



The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Heritage Foundation  
Report on FY2022 TTX (Table Top Exercise)

# Taiwan Contingency Scenario : Escalation from Low-Intensity Hybrid Warfare



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## Notes:

This report presents an overview of the TTX conducted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in cooperation with the Heritage Foundation of the United States on March 2-3, 2023, and a summary of the observations therefrom.

The contents, opinions, and suggestions in this report are based solely on the authors' views and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the project members' current and previous affiliated organizations.

## [Overview]

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation's (SPF) "Japan-U.S. Alliance Study" Project conducted its first face-to-face Table Top Exercise (hereinafter, TTX) in four years at the Heritage Foundation in the U.S. on March 2-3, 2023.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese side (SPF) designed the game in this TTX. Based on the scenario of a Taiwan contingency developed by the Japanese side, this game was played by Japanese participants in the Japanese government team (hereinafter, the Japan Team) and American participants in the U.S. government team (hereinafter, the U.S. Team).

The game designed by the SPF was not a Combat Game but a Pol-Mil Game that gives emphasis to the decision-making process and the verification of communication between the two countries. Since this was a game that reflected Japan's problem awareness, special emphasis was given to the stage preceding actual military conflict, when decision-making was tricky for the Japanese government.

The scenario consisted of three components: "hybrid warfare," "threat of conventional forces and missiles," and "nuclear intimidation." Since the TTX was conducted shortly after the revised "National Security Strategy," "National Defense Strategy," and "Defense Buildup Program" were released in December 2022, the timeframe set for the TTX was after March 2023, before Japan acquires "counterattack capability."

In this TTX, various issues were identified throughout the process, including each move in the game and the subsequent wrap-up meetings. The U.S. Team, the Japan Team, and the team responsible for TTX design and control (hereinafter the Control Team) also made separate After Action Reviews on the TTX.

Members of the U.S. team were divided in their opinion of the scenario of this TTX, some calling it a "work of genius," while others claimed that it was "too easy." This indicated that there were also differing views on the issues in the U.S. This might also be due to the scenario's emphasis on confirming the functions of the alliance relationship and the fact that the involvement of such factors as North Korea was purposely made marginal.

The differing views within the U.S. team affected the team's decision-making. Opinions were divided on China's intent and concrete methods for proportional response to China's actions. Still, the U.S. team was able to maintain the national goals from Moves 1 to 3 and hold discussions based on this, enabling them to make speedy decisions on an action plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The Heritage Foundation uses the term "Tabletop wargame exercise (TTX)."

The marked difference between Japan and the U.S. in decision-making was due to the fact that in the face of various offensives launched by China on Taiwan, the U.S. persisted in its goal of “dissuade-deter-defend” while paying heed to public opinion at home, while Japan vacillated in its consideration of multiple variables, such as legal designation of the situation, support for the U.S., and demonstrating an assertive positive posture. This difference was reflected in their assessment of the situation and the difference in speed in decision-making.

The U.S. team’s speed in deciding on an action plan was because the team members consistently prioritized the U.S.’s decision-making and attached less importance to coordination with allies and cooperating partners in the game. The initial reaction of the team members in all three moves was to decide first on the U.S.’s immediate response, particularly the military option, so most of the options consisted of unilateral actions by the U.S.

The Japanese government must understand that the U.S. government’s action plan is not necessarily decided after giving serious consideration to the reaction of its allies and the international community. The Japan Team pointed out in the After Action Review that the structural issue of the Japanese government is inadequate systems and preparedness to deal with gray zone situations. While it appears that the government has realized the need for the whole government to work together after the Three Security Documents were issued in late 2022, system building has yet to be undertaken. The Japan Team also stated that the nerve center of the government, including the politicians, need to drill and practice, citing also the need for the government to explain to the people. The U.S. Team also indicated that it is necessary to conduct the TTX repeatedly with different sets of players.

Although some of the policy proposals that have been repeatedly recommended after previous TTXs are being implemented gradually, the Japanese and U.S. policymakers and military leaders must continue to spend time on efforts to promote mutual understanding of the political and legal dynamism on both sides in order not to leave any cracks in their relationship that can be taken advantage of by entities scheming to change the status quo by force. It is necessary to improve the mechanisms for coordination and communication for this purpose.

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## [Goals of the TTX]

The military invasion of Ukraine started by Russia in February 2022 (hereinafter, the Ukraine War) is still ongoing as of March 2023. In the Indo-Pacific, China is stepping up military pressure on Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands, and joint military operations by China and Russia are increasing. Against this backdrop, this fiscal year's TTX used a scenario taking into account the revision of the "National Security Strategy," the "National Defense Strategy," and the "Defense Buildup Program" (hereinafter, the Three Security Documents) to identify differences and issues in the Japanese and U.S. governments' decision-making through Japan-U.S. TTX in order to determine ways to strengthen the bilateral alliance. In light of the worsening Taiwan situation in 2022, the examination of cooperation between the Japan-U.S. alliance and Taiwan has had a particular focus on hybrid warfare and nuclear intimidation, which are part of the "new ways of warfare" as seen in the Ukraine War. The goals of this TTX are as follows.

- (1) Since many previous TTXs undertaken in the U.S. based on scenarios developed by the U.S. side reflected the U.S.'s view of the issues at hand, this TTX will use a game design and scenario developed by the Japanese side to clearly reflect Japan's cognition of the issues and its point of view.
- (2) This will not be a TTX dominated by Japanese players. The authenticity of the U.S.'s decision-making on its action plan is enhanced by forming a U.S. team with American players.
- (3) The TTX will identify issues in the two governments' decision-making and actions, as well as in communication and cooperation between Japan and the U.S. in response to China's hybrid warfare employing "new ways of warfare" – which are also mentioned in the Three Security Documents – in the present stage, when a Taiwan contingency is still being deterred,<sup>2</sup> in the sense that China has not launched an armed invasion on Taiwan. The scenario premised on hybrid warfare indicates that a contingency may have already begun even before an invasion with physical military power. Here, the focus is not on a "scenario of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) landing on Taiwan," which was often the focus of attention in the past, but the premise is a red team (an independent team playing the role of adversary to the players) pursuing "victory without fighting."<sup>3</sup>
- (4) In light of the new situation and developments, including the revision of the three new strategic documents, to gain insights into the ideal mode of Japan-U.S. consultations in a crisis (e.g., activating the high-level framework in the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM), utilizing a permanent joint command whose establishment is now being discussed in detail).
- (5) Clarify, in particular, the perception gap between Japanese and U.S. politicians and military officials on the U.S.'s extended deterrence and gain insights on how to deal with this.
- (6) Ensure the authenticity and credibility of the TTX process and its results by conducting the game by experienced and knowledgeable participants from both sides.

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<sup>2</sup> Events not intentionally brought about by outside forces, such as major natural disasters, are sometimes included in the premises of a contingency. These are excluded in this report. It is conceivable that outside forces with certain motives may take advantage of natural disasters and so forth to launch an armed attack. This was also not included in the scenario of this TTX.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the latest strategic document, US Joint Chief of Staff, Joint Concept for Competing (JCC), February 10, 2023, was used as reference on this thinking.

## [Outline of TTX]

**Subject:** Japan-U.S. Alliance Cooperation in a Taiwan Contingency

**Date:** March 2-3, 2023

**Place:** The Heritage Foundation (Washington, D.C.)

**Participants:** See Appendix

**Format:** Seminar-style Pol-Mil Game

**Decision-making level:** Equivalent to the National Security Council/National Security Secretariat (NSC/NSS)

**Moves:** 3 moves

**Scenario format:** While the scenarios in each move stand independently, the script method (in text format following a preset narrative; not the MSEL [Master Scenario Event List] method often used by the military) is used based on the assumption that events occur in a sequence.

