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# New China Defense Policy Focuses Threat on Taiwan

By Benjamin Sand

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China has threatened to crush Taiwan at any cost if the island declares independence. The belligerent rhetoric is at the center of a new national defense policy.

The new 85-page defense policy was released Monday and it reinforced Beijing's hard-line stance against Taiwan's independence movement.

The lengthy white paper highlights a series of regional security concerns, including the nuclear arms standoff on the Korean peninsula and a more aggressive Japanese defense policy. But the focus is on silencing Taiwanese calls for independence.

The paper describes cross-strait relations as grim and says the Chinese army has a sacred responsibility to crush Taiwan if it declares independence. The paper also blasts U.S. policy toward Taiwan, especially its weapons sales to Taipei.

Professor Arthur Ding follows cross-strait relations for the National Chengchi University in Taiwan. He says Beijing's tough rhetoric is in part a reaction to a small group of Chinese hard-liners pushing for a confrontation with Taipei.

"The Chinese government is doing something proactively to diffuse growing pressure in Beijing," he said.

He says the new policy shows ultra-nationalists that Beijing will not allow Taiwan to move further away from mainland China.

The two split politically in 1949 after a civil war, when the defeated Kuomintang fled to Taiwan.

Beijing considers the island its territory and has repeatedly threatened to invade if Taipei declares formal independence.

Taiwanese President Chen Shui Bian's political party favors independence figure and he wants to revise the island's constitution.

Beijing is adopting a new anti-secession law, seen by many in Taiwan as an attempt to create a legal pretext for an invasion.

Mr. Ding says hard-liners on both sides of the Taiwan Strait appear bent on a confrontation. In that context, he says Beijing's new defense policy also may be an attempt to force Washington to rein in Taiwan's pro-independence movement.

"If the Chinese government, at this stage, proposes the anti-secession law, the Chinese government has a bargaining chip with the U.S. government and they can pressure the U.S. government to handle the Taiwan issue," he said.

Under a 1979 treaty the United States is obligated to protect Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack.

But Washington also opposes Taiwanese independence and has called on both sides to avoid unilateral or aggressive policy changes.

Beijing's white paper also says the defense budget will rise 11 percent in the coming year, to nearly \$26 billion. While the number of troops will fall, the extra funds will buy high-technology equipment. That budget, however, does not include many weapons systems and other military spending. The United States and other governments estimate China's full defense spending may be four times as high as the official budget.

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China has officially protested Japan's decision to allow Taiwan's former leader to visit. Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei summoned Japan's Ambassador to China Koreshige Anami Wednesday. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao told reporters in Beijing Thursday that the subject was former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui's visit to Japan. Mr. Liu says China expressed its strongest dissatisfaction and strongest protest to Japan. China...

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Beijing has condemned a new U.S. plan to replace its civilian defense contractors in Taiwan with active duty military personnel. Washington's plan reverses a 25-year practice of avoiding a direct U.S. military presence in Taiwan. The Chinese Foreign Ministry says the U.S. policy threatens to destabilize cross-strait relations. Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao criticized Washington's plans in a news briefing Tuesday. Mr. Liu said the U.S...

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Taiwan's Defense Ministry says China's military buildup and modernization is aimed directly at the island. A Taiwanese Defense Ministry spokesman made the comments Tuesday one

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By  
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