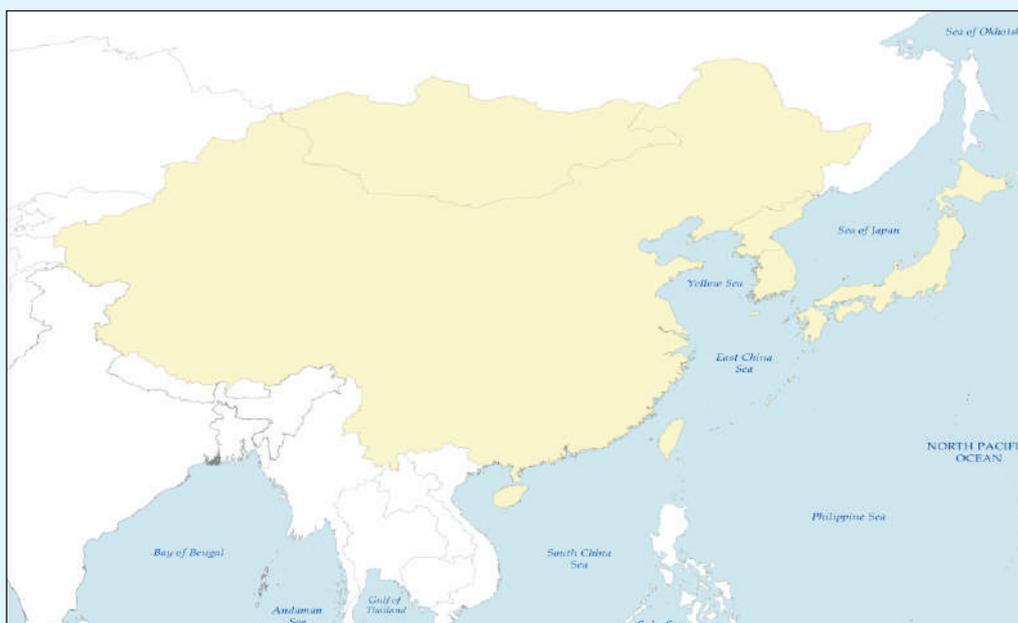


# EAST ASIA MILITARY MONITOR

VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 4

APRIL 2022



- **China-Solomon Islands Sign Military Pact**
- **Xi Jinping Proposes Global Security Initiative at BFA 2022**
- **Experts deliberate on US support for Taiwan in an event of Chinese invasion**
- **LDP Submits Defence Related Proposal**
- **Japan's 2022 Diplomatic Bluebook**
- **North Korea stages night time military parade**
- **RoK and NATO hold Military Committee meeting**

## CHINA

### China, Solomon Islands Sign Military Pact

Amidst intense speculation regarding the security agreement between China and the Solomon Islands, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin [confirmed](#) on 19 April during a press briefing that China and the Solomon Islands signed an inter-governmental framework in March. According to Chinese state news agency [Xinhua](#), the pact promotes long-term stability in the Solomon Islands, along with safeguarding social order, providing humanitarian aid, and helping cope with natural disasters. Due to its considerable geopolitical and military implications, the news of the signing of the security pact created widespread [alarm](#) amongst China's neighbours and the United States (US). However, both the Solomon Islands and China sought to assuage fears expressed by the concerned countries. On 29 March, the Solomon Islands' Prime Minister declared to the nation's parliament that the deal with Beijing largely addresses the Islands' internal security situation. Likewise, Wang Wenbin [stated](#) at another press conference held on 25 April, that "the speculation that China will build a military base in the Solomon Islands is pure disinformation fabricated by a handful of people who harbour ulterior motives".

### Xi Jinping Proposes Global Security Initiative at BFA 2022

Chinese President Xi Jinping [proposed](#) a 'Global Security Initiative' on 21 April in a speech at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2022. The proposed plan highlighted [six broad areas](#) of focus — comprehensive and cooperative security, commitment to sovereignty and territorial integrity, rejection of Cold War dynamics, opposition to the pursuit of individual security at the cost of others, and maintenance of security in traditional and non-traditional domains such as terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity, and biosecurity. Following

Xi's speech, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi published an article in the *People's Daily* [stating](#) that the Global Security Initiative would oppose disruption of the international order and would "build an Asian security model of mutual respect, openness and integration". Further, in a regular press briefing held on 23 April, Wang Wenbin [stated](#) that "the Global Security Initiative upholds true multilateralism. It is open to the world and welcomes the participation of all countries." In this context, it is noteworthy that the 'Global Security Initiative' does not offer anything that is conceptually new and is a reiteration of political values that have already been specified by Chinese leaders on numerous occasions. However, its emergence during the Ukraine war with emphasis on Asian security has [concerned](#) political experts about China's intentions regarding Asia in the aftermath of the war.

Incidentally some political experts have opined that the Chinese military is closely studying Russia's military performance in Ukraine to assess whether the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would be able to pull off a more complex operation in Taiwan after its [military modernisation](#). Learning from the Russian [debacle](#), one scholar observed that the PLA might be considering a more rapid military dominance tactic towards the Taiwanese forces for securing their advantage. Not only that, the scenario in Taiwan provides many more logistical challenges than those being faced by the Russian forces in Ukraine; the information warfare would be far more challenging for the PLA.

## TAIWAN

### Experts deliberate on US support for Taiwan in the event of Chinese invasion

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, *Foreign Policy* and William & Mary's Global Research Institute collaborated to conduct a [survey](#) to gauge the level of support in the US about Washington's commitment to Taiwan's defence in an event of a Chinese invasion of the island.