**Actors:** Japan and the U.S. (Control Team serves concurrently as China, Taiwan, and other actors)

**Adjudication:** none

**Requirement:** Japan-U.S. consultation is held 20 minutes after each move (however, consultation framework is decided by the players)

### TTX Schedule:

**March 2** 0945-1215 **Move 1**

- (1) Each team discusses response to the Move 1 scenario
- (2) Japan-U.S. consultation
- (3) Move 1 wrap up meeting

1330-1615 **Move 2**

- (1) Each team discusses response to the Move 2 scenario
- (2) Japan-U.S. consultation
- (3) Move 2 wrap up meeting

**March 3** 0930-1215 **Move 3**

- (1) Each team discusses response to the Move 3 scenario
- (2) Japan-U.S. consultation
- (3) Move 3 wrap up meeting

1330-1445 **TTX Wrap Up Meeting**



## [Summary of Scenario]<sup>4</sup>

### **Background: Intensifying Chinese operations to influence Japanese and U.S. politics**

China is using both the tactics of “intimidation (coercion)” and “appeasement (cooperation)” as part of its maneuvering to drive a wedge between Japan and the U.S. and Taiwan. Information that “there is a groundswell of sentiment in favor of independence in Taiwan” is spreading among experts in Washington, D.C.

### **Move 1: Intensifying hybrid warfare**

The Japanese and U.S. governments are increasingly wary of China’s influence operations. With no concrete countermeasures possible, there is a stronger possibility that China’s military pressure on Taiwan may actually escalate into an armed invasion, even as North Korea is firing ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan, heightening tension in the East Asian situation. China is stepping up its cyberattacks on communication and financial infrastructure in Taiwan, so the Taipei government is seeking assistance in cybersecurity from Japan and the U.S. and requesting the provision of communication tools, including the use of satellites.

### **Move 2: Heightening conventional and missile threat**

The Chinese Ministry of National Defense announces that it will hold its regular military exercises in a few days. These exercises will last for a few months, with massive dynamic deployment of troops across theater commands. China’s naval vessels and large civilian RORO (Roll-on/Roll-off) ships assemble at ports near Ningde City in Fujian Province, starting a virtual naval blockade. China further designates airspace over Taiwan and the Yonaguni, Ishigaki, and Miyako Islands as a no-fly zone. Taiwan denounces China’s blockade and requests food and energy resources support from Japan and the U.S.

China issues a statement denouncing Taiwanese terrorists for attacking a Chinese naval vessel, claiming that a Taiwan naval vessel fired on a Chinese naval vessel without warning when it was stopping a civilian boat that had entered the no-navigation zone, ignoring orders for it to stop. On the other hand, the Taiwan side announces that the Taiwan naval ship had ordered the Chinese ship about to inflict harm on a civilian boat to stop, following proper procedures starting with radio messages, but the Chinese ship opened fire, thereby triggering a state of war. As a result, the Chinese frigate sank, while the Taiwanese frigate was half-damaged.

### **Move 3: Nuclear intimidation**

Internet connection is partially restored in Taiwan with the U.S.’s help. However, a message which appears to be from the prominent Chinese military enthusiast with the account name Liuqun Taolue [Strategy of the Six Services] is found on the Chinese video-sharing platform Xigua Video. This message indicates that Japan should be made an exception from China’s principle of not using nuclear weapons against nonnuclear nations, justifying a nuclear attack on Japan.

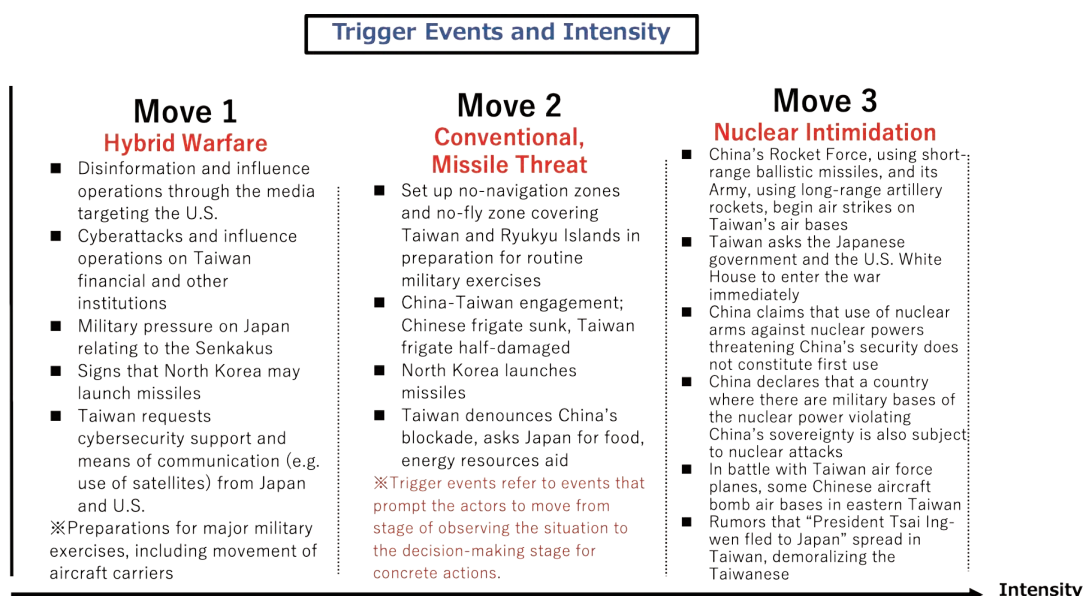
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<sup>4</sup> See Diagram 1 below for more specific and important phenomena constituting the scenarios.

The PLA Rocket Force fires short-range ballistic missiles and the Army fires long-range artillery rockets to start air raids on Taiwan's air force bases and other facilities. Taiwan declares that it is in a "state of war" with China, requesting the Japanese and U.S. governments to enter the war immediately. Rumors spread in Taiwan that "President Tsai Ing-wen fled to Japan," demoralizing the Taiwan people.

Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) reconnaissance planes detect a convoy of small vessels moving east in waters off Taiwan's Yilan County. Fighter-bombers from the Chinese navy's aircraft carrier approach Taiwan from the east, engaging the Taiwan air force in battle. A number of Chinese military aircraft bomb air force bases in the eastern part of Taiwan.

Diagram 1: Trigger Events and Expected Direction of Escalation



## [Result of TTX]

### (1) U.S. Team's Response

During Move 1 and Move 2, the U.S. team looked at China's actions on Taiwan as the "initial stage of full-fledged landing operations," deciding on the strategic goals of de-escalation, response tactics of dissuade-deter-defense, and method of signaling (conveying messages through actions). Particularly with regard to de-escalation, it adopted a policy of avoiding excessive intervention in reaction to China's behavior and countering escalation with proportional response. It took a proactive approach, sounding out Taiwan (Control Team) on accepting U.S. military intervention through teleconferences at the national security adviser level without informing Japan. (diplomatic measure)

In terms of concrete military actions, in addition to providing Taiwan with communication infrastructure support, plans were made to escort civilian cargo vessels transporting goods to Taiwan in response to

China's naval blockade, and a decision was made to seek the involvement of NATO and the EU nations from the very beginning (diplomatic measure), after which Japan was asked to participate in the escort operations. Furthermore, as part of the escort mission for civilian cargo vessels, cyberattacks targeting the PLA's major military facilities, ports, and so forth were considered in the event of Chinese missile attacks on these vessels. (military measure)

At the same time, economic sanctions on China were strengthened to demonstrate the U.S.'s strong will. (economic and diplomatic measure)

Following are the U.S. Team's strategic goals and its concrete responses during each move. Throughout the three moves, the U.S.'s strategic goals were: (1) maintain Taiwan's de facto independence; (2) respond to China's escalation of the situation with deterrence and coercive actions; and (3) contain the scope of the conflict within the region through coordination with allies.

