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Report:

Implications of Russia's War in Ukraine for a Possible Chinese Invasion of Taiwan

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine has been a point of focus for the international community due to the increasingly bellicose and revisionist attitude of its powerful neighbor. More recently, a rising China has stepped up the pressure and its aggressive rhetoric on Taiwan, which it claims is a breakaway province that should be re-united with the mainland – peacefully in a Hong Kong-style arrangement or by military force if necessary. Meanwhile, a troubled United States sees itself split along two fronts in the international arena, as it tries to maintain its commitments to defending the self-governing island in Asia and the NATO-based security architecture in Europe. On a surface level, foreign affairs commentators have compared and linked the two cases to each other – an exercise that has become all the more relevant since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022.

In the eyes of western media and civil society, China and Russia have both grown closer together and become increasingly bold as a result, raising the question of whether the invasion of Ukraine would precipitate an invasion of Taiwan (Chin, 2022; McCarthy, 2022; Fife & Chase, 2022). However, likening the cases of Ukraine and Taiwan to create a convenient narrative for western audiences obscures essential characteristics of both situations. It risks misleading policymakers about the effect of the Russian invasion on Chinese thinking. A more rigorous comparison is needed to present an accurate assessment of the situation.

Methodology

I will first examine and compare the Ukrainian and the Taiwanese contexts on four fronts: their respective domestic historical, domestic political, international legal and international political contexts. This will be done using established academic sources and supplemented with news articles and encyclopedic sources. I will then assess the impact of the Russian experience in Ukraine thus far on the likelihood of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan by examining the factors that are likely to enter into China's calculations and the intelligence signals that could inform on an actual change of mindset in Beijing. Given the ongoing evolution of the situation in Ukraine, this will be done using a mixture of news articles, expert commentaries and think tank reports.

This report finds that the Ukrainian and Taiwanese situations are not equivalent, but neither do they lack in similarities. It is clear that China will be watching the Russian invasion and taking away important lessons that will inform future developments in Taiwan. And the difficulties experienced by Russia may be causing China to delay, or even reconsider, an invasion of the island. That being said, due to the fluid nature of the situation, any conclusions reached here about implications for China may not apply at a future time.

Domestic Historical Context

In terms of domestic historical context, Ukraine and Taiwan share similarities in that their respective histories are both intimately tied to that of the larger neighbouring country that threatens their existence. For Ukraine, this shared history begins with the Kievan Rus, which was a federation of people in Eastern Europe that encompassed most

of modern-day Ukraine, Belarus and Western Russia that existed from the 9th to the 13th century, with its capital located in Kyiv (Kalb, 2015). Ukraine, Belarus and Russia all regard the Kievan Rus – sometimes referred to as "the first Russia" – as their cultural ancestor and claim themselves to be its rightful successor. Ukraine as a political entity then came under Cossack domination, only to be incorporated into the Russian Empire from the mid-18th century until 1917, when it briefly became independent during the Russian Revolution. Ukraine was then incorporated into the newly formed Soviet Union in 1922 until its dissolution in 1991. Ukrainian nationalism had risen in the 19th century, only to be repressed by Russian authorities. This was continued under Soviet domination during Stalin's rule, when collectivization of agriculture and forced industrialization led to the Great Famine in the 1930s – otherwise known as the "Holodomor" – which killed millions of Ukrainians and is regarded by some countries as a Stalinist act of genocide. The Nazis also exterminated millions of Ukrainians during the Second World War during their occupation of the country.

Ukraine secured independence in 1991, but was far from free of Russian influence. In 2004, the Orange Revolution brought pro-European presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko to power after mass demonstrations denied victory to pro-Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovych after allegations that the election had been rigged (Kuzio, 2016). Yanukovych was then elected president in 2010, only to be ousted again in 2014 during the Euromaidan protest movement, which erupted as a result of Yanukovych choosing to establish closer ties with the Russian Federation and moving away from a prospective association agreement with the European Union (EU). In 2014, Russia invaded and annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, doing so under the guise of a local

referendum deemed illegal under Ukrainian law – whose validity was also disputed internationally (Ingelevič-Citak, 2015; Mälksoo, 2019).

