

Evolving Aerospace Trends in the Asia-Pacific Region

Keynote: Analysis of PRC Aerospace Capability Development

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Thank you Randy for this invitation to return to Washington D.C. to join the event of the Project 2049 Institute. My presence here is not official even though I carry the hat as the Deputy Defense Minister of my country. I am very much emotionally attached to the think tank community, and I considered it very satisfactory to come back again to enjoy the wisdom and innovative thinking of Mark Stokes, Paul Giarra, and Jim Thomas. Randy and Mark have allocated an hour for my presentation but I would like to divide my time to talk about the present situation and defense posture in Taiwan for the first 25 to 30 minutes and then I would like to extend the invitation to the audience to ask any question. I will try my best to answer them in my individual point of view, not an official alignment.

To begin with, you would probably be aware, that starting from 2008, there is a change of government in Taiwan. My president, Ma Ying-jeou, has adopted a different approach in terms of advancing Taiwan, elevating the country in a more stable and peaceful direction. This is a very important strategic choice for the government, which basically pursues an engagement policy with Beijing based on no use of force, no unification, and certainly no abdication of independence of Taiwan. Immediately, I think that President Ma is trying to convey good will and sincerity to Beijing so that both sides can face the reality and develop pragmatic and beneficial relations between the two sides. The so-called 92 consensus is the benchmark to facilitate the process of these engagements between the two sides. That is to say, both sides satisfy the essential political disputes and pursuing the dialogue or cooperation to create more beneficial relations between the two sides. Of course, that will also provide benefits for the people and businessmen across the Taiwan Strait based on peaceful engagement between each other.

At the same time, we are also reaching out to Beijing. We have to find whatever means to prevent war between two sides. We still consider that Beijing is a major threat, not only because it stations 1400 or so ballistic missile as Mark has clearly indicated; probably you are fully aware we are the country first experienced a missile crisis in the 1990. Between 1995 and 1996, Beijing has launched a number of full-range ballistic missiles in the Taiwan Straits area, which certainly create high tension in Taiwan Strait.

We are truly grateful that the United States responded to this situation swiftly and helping us stand-down the tension and resuming stability as well. However, since then, we truly consider missile

deployment from the China side as a clear and present threat to us. Repeatedly, the government has urged Beijing to pull back or dismantle those missiles. For the sake of paving peace between two sides, at the same time enhancing mutual trust, that we will actually work for peace in the Taiwan Strait area.

We consider those missiles to not only have immediate, massive threats towards the critical installation of Taiwan, but it sent a negative message to the population in Taiwan as well, because the missile represents Beijing's intention to use non-peaceful means for the sake of political objectives. This is the reason why people are really frustrated by this approach. Secondly, missiles also represent threat acceleration towards Taiwan as well, which is something that creates uncertainty and anxiety to the Taiwanese people and businessmen traveling between two sides and the region. Further, it creates instability for the Asia-Pacific region. To support the engagement policy laid down by the government, we are also pursuing necessary, affordable, and adequate defense transformation in Taiwan.

We are preparing ourselves to focus on preventive defense, which means the priority of defense is to prevent a war in the Taiwan Strait area. Our concept and intention to conduct necessary defense modernization and transformation is not to provoke Beijing or to create war situation in the Taiwan Strait area. We are not actually pursuing intensive offensive capabilities in Taiwan. What we have tried to do is to consolidate our defense postures, as Mark has just mentioned, to face possible strikes from Beijing.

We developed the kind of war scenarios in terms of conducting our exercises. These scenarios in the war situation will begin with massive missile attacks from Beijing, which attempts to neutralize our defense infrastructures, major political and economic centers. So we have to try our best to survive the massive missile attack over Taiwan.

We have no intention to conduct attrition war with Beijing, because we are small and they are big, and they are more advanced in terms of nuclear capability than we are. We will try our best to protect ourselves, hardening, digging and creating multiple protections for our critical and advanced defense systems. That is the priority for our defense construction in the course of continuous development.

If we can survive massive attacks from Beijing by missiles, we would not only be able to reassure the population that we can stand up against the aggression, we would also be able to quickly integrate the morale and participation from all sides of the society and face a second round of attack from Beijing if they control the air and the sea. The way we are protecting our defense assets is to counterattack, or counteract, Beijing's follow-up invasion or multiple attacks by airpower, and possible blockade of sea, or even conducting amphibious landing operations to occupy Taiwan. So the kind of concept we have in mind right now in terms of consolidating our defense is to improve the military and make it smaller and stronger. That means the kind of transformation which is undertaking right now is to cope with the kind of scenario that Beijing is going to conduct against Taiwan in the near future.

In addition, this kind of preventive policy and defense construction also sends a strong political message back to Beijing because we can sufficiently defend ourselves and you have tremendous difficulties in terms of coming over and taking over Taiwan by military operation, making Beijing difficult to conduct

military operation to achieve their political objective so that they will probably be persuaded not to use force.

So the kind of preventive defense strategy and policy adopted by my government is to make sure people have the confidence in our defense, and that all legislators will cooperate and allocate necessary resources into defense modernization. Certainly we want to make sure Beijing will not think of using military operations to take over Taiwan. We are not in the position to encourage Beijing to use force. Certainly we hope Beijing will realize that the use of force towards Taiwan will not succeed in their political objectives and will only create disaster for everyone in the region and for themselves as well. So this is what we have done in terms of continuous consolidating our self-defense.

As I mentioned earlier in other occasions and I repeatedly emphasize, peace through strength, which is my president's famous phrase when we responded to questions from our parliament. We are determined to continue to consolidate our defense through necessary transformation and innovative thinking in terms conducting modernization process.

In addition, we are also focusing on peacetime missions as well. Now disaster relief or humanitarian relief operation are becoming a major task for our force. We rapidly responded to those suffering from natural disasters, like earthquake or typhoon or landslides. We are aware of the wide-range public support for conducting this type of disaster support. By that kind of exercise, our active service officers and men can actually conduct necessary training through these disaster relief operations, and we can apply our additional equipment to cope with this mission.

We also extend relief operations abroad, to the region, if there is a need for our systems. We certainly will offer whatever we can do and our best to the regional disaster relief. We already have many cases in the past where we sent out our relief teams by air or by sea to meet the needs in the region, in Indonesia, and Balkans, for example. A couple of months when Haiti suffered from a severe earthquake, we also sent our transporters to conduct relief operations, and offering Haiti assistance in necessary equipment and medical supply. This will be an area for our forces to fulfill with in the future. I think that we are already increasing domestic consensus in support for these engagements.

We are in favor of preventive defense construction and also providing us with adequate, affordable and accurate defense systems and weapons. So everything we do here is to reassure our citizens and allies, we are here to defend ourselves. We will not neglect our defense in the face of peaceful engagements with Beijing. We are fully aware that we are still facing clear and present threat from the other side of the Taiwan Strait. Certainly, we are continuously urging Beijing to reconsider their approach, give up their use of force, and reach out to the region to be responsible stakeholder and this will enhance Taiwanese competence to conduct peaceful relations with China.