#### **Move 1**

**Response:** Hold an Alliance Coordination Mechanism meeting with Japan;<sup>5</sup> teleconference between the presidents of the U.S. and Taiwan; publicity campaign targeting the Taiwan people and foreign residents of Taiwan as part of information warfare against China; began preparations to hold joint Japan-U.S. military exercises in waters near the Southwest Islands; set up joint U.S.-Japan command headquarters on U.S. military bases in Japan and in areas near Taiwan; deployment of Seventh Fleet and Fifth Fleet assets with the support of CYBERCOM and INDOPACOM; prioritized arms transport to Taiwan; "temporary suspension" of China-related transactions and business activities; preparations made to impose sanctions on Chinese companies previously not subject to sanctions.

#### **Move 2**

**Response:** International Transport operation for humanitarian aid to Taiwan; continuation of supplies to Taiwan using civilian vessels; condemned China's setting of no-fly zone and provocations through statements, media reports, interviews, and so forth with bipartisan support in Congress; holding of teleconferences between the U.S. Congress and the Taiwan president; maintained military readiness and continued movement of military assets to prospective deployment sites; reconnaissance with unmanned ariel vehicle (UAV) in airspace over Japanese territory included in the no-fly zone; incapacitation of China's artificial satellites with cyberattacks; notification of support to Ukraine for subversive activities targeting Russia-China energy pipelines; Ordered INDOPACOM to set DEFCON level to level 4 readiness;<sup>6</sup> encouraged the Philippines to wrest control of the Scarborough Shoal from China by force; alerted public and private companies to prepare to quit China's supply chains if warranted; encouraged the concerned countries to nationalize China's debts; maintained humanitarian and economic aid to Taiwan

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<sup>5</sup> While command and control is set at the NSC/NSS level under the Japan-U.S. consultation framework, the U.S. has set the framework at the ACM level based on the substance of the consultations.

<sup>6</sup> For the U.S.'s situational awareness, see "Table 3 U.S. Situational Awareness." (last page of this report)

### Move 3

**Response:** Continued international transport operations for humanitarian aid for Taiwan (with U.S. Navy escort); prioritized transport of aid to Taiwan; condemned China's missile firings in waters near Japan; made strong demand for China to de-escalate; cyberattacks on China's ports and military infrastructure; conducted ICBM firing tests in East China Sea; authorized quarantine operations in waters near Taiwan and armed response to the PLA Navy's surface vessels;

Table 1 U.S. Response (by diplomatic, information, military [defense], economic [DIME] categories)

	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3
<b>Action</b>	<p>[Strategic Goals]</p> <p>(1) Maintain Taiwan's de facto independence</p> <p>(2) Respond to China's escalation of the situation with deterrence and coercive actions</p> <p>(3) Contain the conflict within the region through coordination with allies</p> <p>[Diplomatic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Held Alliance Coordination Mechanism meeting with Japan</li> <li>■ Teleconference by U.S., Taiwan presidents</li> </ul> <p>[Information]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Publicity campaign for Taiwan people and foreign residents as part of information warfare against China</li> </ul> <p>[Military]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Started preparations for joint U.S.-Japan exercises in waters off Southwest Islands</li> <li>■ Set up joint U.S.-Japan command HQ on U.S. bases in Japan and in areas near Taiwan</li> <li>■ Deployed Seventh Fleet and Fifth Fleet assets with support from CYBERCOM and INDOPACOM</li> <li>■ Prioritized arms transport for Taiwan</li> </ul> <p>[Economic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "Temporary suspension" of China-related transactions and business activities</li> <li>■ Made preparations to impose sanctions on Chinese companies not subject to sanctions so far</li> </ul>	<p>[Diplomatic, Information]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Condemned China for setting no-fly zone and provocations through statements, reports, interviews, etc. with bipartisan support from Congress</li> <li>■ Teleconference between Congress and Taiwan president</li> </ul> <p>[Military]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintained military preparedness and continued movement of military assets to projected deployment sites</li> <li>■ Reconnaissance with UAV in airspace over Japanese territory included in no-fly zone</li> <li>■ Incapacitation of China's artificial satellites with offensive cyberattacks</li> <li>■ Notification of support to Ukraine for sabotage of Russia-China energy pipelines</li> <li>■ Ordered INDOPACOM to set DEFCON level to level 4</li> <li>■ Encouraged the Philippines to wrest control over the Scarborough Shoal from China by force</li> </ul> <p>[Economic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continued supply of goods to Taiwan using civilian ships</li> <li>■ Warned public and private companies to be ready to quit China's supply chains if warranted</li> <li>■ Encouraged concerned countries to consider nationalizing China's debts</li> <li>■ Maintained humanitarian and economic aid to Taiwan</li> </ul>	<p>[Diplomatic, Information]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Condemned China's missile firing in waters near Japan</li> <li>■ Made strong demand to China to de-escalate</li> </ul> <p>[Military, Information]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continued international transport operation (with naval escort) for humanitarian aid for Taiwan</li> <li>■ Prioritized transport of aid for Taiwan</li> <li>■ Cyberattacks on China's ports and military infrastructure</li> <li>■ Conducted ICBM firing tests in East China Sea; authorized "quarantine" in waters near Taiwan and armed response to the PLA Navy's surface vessels</li> <li>■ Incapacitation of Chinese landing craft at ports and in waters in the Taiwan Strait (deploying special forces [SFO] and SSN Mk-48)</li> <li>■ Ordered INDOPACOM to assume DEFCON 2 readiness</li> </ul> <p>[Economic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "Temporary suspension" of China-related transactions and business activities</li> <li>■ Imposed sanctions on Chinese companies not sanctioned so far</li> </ul>

incapacitation of Chinese landing craft at ports and waters in the Taiwan Strait (deployment of special forces [SFO] and SSN Mk-48); Ordered INDOPACOM to set DEFCON level to level 2. readiness; “temporary suspension” of China-related transactions and business activities; imposed sanctions on Chinese companies not subject to sanctions so far.

## (2) Japan Team’s Response

One the other hand, the Japan Team decided on the following responses.

### Move 1

**Policy:** De-escalation; Japan to actively defend the Senkaku Islands with the understanding that China will invade the Senkakus along with Taiwan.

**Response:** Designation as a “situation that can have a serious impact on the peace and security of Japan”; issued order for maritime security operations; advised Japanese nationals living in Taiwan to evacuate; Japan-U.S. joint use of military bases; strengthened preparations for Self-Defense Forces (SDF) mobilization for defense duties; stockpiled energy; requested cooperation from ASEAN and Australia; informed the people; moved troops to assemble ammunitions and fuel; port defense to demonstrate the posture of active intervention under the Three Security Documents; protection of Japanese nationals; convened the UN Security Council to condemn China’s missile attacks and threat of massive UAV attacks; proactive cyber defense; dispatched government representative to Okinawa; decided to provide energy assistance to Taiwan (despite its request for information and energy assistance).