As for Taiwan, its relationship with China officially began in 1683 when the island was formally annexed by the Qing Empire as a part of the neighboring Fujian province on the Chinese mainland (Huang, 2014). It was then ceded to Japan with the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 after the Chinese defeat at the end of the First Sino-Japanese War. Taiwan was then re-taken by China, then known as the Republic of China (ROC), in 1945. This occurred following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, when the Chinese Nationalist Party – also referred to as the Kuomintang (KMT) – secured Taiwan's return to the Chinese central government. At the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War, what was left of the KMT fled from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to the island in 1949, making Taiwan the only territory controlled by the ROC and leaving the mainland under the control of the newly established People's Republic of China (PRC). The island was subsequently governed by a military dictatorship under the KMT from 1949 to 1987, which justified the use of martial law based on the threat of a Communist invasion of the island coming from the mainland. Martial law was kept in place for 38 years, during which the ROC maintained an authoritarian, single-party government.

Then came the international recognition of the PRC in 1971, when most countries switched from recognizing the ROC to establishing ties with the PRC as the legitimate representative of China. After martial law was lifted in 1988, other political parties like the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) created in 1986 were legitimized and allowed to seriously compete for power, heralding a new era of multi-party democracy. The Chinese

Civil War was formally ended in 1991 by the ROC. In 1992, the ROC and PRC developed a "consensus" to frame cross-strait relations. The consensus stated that both sides recognized that there is one China, but that each side could have its own interpretation of what China stands for. Since 2016, there has been an increase in the tensions with the PRC due to the election, in Taiwan, of DPP presidential candidate and pro-independence advocate Tsai Ing-Wen in 2016.

Domestic Political Context

In terms of domestic political context, Ukraine and Taiwan again have similarities, notably that their politics are defined by a resistance to either Russian or Chinese influence. In the case of Ukraine, its politics have taken place within the framework of a semi-presidential representative democratic republic with a multi-party system after independence in 1991. Since then it has been defined by political parties funded by oligarchs that rarely survive more than one electoral cycle (Odarchenko, 2020). For instance, Servant of the People, the current party in power founded by incumbent President Zelensky, was only created in 2017 and allegedly received financing from oligarch Igor Kolomoisky (Hromadske International, 2019; Ray, 2019). Ukraine's political spectrum is characterized by two major movements, with parties tending to be either pro-Russian or pro-Western in orientation. The pro-Russian movement draws its support from Eastern Ukraine, while the western part of the country leans towards pro-Western parties (Schmid, 2019; Masters, 2022). This trend has led to periodic shifts between pro-Russian and pro-Western presidents since the mid-2000s, starting with pro-European Viktor Yushchenko in 2005; then pro-Russia Viktor Yanukovych in 2010; then pro-European Petro Poroshenko in 2014; and finally pro-European Volodymyr Zelensky

in 2019 (Presidents of Ukraine, n.d.). The continuity between pro-European presidents Poroshenko and Zelensky is largely a result of Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, which decisively pushed Ukrainian public opinion towards the pro-European camp (Masters, 2022).

As for Taiwan, the island also has a semi-presidential representative democratic republic with a multi-party system, with two main established political parties. The first one, the KMT, leads the Pan-Blue coalition in Taiwanese politics, which is a group of parties that favor Chinese reunification (Lin, 2019; Fell, 2021). It fully embraces the 1992 One China Consensus and believes that any mention of independence is damaging to cross-strait relations. The second one, the DPP, leads the Pan-Green coalition, which is a group of parties that favors "Taiwanization" and a form of Taiwanese independence. It rejects the 1992 One China Consensus and claims that Taiwan is already independent and sovereign. Similar to Ukraine, Taiwan has been undergoing democratization since the 1990s. Democratization officially began with the birth of the DPP in 1986. However, the KMT was dominant in Taiwanese politics until the year 2000. The DPP then dominated politics from 2000 to 2008, before the KMT regained control from 2008 to 2016. Finally, the DPP swept the KMT away in 2016 with the election of current President Tsai Ing-Wen, who was re-elected in 2020. There has been a steady increase in the strength of "Taiwanese" national identity in recent decades. A plurality of citizens now believe that Taiwan's independence is more likely than unification, and about 75% believe that Taiwan is already an independent country (Hickey, 2020).

