF Air Defense and Missile Command to support joint air defense operations. Following a series of Jingshi, Jingjin, and Jingsui streamlining programs, the ROC Armed Forces keep refining its organization and force structure to meet new challenges.

Second, continue to optimize the recruitment mechanism to promote the voluntary military system. The MND has been conducting a variety of supporting measures including hosting advertising and promotional events, refurbishing military installations, revising selection processes, and refining military pay. It also encourages service members to continue further studies and has set up special programs to provide support for veterans. Up until 2019, the ROC regular forces have been mainly comprised of volunteer service members – the ratio of volunteers is 84.91% and the retention ratio is 75% (MND, p.123). Under the voluntary system, service members go through a 4-month training to obtain acquire basic combat and military occupational specialties (MOS) skills. They will be listed in a pool of reservists upon the completion of training and can be recalled to the military during wartime.

Third, keep streamlining administrative procedures to improve efficiency of day-to-day operations. This measure is guided by the principle of “being horizontally combined and vertically integrated with distinctive authorities and accountabilities” and is assisted by introducing advanced information

communication technologies and modern management concepts (MND, 2017, p.70).

In addition to the preparedness toward mainland China, Taiwan's defense policy seeks to reaching the goal of protecting the well-being of Taiwanese people through the enhancement of civilian protection cooperation. Taiwan's defense policy specified two other missions for the Armed Forces other than combat, namely securing legitimate civilian maritime activities, and disaster relief. The Navy and the Air Force shall secure the sea line of communication, escort Taiwanese fishing vessels in conducting rightful maritime activities, and assist in scientific maritime researches.

In terms of disaster relief, the MND founded an "Emergency Operation Center" to coordinate relief resources to conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Additionally, the MND has been working with civilian institutions to put together rescue and medical resources in an attempt to further strengthen disaster relief capabilities.

4.3.6 At What Costs

Compared with defense policy under the Ma administration, the defense reports during Tsai's tenure have delivered a stronger message that Taiwan will never yield in securing its *de facto* independence by setting forth the goal of self-reliant defense. The 2019 defense report also pledged to unswervingly defend the values democracy and liberty. Such a posture makes the situation in the Taiwan Strait more precarious and is likely to incur retaliation by mainland China.

Also, Taiwan's defense budget has been on a rise in both absolute and relative terms since Tsai took office in 2016. The increase of defense budget translates into the decrease of budget in other sectors.

4.3.7 In What Time Period

Taiwan's defense policy during Tsai's presidency continue to pursue long-term goals. Self-reliant defense, initially introduced during the Ma administration, is a good demonstration. The current Tsai administration, taking into consideration the uncertainty of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan in the long run, have further stressed the importance of defense self-reliance and implemented policies such as the National Defense Industry Development Act to bolster indigenous R&D capabilities of critical and advanced weapon systems and to gradually reduce Taiwan's military dependence on the U.S.

4.3.8 Summary: Taiwan's Defense Policy Toward Mainland China Under the Tsai Administration

President Tsai's denial of the 1992 Consensus and repudiation of "one country, two system" have infuriated the Chinese government. The direct consequence is a more aggressive posture displayed the mainland, whose fury takes on mainly two forms: economic retaliation and military drills in the Taiwan Strait. With regard to defense, the military power of mainland China remains the primary threat to Taiwan' security interests and such a threat grows stronger during the Tsai administration. The Tsai administration also faces constrained defense resources and natural disasters as the previous government did. Difficulty in arms acquisition, cyber security, and receding threat awareness among Taiwanese

civilians undermine Taiwan's security interests. To respond to the increasingly complex and precarious security situation,

Tsai's government tackles the challenges that undermine the security of Taiwan mainly through four sets of efforts: the update of military strategy and guidelines, the upgrade of weapons and equipment, promotion of defense self-reliance, military reform. Additionally, Taiwan's defense policy looks to the enhancement of civilian protection cooperation.

V. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings

Mainland China's defense policy is defensive in nature, and prioritizes addressing the Taiwan issue and achieving national unification through peaceful dialogues. Although reluctant to renounce the use of force, mainland China repeatedly assured that it would only apply military force to crashing attempts to pursue formal Taiwanese independence, which would constitute a deterrent the separatist power in Taiwan.

Taiwan's defense policy displays a different view on mainland's force buildup. Mainland's reluctance to promise not to use military means against Taiwan deeply concerns Taiwan's defense policy, leading it to consider mainland China as the primary threat to its security interests. In this context, defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administrations exhibited 6 characteristics as follows.

(1) "Innovation/asymmetry" has been a doctrine of great significance from the Ma administration through the Tsai administration. The doctrine reflects Taiwan's calculation of military imbalance across the Strait and its own military realities. The PLA is being built toward the direction that enables it to quickly take over the Taiwan Island. Long runways needed for fixed-wing aircrafts to take off can be destroyed by PLA's long-range precision strikes – the fighters may not have a chance to play a critical role in a combat with the PLA (Murray, 2008). U.S. military intervention can be stalled or denied by PLA's enhanced "Ani-Access/Area Denial" capabilities, and in light of the imbalance of military power, Taiwan must figure out a way to resist until foreign intervention arrives.

In this context, the doctrine of “innovation/asymmetry” was formulated and brought to the fore since Ma’s first term. The doctrine has been endorsed and upheld by the military strategy and the ODC during the Tsai administration.

(2) Military reform is underway throughout the period. The Jingjin and Jingsui programs, the transition to and promotion of the voluntary military system, and the ongoing military restructuring under the Tsai administration serve to reduce the number but raise the qualities of military personnel, to facilitate the efficiency of military command and communication, and to achieve functional optimization of the entire ROC Armed Forces.

(3) Defense policy under both administrations seeks to preserve the *status quo* of cross-Strait relations – Taiwan remains *de facto* independent as the Republic of China. The two presidents of opposing parties both try to preserve the *status quo*, although they diverge in the attitude toward the 1992 Consensus.

(4) Defense policy under neither administration projects the possibility of reaching political agreements with the mainland. Despite improved economic and cultural relations, defense policy under the Ma administration still held dear to the belief that the optimum conditions for a political agreement have not yet been reached in response to mainland China’s proposal of building a military mechanism of mutual trust. The Tsai Administration has taken a tougher stance – the president has already repudiated the 1992 Consensus which is the premise of cross-Strait dialogues, not to mention reaching political agreements.

(5) Efforts have been made to combine national defense with domestic industries to enhance self-reliant defense and foster domestic economy. The rationale

behind the efforts is to develop critical military technologies by pooling together public and private resources. At the same time, private companies and research institutions are granted the access to advanced yet non-sensitive technologies, thereby boosting their own production.

(6) Disaster relief has been a one of the core missions for the ROC Armed Forces throughout the two administrations. Typhoon and earthquakes visit Taiwan frequently and directly undermine the security of Taiwanese people and their property. Taiwan's defense policy has attached importance to disaster relief since 2011.

International and regional security situations keep changing constantly. In the face of growing military imbalance across the Strait, defense policy under the Tsai administration has been modified and refined accordingly.

(1) The values of democracy and freedom have been brought to the forefront since 2019. Tsai takes a different approach from her predecessor who was more inclined to maintain a friendly relationship with the mainland. She attached great importance to the values of democracy and freedom of Taiwan and has made numerous statements on both social media and public speeches endorsing these values. A Taiwan embracing the values of democracy and freedom is in sharp contrast with mainland China under authoritarian rule. As far as Tsai's concerned, accepting the "one country, two systems" framework could jeopardize the values of democracy and freedom.

(2) Defense self-reliance has been set as a policy goal. Defense reports have denounced mainland China for expending diplomatic efforts and exploiting

economic leverage to prevent other countries from supplying arms to Taiwan. The prospect of arms acquisition from foreign sources is bleak. In the long run, Taiwan must realize defense self-reliance in order to safeguard other security goals it pursues.