### Move 2

**Policy:** De-escalation and maintenance of status quo

**Response:** Raised China’s violation of UN Charter; lobbied the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); requested ASEAN emergency meeting; called for teleconference with China; designated inclusion of Japan’s territorial airspace in the no-fly zone set by China as an “armed attack situation”; issued mobilization order for defense (based on order to take countermeasures, Air Defense Command to deal with North Korean missiles, Delegate command of Japan Coast Guard to Minister of Defense., preparations made to respond to armed attack, response to violation of territorial airspace [joint Japan-U.S. operations led by the Air SDF]); participated in U.S. military’s operation to transport foodstuff to Taiwan; requested the U.S. for joint response to North Korea; participated in humanitarian aid by international organizations and others; explained food aid to Taiwan and the current situation to China.

**Issues:** Legal constraints prevent Japan from providing civilian vessels for the U.S.’s operations to provide food aid to Taiwan; absence of ROE; Diet approval

### Move 3

**Policy:** Continue de-escalation; however, if China launches missile attacks on the Japanese mainland or on U.S. Forces in Japan, a more “aggressive” posture to be taken

**Response:** Made strong demand to the U.S. for deployment of nuclear submarines and strategic fighters in Japan and requested greater U.S. initiative and leadership role in Taiwan's defense

**Issue:** Establishment of an integrated chain of command

Diagram 2: Japan's Response in the Three Moves

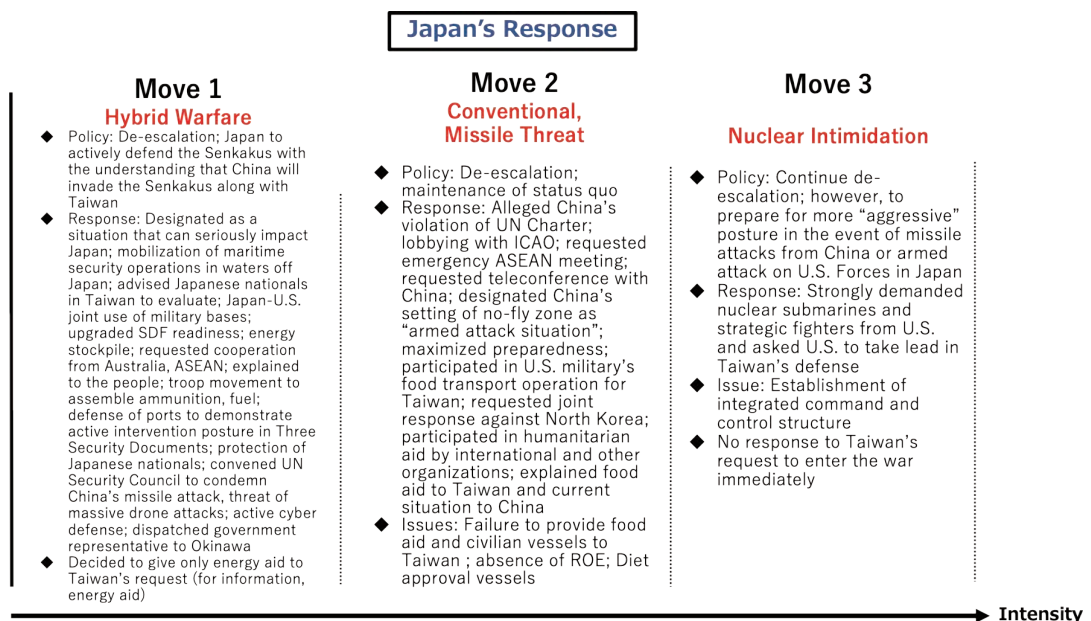


Table 2 Japan's Response (by DIME categories)

	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3
	<p>[Policy]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ De-escalation</li> <li>■ With the understanding that China will invade the Senkakus together with Taiwan, Japan to actively defend the Senkakus</li> </ul> <p>[Diplomatic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sought cooperation from ASEAN, Australia</li> <li>■ Decided to give only energy aid to Taiwan despite its request (for information and energy aid)</li> <li>■ Convened UN Security Council to denounce China for imminent missile attack and threat of massive drone attacks</li> </ul> <p>[Information]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Explained to the people</li> </ul> <p>[Defense]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dispatched government representative to Okinawa</li> <li>■ Designated as a "situation that can seriously impact Japan"</li> <li>■ Initiated maritime security operations in waters near Japan</li> <li>■ Advised Japanese nationals in Taiwan to evacuate; joint Japan-U.S. use of military bases</li> <li>■ Upgraded SDF preparedness</li> <li>■ Troop movements to assemble ammunition and fuel; defense of ports to demonstrate "active intervention" posture in Three Security Documents</li> <li>■ Active cyber defense</li> <li>■ Protection of Japanese nationals</li> </ul> <p>[Economic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Energy stockpiling</li> </ul>	<p>[Policy]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ De-escalation and maintenance of status quo</li> </ul> <p>[Diplomatic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Alleged China's violation of UN Charter; lobbied ICAO</li> <li>■ Requested emergency ASEAN meeting</li> <li>■ Asked for teleconference with China</li> <li>■ Requested joint response to North Korea</li> <li>■ Participated in humanitarian aid by international and other organizations</li> <li>■ Explained food aid to Taiwan and current situation to China</li> </ul> <p>[Defense]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Designated China's setting no-fly zone including Japan's territorial airspace as "armed attack situation"</li> <li>■ Responded to various developments based on defense mobilization order</li> <li>■ Participated in U.S. military's food transport operation for Taiwan</li> </ul> <p>[Issues]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Refused provision of civilian vessels for U.S. food aid operation for Taiwan</li> <li>■ Absence of ROE</li> <li>■ Diet approval</li> </ul>	<p>[Policy]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ De-escalation; to take more "aggressive" posture in the event of China's missile attack or armed attack on U.S. Forces in Japan</li> </ul> <p>[Defense]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Made strong demand for U.S. deployment of nuclear submarines and strategic fighters in Japan</li> <li>■ Requested U.S. to play leading role in Taiwan's defense</li> </ul> <p>[Issue]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establishment of an integrated chain of command</li> </ul>
Action			

**[TTX Wrap Up Meeting]** (Since the Chatham House Rule<sup>7</sup> was adopted, the speakers are only identified as "U.S. Team," "Japan Team," and "Control Team")

**U.S. Team:** We have a question on the scenario. In Move 2, Taiwan air bases were bombed. How should the Japanese and U.S. armed forces respond to this? We would like to hear the Japan Team's opinion. In this move, the participants understood that the PLA Rocket Force attacked Taiwan air bases. In reality, what are the ways for Japan to make it difficult for the PLA to launch such attacks?

<sup>7</sup> The Chatham House Rule stipulates that, "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed." [https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule]

**Control Team:** In the scenario, China had made a decision to launch military operations against Taiwan. The air raids were also meant to make the Taiwan government and citizens lose resilience, to persuade them, and at the same time, avoid a military invasion. Another purpose was to wreak havoc in the Japan-U.S. alliance.

The Control Team noticed difference in the decision-making procedures and thinking process between Japan and the U.S. In the initial stage, the U.S. Team started with a discussion on the national goals in a state of war, while the Japan Team started with the restraining factors, i.e., the legal constraints, strong social reaction and resistance, and security policy.

The Japanese government's decision to shoot down Chinese military aircraft violating its airspace also came as a shock to the U.S. Team. However, even if the Japanese government had made such a decision, this would not mean that the SDF would shoot down Chinese planes unconditionally. The U.S. Team failed to understand this point in this game.