International Legal Context

In terms of international legal context, Ukraine and Taiwan are characterized by very distinct situations. Ukraine is an internationally recognized sovereign state which meets the criteria of the 1933 Montevideo Convention: (1) a defined territory, (2) a permanent population, (3) a functioning government, and (4) the ability to enter into other relations with other states (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.; Member States, n.d.). The last criteria is supported by the fact that the Soviet Union – which Ukraine used to be a part of – and its Russian successor state recognized the country's independence in 1991 (Ingelevič-Citak, 2015). However, Ukraine does have its fair share of international legal issues to contend with. For instance, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimean violated Ukraine' territorial integrity in 2014, a development that has repeated itself with Russia's recognition of the breakaway Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) shortly before its invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Sayapin & Tsybulenko, 2018; Pitchford, 2022). In addition, by launching a full-scale war against the country, the Kremlin has recently adopted an implicitly revisionist attitude – with the underlying premise that Ukraine is in reality a historic part of Russia (Masters, 2022; Remnick, 2022).

As for Taiwan, its situation is much more complex due to it being an unrecognized de-facto state (Relitz, 2019). Its status is unclear under international law in terms of the Montevideo criteria, since it has (1) a permanent population, (2) a defined territory, and (3) a functioning government, but limited (4) capacity to enter into relations with other states because of active opposition by the PRC (Chiang, 2017). Regardless, 47 countries that do not "recognise" the island as an independent state have representatives

in Taipei, and Taiwan itself maintains embassies in every one of the 14 states that recognises it, alongside other institutionalized forms of representation in 59 additional countries (Relitz, 2019). Taiwan is also a member of various international organizations, including the World Trade Organization, and has signed numerous bilateral treaties on economic, cultural, and even military cooperation with countries that do not recognise it. Taiwan's unclear status is a result of the unresolved outcome of the Chinese Civil War. The ROC's Constitution still lists the mainland as a part of its territory, but the PRC also lists Taiwan as a part of its territory. The notion of "one country, two governments" – which is the basis of the 1992 One China Consensus – adds to the confusion; it is a mutual acknowledgement that both sides claim to represent China but that there de-facto exist two equally functioning governments (Chiang, 2017; Relitz, 2019).

International Political Context

In terms of the international political context, Ukraine and Taiwan appear to share similarities at first glance but again differ significantly. As a former part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine has been drifting steadily towards the West since independence, expressing its desire to join both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU (Masters, 2022). The country applied to NATO under a Membership Access Plan (MAP) in 2008 and signed the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement in 2014; it even applied for express entry into the EU shortly after the 2022 Russian invasion began and called on NATO to impose a no-fly zone over its airspace (Kuleba, 2021; EU relations with Ukraine, 2022; Fella, 2022; Strohmeyer, Reid & Hwang, 2022). Yet despite all the Ukrainian efforts to join these two institutions, Russian threats (based on concerns about its security being threatened by closer ties between Ukraine and the West) have proven

powerful enough to deter the EU and NATO from granting membership (Faiola, 2022; Masters, 2022).

As for Taiwan, despite its lack of official statehood it benefits from having a pseudo-military alliance with the United States (Scobell & Stevenson-Yang, 2022; Chen, 2016). The defense pact between Taipei and Washington was replaced in 1979 by the Taiwan Relations Act, as a part of American efforts to maintain semi-official relations (Bush, 2004). Although the Act itself does not contain language that explicitly guarantees military support from the United States in the event of an attack on Taiwan by the PRC, many in the US government believe that such a commitment exists – and this "strategic ambiguity" has been enough to deter Beijing so far. Successive US administrations have also repeatedly stated that they would defend the island against Chinese aggression (Scobell & Stevenson-Yang, 2022; Chen, 2016). The Taiwanese population is also convinced that the United States will bear the brunt of the fighting should China invade (Hickey, 2020). This has been accompanied by regular arm sales to Taiwan and an increase in the number of visits by US politicians to the island in recent years.