(3) Military strategy has been amended from “resolute defense and credible deterrence” to “resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence”. The Overall Defense Concept was formulated with the goal of compelling the enemy to consider an invasion unattainable. Taiwan under the Tsai administration must ramp up military preparedness to prevent the current deterrence dynamic from deteriorating into a compellence dynamic. Taiwan’s defense still relies on the U.S. intervention in the event of mainland China’s aggression, as its own military power is no match for the formidable PLA (Gitter & Sutter, 2016). The ultimate goal of the updated military strategy and the ODC, in essence, is to buy enough time for the U.S. military to intervene. The ODC expects to constitute an effective deterrent against the mainland by compelling it to realize that it is not likely to seize Taiwan quickly enough before the U.S. intervention arrives.

5.2 Policy Implications for Mainland China

Still, mainland China is perceived as the primary threat by Taiwan national defense, even during the period of economic rapprochement. Also, the values of democracy and liberty have been stressed since 2019, suggesting the belief held by Taiwan’s defense policy that reaching political agreement with the authoritarian Chinese mainland will compromise these values. The long-lasting democracy struggles in Hong Kong, where the “one country, two systems” framework is applied, gradually push Taiwan away.

Mainland China should bear in mind that unification with Taiwan can never be

achieved without the trust and support of its people. The study of Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma and Tsai administration has shown that regardless of the relationship between the two sides, mainland China is invariably regarded by Taiwan's defense policy as the primary threat unless it renounces the use of force. Although since 2016 the mainland has been expending efforts to bypass the DPP government and promote cooperation with Taiwanese business, it has more to do to recast its image among the Taiwanese public. To garner trust from Taiwanese people, under no circumstances should mainland China breach its promises of the "one country, two systems" principle. Instead, it should demonstrate sincerity as well as respect for the values of democracy and freedom through practices. Only in this way can the two sides of the Taiwan Strait find a common ground and reach further dialogues.

5.3 Limitations

This research studies Taiwan's defense policy under the Ma Ying-jeou and Tsai Ing-wen administrations. The paper first examines mainland how China's defense policy deals with the Taiwan issue, which is used as the background for the analysis of Taiwan's defense policy. But as the background and literature review point out, the U.S. has been playing a significant role in the shaping and evolution of cross-Strait relations and its tacit support for Taiwan has been affecting the latter's making of security policy. Therefore, future studies can shed more light on the U.S. factor to the formulation of Taiwan's defense policy as well as the triangular security relations among mainland China, the U.S. and Taiwan.

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초록

마잉주 정부와 차이잉원 정부는 대만과 중국 본토와의 관계를 다루는 방식에서 서로 상처됨을 알 수 있으나 방위정책에서는 모두 중국이 대만의 안보 이익에 일차적인 위협이 됨을 주장하고 있다. 양안관계 학자들은 92 공식을 둘러싼 정치 투쟁에 초점을 맞춰왔다. 현재까지 대만의 대중 방위정책에 대한 연구는 제한적 관심을 받아 왔다. 본 논문은 중국-대만에서 발표한 방위 보고서, 대만 문제에 대한 중국 지도자들의 연설, 제 3 자 군사 보고서 등 자료를 근거하여 2008 년부터 대만의 방위정책 수립의 근거를 밝히려고 한다. 대만은 중국의 방위정책과 무력 증강에 대해 비관적인 해석을 갖고 있는 것으로 파악된다. 대만의 입장에서 보면 중국의 방위정책은 양안관계를 다루는 데 있어 사실상 공격적이며 이는 궁극적으로는 현상을 타파하고 대만의 안보 이익을 저해할 것이다. 이러한 주장을 고수함에 따라 마잉주 정부와 차이잉원 정부 시기의 대만의 방위정책은 군사전략과 지침의 개선, 군사개혁 추진, 자주방위 발전 등을 통해 현상 유지를 추구하는 것으로서 적의 침공을 저지하고 미군의 개입 전까지 지탱할 수 있는 군대를 건설하는 것이었다.

키워드: 방위정책; 군사전략; 마잉주; 차이잉원; 양안관계.

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