Furthermore, while the U.S. Team was constantly aware of the signals from China, how to send signals to China, and the discrepancy between signals and actions, the Japan Team's discussion was limited to how to respond to signals from China. This was probably because while the U.S. had many options, Japan's options were limited.

**U.S. Team:** The scenario was a work of genius. China is a top-down authoritarian state. The armed forces are constantly watched by the authorities. It is impossible for them to take military action without the permission of the higher-ups. In other words, the Chinese leaders' political motives are always behind its military actions.

The U.S. Team agonized over how to meet Japan's demands while continuing to use military force to maintain the international order. There was a gap in Japan's and the U.S.'s intentions for de-escalation. In reality, the U.S. also has a bi-party system. The domestic political factor makes political solidarity in society difficult to achieve. However, while the current administration was in a difficult position in the initial phase of the Ukraine war, it has learned many lessons.

Supplying fighters to Ukraine will probably be discussed in the future. With regard to Taiwan, we are cautiously optimistic, and it may be possible to take decisive action against physical threats on Taiwan. Moreover, there is also the option of deterrence before an all-out invasion.

**U.S. Team:** Since the PLA Rocket Force uses TEL (Transporter-Erector-Launcher), missile attacks will take place without warning. However, Japan and the U.S. should be able to detect certain signs. The U.S. is adopting a strategy of ambiguity on Russia's invasion of Ukraine because it does not have a mutual defense treaty or agreement with Ukraine. This strategy of ambiguity can also be applied to Taiwan. On the other hand, since the U.S. has a security treaty with Japan, the U.S. government will probably make an outright decision to rally all attention and resources in a contingency.

It is thought that communication between the two countries will be important amid



rapid changes in the situation.

**U.S. Team:** While China's goals will be revealed gradually, there will be little information to ascertain them at the beginning of the invasion. This did not constitute a serious challenge to the players in this game. This is because computers were not used, game setting was easy, and we did not have to deal with issues like constraints imposed by North Korea's nuclear threat, the trouble of maintaining and strengthening the alliance relationship with South Korea, prioritization by the U.S. president, China's very real nuclear threat, and the acknowledgement of the Spratly Islands. Also, because Japan had promoted legislation swiftly, its security policy was now more aligned with the U.S.

**U.S. Team:** In this game, North Korea and other factors were purposely treated lightly or ambiguously in order to focus on examining the functions of the alliance. We think this is because the aim was to investigate issues related to the alliance relationship. It is thought that in similar games in the future, it will be necessary to assign situations with greater degrees of difficulty for Japan and the U.S. to increase the strain on the players.

**U.S. Team:** The situation inside the U.S. team is that perhaps due to the composition of the team, we were not able to determine whether the actions of the Chinese armed forces would escalate into an all-out invasion. Partly for this reason, the U.S. Team was uncertain about what military actions and leadership were needed.

**U.S. Team:** When discussing China's motives, air raids on Taiwan became an issue. Ultimately, we decided that the purpose of the air strikes was to incapacitate the Japan-U.S. alliance or to interfere in the alliance and to demoralize Taiwan.

**U.S. Team:** Recently, another U.S. think tank conducted a wargame to find out who will win in a Taiwan contingency, the U.S. or China. Another purpose of this was to examine the new weapon systems and identify the vulnerabilities of aircraft carriers. In other words, it is necessary to present possible scenarios of what might happen in a contingency and rectify the American people's view of war and China-related businesses.

There are different types of wargames used for studying strategy. In this game, separate rooms were assigned to the Japan and U.S. Teams, which enabled them to hold steady discussions without interference from outside the team. However, coordination with the other team became a challenge.

**U.S. Team:** Throughout the game, the U.S. acted very arbitrarily. In Move 1, while we paid attention to cybersecurity partly because of a request from Taiwan, our interest eventually shifted to other matters. Japan must be prepared for the possibility that the U.S. may make unilateral decisions and change its action plan without fully communicating with Japan.

In wargames, sometimes the players clash with the scenario, but in this game, the situation was set with some ambiguity, allowing us to play the game based on the issues at hand.

**U.S. Team:** Governments' sensitivity to game playing differs. Including a Taiwan team in future games is an option. The weakness of the framework of this game was the lack of Taiwan's point of view.

**Control Team:** While we are not thinking of wargames with Taiwan at this point, we would like to consider the participation of a Taiwan team in future TTXs. On the other hand, since Japan has reservations about using the term “war,” addressing games as “wargames” should be limited to those relating to the Japan-U.S. alliance.

**Japan Team:** In this game, we examined decision-making methods and procedures in a crisis. However, in doing so, it was also necessary to consider the background of decision-making and the timing of the crisis. Other issues, such as the scope of U.S. assistance to Taiwan, the U.S.-China and U.S.-China-Taiwan military balance, support for Taiwan from friendly nations, the Communist Party of China’s (CPC) domestic rule, including the economy, public opinion trends in Japan, and economic sanctions on China, should also be considered.

Here, the question of greatest concern for the Japan Team was the timing of the Taiwan Contingency. The U.S. is holding a presidential election in 2024, and the new administration will be analyzing the previous administration’s policies in 2025, after which a new strategy on China will be announced. China will scrutinize this in detail. As a result, it may change its posture toward the U.S., or it may take action by 2027. In that case, a Taiwan contingency may occur in the two years after China spends 2.5 years making its preparations.

Moreover, whether China will use military means will also depend on domestic issues such as an economic downturn and rapid aging of the population. Furthermore, as Japan worries about the decline in U.S. military presence and engagement, China is also closely watching this situation.

There is a full agenda between Japan and the U.S. It is important to be aware of the differences between them in such matters as cyber intelligence, space, defense equipment, technological cooperation, new advanced equipment such as UAVs and satellite constellations, and building new supply chains. It is necessary to work on these issues in turn. We would like to ask the U.S. Team their thoughts on the timing of a Taiwan contingency.

**U.S. Team:** A Taiwan crisis may be triggered by a naval blockade, which will be recognized as a hostile act by China.

**Japan Team:** Although the Three Security Documents have been adopted, we are concerned that they may not be implemented in time for a Taiwan crisis. Therefore, we are interested in whether the U.S. will offer advice and other forms of support regarding the implementation of defense programs in the next five years.

**U.S. Team:** We are facing a decade of serious threat. China’s physical pressure is competing with Japan-U.S. commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. However, the good news for the Japan side’s concern is that the many issues pointed out to be lying between Japan and the U.S. are actually overrated. I know that the two countries have reached many consensuses.

Also, our point is that this is a two-stage process. These tests and conditions assume the period until the Taiwan election two years from now. While it has become more difficult to discuss Taiwan issues in Washington, D.C., at least, there is a general consensus

that tension over Taiwan will peak in the period up to 2027. The acceleration of the CPC's military modernization has triggered useful discussions. It is necessary to continue such discussions.

Japan and the U.S. are trying to prioritize work on RMD (Regional Missile Defense). If they fail to reach a consensus by 2027, they will have to set the order of priority for preparations that need to be made. The U.S. defense budget is expected to be slashed. In such a situation, it is important to set an order of priority in capacity building that takes years to accomplish. The more important issue is concerns about the capability to supply ammunition. I am not sure if Japan is aware of this, but the situation in Ukraine has prompted U.S. to realize its weakness of ammunition supply capability.

**U.S. Team:** In a situation where the U.S. Congress is cutting the budget for building naval vessels, we need to pay attention to the debate on the U.S. naval vessels' modernization and response readiness and changes in the roles expected of the U.S. Navy. Congress recognizes the declining capability of the Navy and that this requires budget allocations. Republican Representative Mike Gallagher cited the China threat the other day, arguing that the Navy must not only be a force for fighting, but also a force for projecting the U.S. presence and pledging to promote changes in the U.S. Navy's equipment and organization.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the American people have belatedly heightened their awareness of the China threat, sensing that something bad may happen in the Indo-Pacific by 2027.