Comparison Summary

As two of the most important flashpoints in world politics, Ukraine and Taiwan share important similarities – especially when it comes to the relationship with their larger neighbor. Yet they also differ in key aspects. On the domestic historical front, the shared history between Russia and Ukraine reveals a pattern whereby Ukraine continuously has had to defend its existence as an independent nation from Russian imperialism. The shared history between mainland China and the island of Taiwan

reveals a similar but slightly different pattern, in that Taiwan has historically been Chinese but has also developed a sense of nationhood of its own in recent years – something China wants to suppress. On the domestic political front, both Ukraine and Taiwan developed democratic systems with political dynamics characterized by a split between pro-Russian/pro-unification and pro-Western/pro-independence movements – with a shift towards the latter in recent years.

On the international legal front, Ukraine is a well established and recognized state – although its existence is increasingly brought into question by Russia – whereas the case of Taiwan is characterized by legal uncertainty. Taiwan's situation brings up questions such as whether Taiwan belongs to China, which China it belongs to, and whether "two Chinas" are the equivalent of "one China." On the international political front, sovereign Ukraine has been officially left stranded by NATO and the EU in the face of Russian aggression, whereas Taiwan, regardless of its unofficial status, can certainly count on American military support to defend itself from China.

Based on the above, likening Ukraine to Taiwan is not completely accurate, but also not totally devoid of merit. Rather than debating its appropriateness, the comparison should be seen as a useful exercise in policymaking, since the similarities and differences have important implications for how major powers – such as the United States, Russia, the European Union, and China – translate the lessons learned in one situation to the other. This leads us to the question of how Russia's invasion of Ukraine may have affected the likelihood of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

Implications for China

In terms of examining the implications of the war in Ukraine on China's approach to Taiwan, it is important to acknowledge the difficulty of accurately analyzing the mindset of the Chinese leadership, given the secretive tendencies of the CCP and autocracies in general. In recognition of this fact, the second part of this report explores two avenues through which Beijing's internal reaction can be assessed. I will begin by analyzing major factors which in theory should weight heavily into the Chinese calculus behind any plans for an invasion of Taiwan. I will then move on to explore the various intelligence signals emanating from China that either substantiate or disprove the conclusion reached by the major factor analysis.

Major Factors

Opportunity to Invade

The first major factor to consider is the opportunity that Russia's invasion of Ukraine presents to China. At the onset of the conflict, the parallels drawn between the situation in Ukraine and Taiwan led to the observation that China could take advantage of an American pivot to Europe to attack the island (Colby & Mastro, 2022). The United States no longer enjoys the military superiority it did at the end of the Cold War and thus cannot afford, with its allies, to spread itself along two fronts located in regions geographically distant from each other (Sacks, 2022). China now boasts a large and modern military and – while deterred so far by the US-Taiwan relationship – could see the Russo-Ukrainian War as a window of opportunity to invade the island. This would be done knowing that the American military might not be able to fully deliver on its

commitment to defend the island, due to its resources already being mobilized to support Ukraine and NATO allies. The Russian attack has already re-ignited public debate in Taiwan over the readiness of its defence forces – prompting calls to create a civilian defense force and extend conscription (Davidson, March 2022; Davidson, April 2022). Since it decreases the likelihood of strong American military support for Taiwan, this major factor increases the likelihood of a Chinese military invasion.

International Economic Sanctions

The second major factor to consider is the effect of international economic sanctions on the Russian economy as a retaliation for its invasion of Ukraine. The effectiveness of economic sanctions as a deterrent was questioned after they were imposed on Russia following its annexation of Crimea in 2014. However, the depth and breath of the current round of sanctions imposed by Western countries in response to the attack on Ukraine has taken Russia and the world by surprise (Constable, 2022; Chatzky, 2019). They target an extensive range of Russian entities – banks, companies, oligarchs, politicians, airlines – across a wide array of sectors – finance, oil and gas, technology, military, transportation – with the intent of crippling Russia's economy to deny it the ability to economically sustain its war effort (Funakoshi, Lawson & Deka, 2022; Hufbauer & Hogan, 2022). They involve measures such as export bans to Russia, substitution of Russian imports, financial asset freezes and property seizures.