The survey was conducted from 10 to 14 March, involving 866 academics from various universities in the US. They were asked primarily about potential measures that the US could undertake if China uses military force against Taiwan. The survey revealed that 94 per cent of the respondents supported sanctions against Chinese leaders and 83 per cent of them wanted the US government to send “additional arms and military supplies to Taiwan. In terms of a US military response, 72 per cent favoured “deploying US military forces in the region and only 18 per cent thought that the US should initiate direct military action against China.

The Ukraine crisis has prompted Taiwanese experts to analyse and assess their own security situation vis-à-vis China and the possibility of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Among the various scenarios discussed, one is that while invading Taiwan proper is still a low probability, Xi Jinping can authorise the invasion of Kinmen County or any other outlying island of Taiwan. Since this invasion would not affect Taiwan, international support for Taiwan, including any possible US sanctions against China, may not be forthcoming.

## JAPAN

### LDP Submits Defence Related Proposal

In April, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) submitted their [proposal](#) regarding the revision of three important defence documents to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, namely, Japan’s National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Programme Guidelines (NDPG) and the Medium-Term Defense Force Build-up Programme (MTDP). If approved, this will be the first revision of the NSS since 2013.

The LDP’s proposal reflected on Moscow’s invasion in Ukraine, advancements in Pyongyang’s missile and nuclear programmes, and Beijing’s increasing assertiveness around Taiwan. It recommended that the government undertake steps ensuring Tokyo’s security

“without being constrained by precedents”. Accordingly, the proposal suggested acquiring “counterstrike capabilities” to attack enemy bases and command-and-control nodes. Given the reservations with the term “pre-emptive strike capabilities” under the constitution, the LDP recommended that the government could employ the term “counterstrike capabilities” in order to alleviate fears among the public and the coalition partner, Komeito. It further suggested doubling the defence spending to two per cent of the GDP over five years and emphasised that it is very important to secure the necessary defence capabilities in a timely manner, given that the security environment around Japan is likely to become even more severe over the next decade. While advancing its recommendation, the LDP also noted Germany’s policy shift to increase its defence budget in the wake of the war in Ukraine. However, the proposal did not include the call made by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to consider discussion on a NATO-style nuclear weapons-sharing deal with Washington. As Japan reviewed its key security documents, the LDP called for formulating a National Defense Strategy instead of the NDPG, and a Defense Force Development Plan to replace the MTDP. It was suggested that “acquiring counterstrike capabilities that can target both enemy bases and command posts would give Japan more options for retaliating against mobile- and submarine-launched missiles and serve as a deterrent against possible attacks”.

In a related development, media reports indicated that Japan may opt to [classify](#) portions of the NDPG following recommendations by the LDP, in addition to the suggestions made by security experts invited to the government’s closed-door hearings. However, there is a view that it would be difficult to review Japan’s security strategy in case the Guidelines come under the 2014 secrecy law.

### Japan’s 2022 Diplomatic Bluebook

Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the 2022 edition of the

[Diplomatic Bluebook](#) on 22 April. The highlights of this year's edition were references to Taiwan Strait and the row over Northern Territories. While the 2022 Diplomatic Bluebook stressed for the first time in almost two decades that Japan's Northern Territories have been "illegally occupied" by Moscow, it mentioned Taiwan five times which is in contrast to its total absence in earlier editions from 2017 to 2021. The Bluebook indicated that Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has damaged the foundation of international order, and emphasised that Moscow should pay a high price for its behaviour through coordinated sanctions. Further, it referred to Beijing as a major security concern given its increasing military activities near Japan, and also reflected on China's relations with Moscow. Also, Taiwan featured alongside Tokyo's concerns over the contested Senkaku Islands, and the South and East China Seas.

Tokyo maintains that unilaterally altering the status quo by force cannot be accepted. Threats emanating from North Korea's repeated launching of different types of missiles are a cause of grave concern. The Bluebook mentioned that Japan seeks full implementation of the relevant UNSC Resolutions vis-à-vis Pyongyang in cooperation with the international community.

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### North Korea stages night-time military parade

On 25 April, North Korea conducted a night-time [military parade](#) to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The parade [featured](#) thousands of troops and some of North Korea's most powerful weapons including the largest Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) *Hwasong-17*, which was tested last month and some shorter-range solid fuel missiles. The highlight of the parade was the speech by its supreme leader Kim Jong-un. According to the [transcript](#) of the speech published by the official news media North

Korean Central News Agency, Kim called nuclear weapons a symbol of national power and pledged to continue to advance the nation's nuclear capabilities at a rapid pace. The military parade and Kim's speech did not attract any immediate official response from North Korea's neighbours and the US. However, China's Special Representative on Korean Peninsula Affairs Liu Xiaoming [remarked](#) in a meeting with his South Korean counterpart on 3 May, that China would play a constructive role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

North Korea's display of military force and resolve to step up development of nuclear weapons comes in the backdrop of stalled denuclearisation talks with the US and the emergence of a conservative leadership in South Korea. This in turn is likely to aggravate an arms race in the Korean Peninsula and further dampen the Six-Party Talks.

### RoK and NATO hold Military Committee meeting

Keeping in line with South Korean President-elect Yoon Seok-youl's campaign promise of aligning more closely with the US, South Korea's Minister of National Defense Suh Wook, held a meeting with Admiral Rob Bauer, the Chair of the NATO Military Committee in Seoul from 9 to 12 April. According to a [press statement](#) published on NATO's website, the meeting between the leaders was held primarily to discuss the South Korea-NATO partnership and ways to increase military cooperation between the two. The conversation between the two parties also addressed other issues like weapons of mass destruction and cyber defence and promotion of information sharing. In this context, it is noteworthy that South Korea and NATO have been [engaged](#) in dialogue and cooperation since 2005 for mitigation of shared security challenges like cyber defence, non-proliferation, and counter-terrorism. Further, South Korea is one of the "partners across the globe" with whom NATO is developing relations.