**Japan Team:** We would like to promise that as long as the U.S. supports Taiwan, Japan will also do so with the U.S., even though it may take time to make a decision. This determination will not change regardless of any change of administration.

## [U.S. Team's Observations]

### (1) Collective Observations of the U.S. Team

#### Difficulty of Discerning China's Intent

In Move 1, the U.S. Team reckoned that China had a strong intent. It opted for a strong military response and immediate shift to an aggressive posture. However, since China showed no signs of embarking on a large-scale landing operation by landing craft, the U.S. Team decided to adopt a more cautious posture. The U.S. Team set China's de-escalation as its top priority goal, but they were divided on China's intent and how to make proportional response to China's actions. Such difference of opinion in the team later came to seriously affect the U.S. Team's decision-making, such as on what form of support to seek from Japan in the transport of goods for Taiwan using private vessels.

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<sup>8</sup> Mike Gallagher, "Taiwan Can't Wait: What America Must Do To Prevent a Successful Chinese Invasion," *Foreign Affairs*, February 1, 2023. [<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-02-01/taiwan-cant-wait>]

### **Methods of Deterrence**

Throughout Moves 1 to 3, the U.S. Team consistently strived for de-escalation through deterrence and coercive diplomacy. In Moves 1 and 2, the U.S. gave priority to methods such as economic sanctions, raising the DEFCON level, coordination with allies, and tarnishing China's image. However, in Move 3, the U.S. Team used ICBM tests, launching of Mk-48 torpedoes from multiple SNNs, and boarding and inspection of ships in waters off Taiwan for deterrence, as well as embarked on coercive diplomacy.

### **Decision-making Depending on Attributes of Individual Players**

As discussed at the TTX Wrap Up Meeting, the U.S. Team understood that differences would emerge not only in the quality of decision-making but also in the assessment and analysis of various factors underpinning decision-making depending on which players took up the role of decision-maker. Specifically, the U.S. Team made an assessment that China intended to embark on a landing operation in Taiwan in the early stage of the TTX, but when China did not take actions toward escalation, they became unsure of whether China was serious about an all-out attack as the game progressed. If the U.S. Team were made up of different players, there might have been a different assessment of China's intent or more aggressive operations might have been executed at an early stage.

### **U.S. Approach on the Allies**

Generally speaking, the U.S. Team prioritized its own decision-making and treated coordination with allies and cooperating partners as secondary objectives. The initial reaction of participants in the U.S. Team was to decide on the U.S.'s immediate response, particularly the military options, most of which were unilateral actions by the U.S. This means the U.S.'s actions did not give serious consideration to the reaction of its allies and the international community. However, as the decision-making process moved forward, the U.S. Team came to engage in a certain extent of coordination with Japan and Taiwan. On the other hand, giving minimum required consideration to the UN and other international organizations was emphasized consistently.

### **Taking Disinformation Lightly**

The scenario in this TTX attached importance to China's disinformation campaign in a hybrid warfare, but the U.S. Team was generally dismissive of its potential impact. In Move 3, one participant openly stated that "disinformation is a distraction." The U.S. Team rather concentrated on deescalating the ongoing crisis in the Taiwan Strait with kinetic options. In the latter half of Move 3, although video footages of the Taiwan president fleeing and the U.S. president trying to cut back U.S. military intervention were discussed, the U.S. Team ultimately concluded that the impact of disinformation was minimal to small. However, in a real-life contingency, it is highly probable that disinformation will have a major impact on decision-making.

### **Importance of Communication**

The U.S. Team made clear its thinking during U.S.-Japan consultations, but sometimes this thinking changed. For example, the U.S. Team had highly rated the Japan Team's support to the joint U.S.-Japan

command and contribution to convey operations. However, after Japan declared an “armed attack situation” and indicated that it would confront China’s setting a no-fly zone with the use of force, it had to review Japan’s posture to determine the AOR (area of responsibility). That is to say, it was only through discussions that the two teams were able to communicate and influence the U.S. Team’s decision-making. That is how important communication between the two countries is.

## **(2) U.S. Team’s Self-Evaluation of Its Response in Each Move**

First, the U.S. Team set the following strategic goals: (1) maintain Taiwan’s de facto independence; (2) respond to China’s escalation of the situation with deterrence and coercive actions; (3) contain the scope of the conflict within the region through coordination with allies. To achieve these goals, the following actions were taken: (1) proportional response to China’s offensive; (2) implemented and continued escort and rescue operations to provide aid to Taiwan using civilian vessels; and (3) maintained solidarity with allies and cooperating partners. However, the following issues were identified: (1) concerns about the passive attitude taken until it responded to China’s landing crafts; (2) the risk of escalation; (3) ambiguity of China’s intent; and (4) misunderstanding and miscommunication between Japan and the U.S. (and Taiwan) on the operational environment.

### **Move 1**

**Positive evaluation:** Strong collaboration with Japan.

**Negative evaluation:** Risk-averse responses.

**Evaluation of achievement:** Successful cooperation with Japan; Deterrence held.

### **Move 2**

**Positive evaluation:** The U.S.-Japan unity on purpose and political will.

**Negative evaluation:** U.S.-Japan lack of synchronization over use of force to enforce no-fly zone.

**Evaluation of achievement:** Successful in not contributing to escalation; Allies involved but not fully coordinated.

### **Move 3**

**Positive evaluation:** U.S.-Japan alliance maintains unity; the U.S. posture more forward thinking and active.

**Negative evaluation:** Failure to act decisively until near end; Unable to deter Chinese attacks on Taiwan

**Evaluation of achievement:** Met China’s threats without backing down or escalating.

## **(3) U.S. Team’s Recommendations**

### **Determine the Relevance of Actor Intentions**

During the TTX, the U.S. Team wavered in its assessment of China’s intent. For this reason, it started with an aggressive response, gradually shifting to a cautious stance, then reverting to the aggressive posture near the exercise’s conclusion. From this, U.S. policymakers must realize that in any Taiwan contingency,

it is very important to understand China's intent before the situation evolves further. That is to say, as the crisis progresses and China is judged to be moving toward invading Taiwan, even if policymakers attempt to achieve their goal of making proportional response based on their own assessment of China's intent, they will have very limited time. When China is judged to be on its way to invading Taiwan, they should rather make a quick decision on whether the U.S.'s response should be proportional to China's intent or should simply defend and enhance the U.S.'s interest regardless of China's intent.

### **Comprehend the Political and Legal Dynamism**

In the wrap up meetings after Move 2 and after the TTX, participants from both sides discussed the question of Japan's legal and political authorization. For example, when the Japan Team declared an "armed attack situation" and adopted the stance of defending the Japanese territorial airspace by force, it became clear that even though this is legally authorized, in reality, the Japanese government will not proceed to use force due to political pressure. We also learned that unlike the U.S., Japan has no permanent ROE. U.S. policymakers and military leaders should dedicate time to thoroughly understanding the political and legal dynamism in both countries in order to prevent any cracks in bilateral ties from being taken advantage of.

### **Improve U.S.-Japan Coordination**

Likewise, the policymakers and military leaders of both countries should strengthen their overall collaboration. For example, the recently announced U.S.-Japan integrated command and control system should be made operational as soon as possible. Following the establishment of Japan's new National Security Strategy, the two countries should coordinate on ROE, clearly define collective self-defense, encourage more military exercises in Japan's Southwest Islands and elsewhere, and ensure joint decision-making in a crisis.