While Russia has been preparing since 2014 for such contingencies, this has not prevented the current economic damage brought about by the sanctions. Russia is currently experiencing major shortages, faces a sovereign debt default and has had to

raise interest rates to 20% to prevent capital flight (Davies & Alper, 2022; Turak 2022; Ivanova, 2022). This acts as a signal to China, whose economy is even more reliant on access to international markets: two-way trade represented 36 percent of its GDP in 2019, compared to 25 percent for Russia, excluding oil and gas exports (Hufbauer & Hogan, 2022; Huang & Lardy, 2022). For China, the possibility of Russia-style sanctions would imply a drastic fall in living standards, at a time when its economy has been affected by the Sino-American trade war and the recent Evergrande debt crisis (Hoskins, 2021), and where related concerns (on the part of the CPC) about public opinion have heightened. This major factor decreases the likelihood of a Chinese military invasion.

Military Effectiveness

The third major factor to consider is Russia's poor military performance. Western analysts and the Russian themselves predicted that Ukraine would fall quickly to the Russian war machine – with estimates claiming that the capital Kyiv would be conquered in 72 hours (Dyer, 2022; Cookman, 2022; Eckel, 2022; Hagstrom, 2022). With the war soon entering its third month and Kyiv still standing, Ukraine has proven more than capable of defending itself. In addition to receiving significant help from NATO countries in the form of military hardware, Ukraine has benefited from having highly motivated troops due to the existential nature of the Russian threat (Gramer, Detsch, & Mackinnon, 2022; Boot, 2022). This stands in stark contrast to the Russian experience, which has been characterized by defective equipment, low morale and a high number of casualties – estimated by the United Kingdom to be as high as 15 000 as of April 26th (Boot, 2022; Buncombe, 2022; Beliakova, 2022; Saul, 2022). Russia's poor military

performance thus serves as a cautionary tale for China and its People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Once referred to as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" by General Douglas MacArthur, Taiwan's physical geography also complicates any prospective full-scale invasion plan by the PLA (Yoo, 2020; Fife & Chase, 2022). Whereas Ukraine and Russia share a continuous land border on flat terrain, facilitating the movement of troops, Taiwan is an island; China would therefore have to perform an amphibious landing – something difficult to achieve (Gatopoulos, 2022; Fife & Chase, 2022). This factor combines with Russia's surprising poor military performance to significantly decrease the likelihood of a Chinese invasion.

International Public Opinion

The fourth major factor to consider is the international public opinion regarding Russian aggression towards Ukraine. According to Russian propaganda, the invasion is justified using various narratives: to destroy bioweapon facilities, prevent the genocide of Russian minorities, or even "de-nazify" Ukraine (Lee, 2022). In more strategic and legal terms, Russia has also tried to frame its actions through the lens of legitimate defense in the face of NATO expansion – an argument rooted in the Russian belief that it had the right to a share of the balance of power on the European continent (Rice-Oxley, 2022; Mälkoo, 2019). Despite the Kremlin's efforts to build a credible rationale, international public opinion has sided against it, as exemplified by a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution condemning the invasion gaining 141 votes on March 4 (Wilson Center, 2022; International Crisis Group, 2022).

For China, which has been struggling to maintain the image of a "peaceful" and "responsible" rising superpower, the Russian experience of antagonizing a sizable portion of the international community is worrisome (Kurlantzick, 2022; Tian, 2021; Carafano, 2022). Despite Taiwan not being a sovereign state like Ukraine, its de-facto status as a self-governing democracy attracts sympathy worldwide; a Ukraine-style attack against it would antagonize other states and trigger fears of Chinese expansionism among Chinese neighbors. This major factor decreases the likelihood of Chinese invasion.

China's Own Foreign Policy

Ironically, the fifth and last major factor to consider is Beijing's own foreign policy on both the issues of Taiwan and Russian actions in Ukraine. For the CCP leadership in Beijing, the Taiwan issue is strictly a matter of "China's internal affairs" (Chiang, 2018). Internationally, this desire to have other countries respect its claims of sovereignty on the island has translated into Chinese foreign policy as a consistent emphasis on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states. This is reflected in China's adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence since 1954 (Shin, 2022). At the same time, Beijing vehemently criticizes any attempt by any other state to interact with Taipei in any official capacity or comment on China's relationship with the island – especially when that country is the United States (Chiang, 2018).

