**Why Must a War with China be Avoided?**

**There is one very good reason to avoid war with China.**

Studies by Rand Corporation and our specialists in the Pentagon, who simulate with computer wargames demonstate that victory with an opponent like Chine, 4 million square miles and armed with nuclear weapons will not make us number 1. This type of war is unwinnable largely due to the cost of long distance logistics. Against small foes, we have wasted a lot of money and people, and a war with a major adversary is unthinkable.

It is apparent that a war with China will be really expensive, and we may not win. If the war games are accurate, we will not win.

We already know from Vietnam, Korea and Middle Eastern conflicts, that long distant war are not winnable unless there are unlimited resources, both of manpower and finances.

War with a long distant major adversary, which has long range rockets and nuclear weapons, should change our goals and objectives to destroy China.

Despite our historical negative attitudes toward China, we must figure out how to live with China. Today, unlike years ago, both countries face enormous problems. The virus threat, the threat of climate change, the exhaustion of available natural resources and many man-made problems require cooperation if anyone is going to be around in a century.

The world, as we know it, may last a little longer, if both China and America can cooperate for the benefit of both parties.

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**Pentagon, Chinese analysts agree US can’t win in Taiwan Strait**

**US mulls ‘scorched earth’ strategy for Taiwan instead of defense**

**By DAVID P. GOLDMAN, DECEMBER 6, 2022**

China has greatly expanded its satellite surveillance of the Western Pacific in recent years. Image: Anadolu Agency

China’s satellite coverage in the Western Pacific has doubled since 2018, the Pentagon reported last week in its annual assessment of the Chinese military. That gives China the ability to detect American surface ships with an array of sensors that can guide its 2,000 land-based missiles to moving targets, including US aircraft carriers.

The Defense Department’s November 29 report “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China” reflects a grimly realistic rethinking of China’s military capacity in its home theater.

China hawk Elbridge Colby, a prominent advocate of a Western Pacific military buildup to deny China access to its adjacent seas, tweeted on November 6, “Senior flag officers are saying we’re on a trajectory to get crushed in a war with China, which would likely be the most important war since WWII, God forbid.”

The strategic takeaway is that the United States cannot win a firefight close to China’s coast, and can’t defend Taiwan whether it wants to or not. That view in the Joe Biden administration’s Department of Defense (DOD) persuaded the president to discuss “guardrails” against military confrontation in his November summit with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

Republican hawks appear to have come to the same conclusion. The United States will enact a scorched-earth policy in Taiwan, destroying its semiconductor industry, if the PRC seizes the island, former Trump national security adviser Robert O’Brien told a conference at the Richard Nixon Foundation on November 10, reports army-technology.com.

“If China takes Taiwan and takes those factories intact – which I don’t think we would ever allow – they have a monopoly over chips the way OPEC has a monopoly, or even more than the way OPEC has a monopoly over oil,” O’Brien said.

A much-read paper by two Army War College professors published this year proposes that “the United States and Taiwan should lay plans for a targeted scorched-earth strategy that would render Taiwan not just unattractive if ever seized by force, but positively costly to maintain.”

“This could be done most effectively by threatening to destroy facilities belonging to the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, the most important chipmaker in the world and China’s most important supplier.”

O’Brien evidently agrees with the Pentagon’s assessment that the US can’t win a war in the Taiwan Strait, proposing – apropos of the Vietnam War’s most celebrated sound bite – to destroy the island in order to save it.

**Anti-ship missiles are the 21st-century equivalent of the torpedo and dive bombers that** banished the battleship from military budgets after the 1941 sinking of the Bismarck by the British and the sinking of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales by the Japanese. Surface ships, including aircraft carriers, can’t defend against modern missiles that can downlink guidance data from reconnaissance satellites.

The **DOD report states that the PLA Rocket Force’s “conventionally armed CSS-5 Mod 5 (DF-21D) ASBM variant gives the PLA the capability to conduct long-range precision strikes against ships, including aircraft carriers, out to the Western Pacific.”**

“The [People’s Liberation Army Air Force’s] ground-based missile forces complement the air and sea-based precision strike capabilities of the PLAAF and PLAN.… DF-21D has a range exceeding 1,500 km, is fitted with a maneuverable reentry vehicle (MaRV), and is reportedly capable of rapidly reloading in the field.

“The PLARF continues to grow its inventory of DF-26 IRBMs, which it first revealed in 2015 and fielded in 2016. The multi-role DF-26 is designed to rapidly swap conventional and nuclear warheads and is capable of conducting precision land-attack and anti-ship strikes in the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the South China Sea from mainland China.

“In 2020, China fired anti-ship ballistic missiles against a moving target in the South China Sea.”

China tested these weapons thoroughly, the Pentagon report adds:

“In 2021, the PLARF launched approximately 135 ballistic missiles for testing and training, more than the rest of the world combined excluding ballistic missile employment in conflict zones. The DF-17 passed several tests successfully and is deployed operationally.

“While the DF-17 is primarily a conventional platform, it may be equipped with nuclear warheads. In 2020, a PRC-based military expert described the primary purpose of the DF-17 as striking foreign military bases and fleets in the Western Pacific.”

Key to the effectiveness of anti-ship missiles is satellite intelligence and electronic warfare measures. As the Pentagon reports:

“China employs a robust space-based ISR [intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance] capability designed to enhance its worldwide situational awareness. Used for military and civilian remote sensing and mapping, terrestrial and maritime surveillance, and intelligence collection, China’s ISR satellites are capable of providing electro-optical and synthetic aperture radar (SAR) imagery as well as electronic and signals intelligence data.”