### **Prepare Capabilities Now, Not Later**

For kinetic and cyber warfare to succeed, the U.S. must develop offensive plans years in advance. The present posture and preparations can hardly be said to meet operational demands. If plans cannot be developed and capabilities cannot be positioned, then the U.S. must accept a different risk calculus that may encourage higher risk tolerance or limits U.S. abilities to escalate both vertically or horizontally.

## **[Japan Team's Observations]**

### **Observation ①**

#### **Scenario for Practicing with Hybrid Warfare, Gray Zone Situations**

This TTX featured a game design and scenario not focusing on military conflict, but on thinking naturally about how to respond to various conceivable phenomena, what is the other party's intent, and what are the goals we want to achieve in gray zone situations preceding a conflict.

Through the three moves, we learned how to set our own specific goals using DIME (Diplomatic,

Information, Military, and Economic) measures. While SDF OBs often tend to zero in on military methods, we were able to make broad observations in this scenario.

### **System Building to Enable Response to Gray Zone Situations**

It became clear that the structural issue for the Japanese government is that its systems and structures for dealing with gray zone situations are still inadequate. While in light of the formulation of the Three Security Documents in late 2022, the need for the government to make concerted efforts is now recognized, actual system building has yet to begin. There is as yet no system for rapid gathering and analysis of information and taking countermeasures to deal with information and psychological warfare. While the Three Security Documents indeed announced the intent to improve cybersecurity response capability, there are still numerous tasks to be undertaken, such as the required legal amendments (an organization to replace the National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity [NISC] and powers to be granted to this organization) and changing the interpretation of Article 21 of the Constitution.

### **Need for the Government's Nerve Center, Including Politicians, to Practice**

It was strongly felt that after the designation of an “armed attack situation,” while a system for setting up a headquarters for responding to armed attack situations and anticipated armed attack situations is now in place, repeated drill and practice is necessary for the headquarters led by the prime minister to be able to make appropriate decisions and function in a timely manner.

### **Drawing Up Plans and Manuals for Responses**

In the absence of any plans, it will be extremely difficult to set goals to be achieved and use DIME measures to achieve such goals. For example, in this TTX, the importance of making preparations in normal times was strongly felt, e.g., deciding on what Japan needs to discuss and agree with the U.S. for extended deterrence to be effective, considering the methods and procedures for imposing economic sanctions, and the procedures for placing the Japan Coast Guard under the defense minister's command. (It is not known if these preparations are actually being made in the government.)

### **Government's Explanation to the People**

It is reckoned that a majority of the people will find it difficult to envisage a “contingency.” It is fully possible that there will be confusion and panic in the people's daily life if critical infrastructure suddenly stops functioning in a gray zone situation. Therefore, it is necessary to make it widely known in advance that such a situation may come to pass and help the people prepare and acquire “immunity” to gray zone situations.

### **Close Cooperation, Coordination between Japan and the U.S.**

It was felt that close communication between the two countries is of particular importance in a gray zone situation. This was a point also brought up by the U.S. Team in the wrap up meetings. For example, communication between the two sides is indispensable on such issues as the evacuation and protection

of Japanese nationals in Taiwan, consultations on extended deterrence, and the two countries' response to an armed attack on Taiwan.

### Observation ②

Japan is not prepared to respond to the following situations.

- ① Nuclear threat and nuclear attack
- ② Massive attacks using bacteriological, biological, and electronic warfare weapons, drones, and space systems
- ③ For examples, an emergency situation where some islands in the Southwest are occupied and the residents are killed or taken hostage, plunging the locality into great chaos and resulting in the collapse of the government's rule
- ④ When a large number of Taiwan troops and citizens evacuate to Japan
- ⑤ When Japanese nationals in China or South Korea are detained by these countries

### Observation ③

#### Move 1

**Positive evaluation:** Acted in line with the Japanese government's policy as indicated in the Three Security Documents

**Negative evaluation:** Difficulty in explaining to the U.S. why we designated China's setting up a no-fly zone as an "armed attack situation" and the course of subsequent response, resulting in ambiguous communication

**Evaluation of achievement:** Able to identify issues that may arise when adopting an assertive approach to a Taiwan contingency

#### Move 2

**Positive evaluation:** Took actions in line with the Japanese government's policy as indicated in the Three Security Documents

**Negative evaluation:** Insufficient effort in obtaining information the U.S. side possessed and inadequate confirmation of the U.S.'s intent.

**Evaluation of achievement:** Able to identify issues that may arise when adopting an assertive approach to a Taiwan contingency

#### Move 3

**Positive evaluation:** Able to convey information to U.S. side accurately to facilitate Japan-U.S. cooperation

**Negative evaluation:** Inadequate response to nuclear intimidation

**Evaluation of achievement:** Confirmed the difficulty of responding to nuclear intimidation, handling the Three Nonnuclear Principles, and ensuring the credibility of the U.S.'s extended nuclear deterrence



## Observation ④

### Move 1

**Positive evaluation:** Able to set de-escalation as the basic policy throughout Moves 1 to 3; able to meet the U.S. Team's demands (use of Japan's airports, ports, and other facilities) by designating the situation as potentially having "serious impact on the peace and security of Japan"

**Negative evaluation:** Failure to work out details of active cyber defense and framework and methods for protection of submarine cables within the scope of maritime security operations.

### Move 2

**Positive evaluation:** Able to designate the PLA's setting a no-fly zone as an "armed attack situation," with Japan and the U.S. agreeing that this was a situation covered by Article 5 of the bilateral security treaty; able to take de-escalatory steps toward North Korea.

**Negative evaluation:** Unsure if the U.S. was properly informed that designation of an "armed attack situation" does not necessarily mean the SDF will be authorized to use force; such issues as how to handle and organize ships arriving at Yonaguni Island from Taiwan and the evacuation and protection of Japanese nationals in Taiwan were not addressed adequately; there was also the question of how to handle requests for humanitarian aid from the Taiwan president while maintaining the position of a neutral third party.

**Evaluation of achievement:** Issues identified include: procedures not in place for Diet approval to authorize use of military force in response to Chinese military planes violating Japan's territorial airspace when flying in the no-fly zone set up by the PLA and the SDF's lack of ROE

### Move 3

**Positive evaluation:** Based on a correct understanding of the limitation of Japan's military capability, able to make the realistic decision to regard persuading the U.S., which was not keen on intervention, as the top priority

**Negative evaluation:** Failure to interpret the Taiwan government's denunciation of the invasion and the Taiwan president's declaration that "Taiwan has entered into a state of war with China" as amounting to a declaration that Taiwan is a separate state from China. Thus, the Japanese government did not designate this as a "situation threatening Japan's survival."

Failure to touch on the importance of rescuing U.S. citizens in Taiwan from the bombings in Taiwan when persuading the U.S. to intervene militarily.

Handling of disinformation and nuclear intimidation was not necessarily

appropriate.

Failure to utilize the hotline set up between the Japanese and Chinese governments that was attempted in Move 2.

## [After Action Review by TTX Designer, Control Team]

Following is the After Action Review of the designers of this TTX and the Japanese side's control unit.