However, due to growing ties with Russia, China has thus far abstained from overtly criticizing Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, which amounts to tacit support for Russian actions given China's importance in international politics and its permanent seat on the UN Security Council (Bartlett et al., 2022). Domestically, China has also repeated

the various Russian propaganda narratives to Chinese audiences, which observers see as a sign that Beijing is supportive of Russia's war in Ukraine (Standish, 2022). This comes across as hypocritical, however, given the status of Ukraine as a sovereign state and the nature of Russia's intentions. Although by itself it would not deter China, this bit of realpolitik is proving harmful to the Chinese rhetoric abroad on Taiwan, as the double standard of the situation is not lost on the island's Western allies (Haenle & Zhao, 2022). This major factor slightly decreases the likelihood of a Chinese military invasion in the near future, as Beijing grapples with the consequences of the contradictions between its support for Moscow and its criticism of US meddling in China's "internal affairs" when it comes to Taiwan.

Intelligence Signals

Intelligence signals – defined as the collection of foreign intelligence from communications and information systems (National Security Agency, n.d.) – on how Russia's actions have influence the Chinese approach to Taiwan have been scarce since the beginning of the conflict. Nonetheless, there is evidence that, while it could have emboldened China, the Russian invasion has instead led to Beijing postponing any potential plans for an invasion of Taiwan. First of all, the absence of a PLA military build-up on the mainland side of the Taiwan Strait since the beginning of the war in Ukraine is in itself a signal that China has not planned to capitalize on the opportunity to invade (Scobell & Stevenson-Yang, 2022). The rate of monthly PLA incursions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) has also slowed significantly since late February – a reversal from the significant increase in the months leading to the Russian

invasion (Brown, 2021). ADIZ incursions are often used by military analysts as a proxy measurement for Chinese military assertiveness (U-Jin & Suorsa, 2021).

Other signals pointing to a decrease in Chinese military appetite have emerged from the intelligence community itself. According to Chen Ming-tong, head of Taiwan's national security bureau, Beijing has opted to not launch an attack for the remainder of president Tsai Ing-wen's term, which ends in 2026, after witnessing the Russian disaster in Ukraine (Dollimore, 2022). Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Burns also disclosed that China was "surprised and unsettled" by the Russian debacle in a statement he made to the Senate Intelligence Committee (Kheel, 2022). These statements are supported by claims made by an anonymous Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) whistleblower earlier in March, according to which a Chinese attack on Taiwan had been postponed. The leak was received by a Vladimir Osechkin, a Russian dissident living in France; it consisted of a letter claiming that President Xi had been planning to "take over Taiwan" but that "this window of opportunity has been closed to him" by the events in Ukraine (Dollimore, 2022).

Implications Summary

Both the analysis of major factors and intelligence signals point to a decrease in the likelihood of China invading Taiwan in the near future. Four out of the five major factors identified above – military effectiveness, international economic sanctions, international public opinion, and Chinese foreign policy – suggest that the Russian invasion of Ukraine should decrease the likelihood of a Chinese military invasion. Only one major factor – the opportunity to invade – suggested that China could launch an

attack as a result of Russia's actions. Even then, this major factor is not supported by information disclosed from the intelligence community or intelligence signals on the ground, such as the lack of Chinese troop movements along the Taiwan strait and an increase in the PLA's rate of incursion inside Taiwan's ADIZ.

Overall Conclusion

The overall conclusion of this report is that the comparison of Ukraine and Taiwan is a flawed one, as both share important similarities but also differ in key aspects. The act of comparing them is nonetheless useful from a policy planning standpoint, as it highlights how the lessons learned in one situation can transfer to the other while accounting for the difference in context. This is explored in the reaction of China to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Rather than using it as a distraction to invade Taiwan, the Chinese leadership appears to have postponed plans for an attack on the island to a latter date – deriving important lessons from Russia's experience in the meantime.

Moving forward, it is worth mentioning that Beijing may prioritize other methods to subjugate Taipei to its will, such as deploying so much economic leverage over the island that its reunification with the mainland would become naturally obvious to its citizens (Grady, 2022). Foreign policy analysts have also pointed out that China believes that the West is getting weaker – meaning that the CCP leadership is in no hurry to retake Taiwan by force since it views time as being on their side (Carafano, 2022). One should also note that the Chinese calculus regarding the use of force against the island is always subject to change. The world should remain on the lookout for intelligence signals and

continually monitor the situation. An important part of this monitoring will involve analyzing how China assesses Russia's performance in Ukraine in the near future.

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