**Most important:**

**“As of the end of 2021, China’s ISR satellite fleet contained more than 260 systems – a quantity second only to the United States, and nearly doubling China’s in-orbit systems since 2018.”**

**Satellite signals can be jammed or spoofed (misdirected to show incorrect coordinates), but**

**“The PLA continues to invest in improving its capabilities in space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), satellite communication, and satellite navigation … the PRC continues to develop a variety of counter-space capabilities designed to limit or prevent an adversary’s use of space-based assets during crisis or conflict.**

“In addition to the development of directed energy weapons and satellite jammers, the PLA has an operational ground-based anti-satellite (ASAT) missile intended to target low-Earth orbit satellites, and the **PRC probably intends to pursue additional ASAT weapons capable of destroying satellites up to geosynchronous Earth orbit**.

“**PLA [electronic warfare] units routinely train to conduct jamming and anti-jamming operations against multiple communication and radar systems and Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite systems during force-on-force exercises.**

“These exercises test operational units’ understanding of EW weapons, equipment, and procedures and they also enable operators to improve confidence in their ability to operate effectively in a complex electromagnetic environment.”

China’s military has improved quality as well as quantity, according to the Pentagon:

“**Recent improvements to China’s space-based ISR capabilities emphasize the development, procurement, and use of increasingly capable satellites with digital camera technology as well as space-based radar for all-weather, 24-hour coverage.**

**“These improvements increase China’s monitoring capabilities – including observation of US aircraft carriers, expeditionary strike groups, and deployed air wings. Space capabilities will enhance potential PLA military operations farther from the Chinese coast.”**

Overall, the Pentagon’s readout on China’s missile and satellite capability is virtually identical to the estimation of Chinese analysts, for example, the widely read military columnist Chen Feng in the prominent Chinese website “The Observer” (guancha.cn). In a November 27 report, Chen explained why an array of small satellites can achieve precise real-time target location:

“Small satellites are not only small, lightweight, and low-cost, but also operate in low orbits. In terms of space ISR, one is worth nearly three. This is true for optical and radar imaging, as well as for signal interception. So **the actual reconnaissance capability of small satellites is no weaker than large satellites, and commercial Synthetic Aperture Radar small satellites in the United States and China are able to reach 0.5-meter resolution.**

“**Optical imaging has always had the advantage of high resolution, which is also a very mature technology**. In the era of digital imaging, there is no longer a need to use the re-entry capsule to send the film back to the ground when the satellite is overhead.”

Synthetic aperture radar, Chen explains, “is not applicable to moving targets, but most of the intelligence can be interpreted from still images, and the similarities and movement can be inferred from differences between the before and after still images can also be inferred from the movement.”

A lead satellite may detect a suspicious object, and follow-up satellites “can be switched to a detailed investigation mode, and relay the results of detailed investigation.” Other satellites with electromagnetic rather than optical sensors can conduct real-time triangulation.

In addition to its satellite ISR capability, Chen says**, the other half of China’s reconnaissance capability consists of “unmanned aircraft, unmanned boats, submarines, and networked land-based radar, and undersea hydroacoustic monitoring**.”

China, Chen concludes, **does not yet have global ISR capability, “but theater coverage has been achieved.”**

In the past, the US Navy has insisted that a combination of electronic warfare measures and anti-missile defenses can defend US capital ships against Chinese attack. This year, the navy’s top officer Admiral Jonathan Greenert told reporters that a combination of spoofing (feeding false position coordinates to an incoming missile), masking electronic emissions, and anti-missile systems like Aegis can defend US carriers.

But as Gabriel Honrada reported on August 14, **US anti-missile systems like Aegis or Patriot aren’t effective against missiles honing in from a high trajectory. China’s DF-21 and other anti-ship missiles are designed to ascend to the stratosphere and strike vertically.**

Electronic countermeasures, moreover, are less effective against multiple sensors. China’s tiered system of sequenced optical, as well as electromagnetic reconnaissance combined with air and sea drones, is getting harder, if not impossible, to spoof. And **China’s missile force is so large that it can inflict devastating damage even with a high error rate**.

Apart from its formidable inventory of conventional missiles, **China has developed hypersonic glide vehicles that hug the ground and maneuver at the speed of intercontinental ballistic missiles, or several times the speed of sound. No conventional missile defense can stop HGVs.**

Apart from its missile force, China has about 800 fourth-generation fighters deployed at its coast and close to 200 fifth-generation (stealth) fighters. As the Pentagon report notes, **China has corrected the most important deficiency in its domestic warplane production, namely jet engines:**

“China’s decades-long efforts to improve domestic aircraft engine production are starting to produce results with the J-10 and J-20 fighters switching to domestically produced WS-10 engines by the end of 2021. China’s first domestically produced high-bypass turbofan, the WS-20, has also entered flight testing on the Y-20 heavy transport and probably will replace imported Russian engines by the end of 2022.”

A noteworthy observation in **the new Pentagon report is that China now has only 30,000 marines, compared with a US Marine Corps of about 200,000 including reserves. Only 200 Chinese marines are deployed outside the country, at China’s sole overseas base in Djibouti. China has about 14,000 special forces versus an American count of about 75,000. This isn’t consistent with the report’s claim that China wants to “project power globally.”**