1. By holding the TTX based on a scenario with Japan-led design, it was possible to better reflect the Japanese side's problem awareness and its point of view. Many insights were gained on the various gaps and issues between Japan and the U.S. Furthermore, the overall design of the TTX, including the scenario, was rated positively by the U.S. side, so it can be concluded that the expected goals were mostly achieved.<sup>9</sup>
2. Forming the U.S. Team with American players gave authenticity to the U.S.'s behavior. In particular, this afforded clues to changes in the U.S. government's assessment of the situation over the years, its "true feeling" about the allies in a contingency, and subtle changes over the years.
3. Insights were gained on the ideal way of Japan-U.S. consultations in a contingency (activation of the ACM for high-level coordination, including at the ministerial level, designating an organization in the SDF that will potentially play the role of a permanent joint headquarters, etc.) In particular, a consensus was reached between the two countries on the urgency of setting up a permanent joint headquarters.
4. A gap in the understanding of extended deterrence emerged between the two countries. With regard to the perception of China's nuclear intimidation, it became clear that coordinating only after a contingency occurs will be difficult. It is necessary for the two countries to discuss extended deterrence constantly in peacetime and reconsider how to engage in such discussions.<sup>10</sup>
5. The participation of experienced and knowledgeable players from both sides afforded authenticity and credibility to the process and result of the TTX.
6. It became clear that with conspicuous differences in the situational assessment and decision-making between Japan and the U.S., it is very likely that in an actual contingency, there may be delays in Japan's joint actions with the U.S. military or it may be kept out of the loop temporarily.
7. The most obvious difference in decision-making between Japan and the U.S. is that before China launched its various offensives against Taiwan, the U.S.'s thinking process was anchored on the goal of dissuade-deter-defend that it maintained consistently while giving consideration to public opinion at home, whereas Japan's thinking shifted unsteadily in consideration of different variables, including legal designation of the situation, support for the U.S., and assertive and active show of force. Due to this difference, there was also a gap in the speed of situational awareness and decision-making.

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<sup>9</sup> Issues for the future to be discussed below.

<sup>10</sup> SPF engages in wargaming as one way of holding such discussion. See Sasakawa Peace Foundation, "Proposal for Regular Wargaming by the Japanese and U.S. Governments." [<https://www.spf.org/japan-us-alliance-study/global-data/user17/20221212164140266.pdf>] (in Japanese)

However, thanks to the format of the response sheet used in the TTX, the Japan Team was at least able to sustain its consideration for certain strategic goals and priorities.

8. There was a sharp contrast in the approach of both countries to a Taiwan contingency, with the U.S. maintaining a position of pursuing absolute operational victory, while Japan devoted a great deal of deliberations to the issues deriving from the contingency, such as refugees and legal judgments.
9. In light of the uncertainty over the channel of coordination on both sides for Japan-U.S. joint operations and the fact that the Japanese side did not raise questions with the U.S. side on joint operations, it is reckoned that setting up a permanent joint headquarters in Japan is a vital and urgent matter.
10. There was no coordination within the Japan Team and between the Japan and U.S. Teams regarding the navigation of civilian cargo ships for transporting aid supplies in response to Taiwan's request, traffic control of ships transporting Japanese nationals from Taiwan, as well as the protection of such ships. This is also a question of what the two countries perceived to be the necessary actions, and it highlights the absence of any bilateral emergency coordination mechanism in a contingency. Sorting out matters that need to be coordinated, including coordination between the permanent joint headquarters and its potential counterpart, will be an important issue from now on.
11. When faced with strategic issues such as nuclear deterrence, while the U.S. side has many means at its disposal, Japan has limited options, and this is perceived by the U.S. and Taiwan as a reflection of Japan's indifference. It is necessary to consider frameworks and methods to convey Japan's intent and its present situation to the U.S. and Taiwan during peacetime, and discussions on increasing Japan's options need to take place.
12. Even though it has become clear that discussions in Japan on the designation of security situations will be meaningless during a contingency, the Japan Team was evidently obsessed with such a debate. On the other hand, although the U.S. also has DEFCON and CYBERCON for classifying the seriousness of a situation in various domains<sup>11</sup>, the U.S. Team adhered to a clear thinking process: situational awareness → setting of national goals → list of priority responses → final decision-making.
13. The confusion in the thinking process and decision-making due to systemic constraints exemplified by the designation of security situations also had the usual effect on the Japan Team's participation in U.S.-led operations. For example, even though it had once taken a positive stance on participating in maritime escort operations as requested by the U.S., in the end, Japan realized that it had no ROE in place, thus resulting in indecisiveness in the debate on participation in the operation.
14. Certain issues were taken up at the discussion phase, but no conclusion was reached. For example, during the discussion on response, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) was presumed to be the main channel of communication between Japan and Taiwan, but there was no attempt to make full use of AIT for active communication with Taiwan. The same is true with the question of exercising the right to collective self-defense in connection with Taiwan.
15. Lastly, lack of serious consideration of response to disinformation, which is the most difficult part of hybrid warfare, can be cited as a problem. This is an issue common to Japan and the U.S. that will, no

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<sup>11</sup> For the U.S.'s situational awareness, see "Table 1 U.S. Situational Awareness." (page 19 of this report)

doubt, remain a problem for the future. While during the TTX, a U.S. Team member claimed that “China’s information warfare is a distraction,” the team reached the conclusion that greater efforts need to be devoted to studying this issue, including how this might affect Taiwan. Meanwhile, for the Japan Team, it has been pointed out that capabilities required of SDF officers need to be studied. There is concern that SDF officers have no understanding of the reality of hybrid warfare during Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Ministry of Defense is reportedly planning to acquire capabilities to use AI to collect and analyze open-source information automatically. It is also reported that the Maritime SDF will create a new unit with capabilities for responding to dissemination of disinformation by around 2025. However, each ministry and SDF unit must not only take their own measures; it is necessary to develop a framework centered on the National Security Council and National Security Secretariat based on a national strategy, and the Defense Ministry and all other ministries must work toward developing concrete cross-sectional, dynamic capabilities.

## [Issues for Future TTX]

This TTX was a very flexible Pol-Mil Seminar Game which involved not role players but team players. For this reason, strict role playing and updating and adjudication of the situation after each move did not take place. While it was a relatively simple TTX, several important policy issues were identified. For sure, this does not mean that the TTX was perfect. In terms of methodology, there were also issues with the TTX’s design and execution. Following are the main issues.

1. Additional actors (teams): The TTX process will gain greater authenticity by adding a Taiwan team and a China team, the red team. Authenticity will improve further through meticulous red teaming, in particular.
2. Situation updating: The situation changes with the actors’ response in each move. Therefore, the situation in the scenario for the next move should be updated. Although this will be an additional burden on the control team, it will facilitate more realistic developments in the game. Increasing the number of staff members to put this into practice will also be an issue.
3. Introduction of adjudication: Adjudication is a necessary step for updating the situation. For example, it is necessary to determine the success or failure of cyberattacks, attribution, and specific responses.
4. Improvement of technical support: Utilization of digital technologies, AI, and so forth as aids may facilitate speedier and better liaison between the control team and the other teams, visualizing the situation in the digital simulated COP (Common Operational Picture), and speedier and better communication between the teams.
5. Better facilitation: The support of the facilitator from the sideline is indispensable for making headway in the game when decision-making is not proceeding smoothly in the teams or when the situational awareness of the teams deviates significantly from the scenario.
6. Execution by different players: Unlike computer simulation, TTX cannot be repeated over and over again instantaneously. Therefore, although it has its limitations, executing the TTX several times by

different but trustworthy players will enhance confidence in the general accuracy of the result and the credibility of the TTX.

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Security Studies Program, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation  
The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Heritage Foundation Report on FY2022 TTX (Table Top Exercise)  
**Taiwan Contingency Scenario: Escalation from Low-Intensity Hybrid Warfarer**

2023.9

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