IS AMERICA PREPARED FOR A WAR WITH CHINA?

World War III may be just over the horizon; the signs are everywhere. Our foe has been preparing to fight us for decades. Yet the most powerful military in world history may have as little as three weeks of supplies to fight a years-long war. And that's just the beginning of America's problems.

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Few Americans may be interested in a war with China, but China is surely preparing for a war with America. If they get their wish, no one will escape the consequences.

The 2020s are already shaping up to be the most dangerous decade in at least eighty years, with wars sparking in two of the friction zones that keep world leaders up at night—eastern Europe and the Middle East. That leaves the third: the East China Sea, a region brimming with small U.S. allies and dominated by a vengeful communist power.

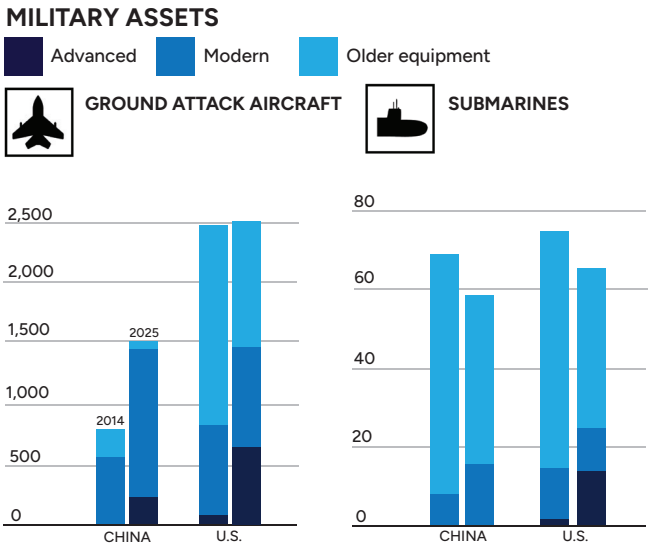
Of all the hostile regimes in the world, only the People's Republic of China boasts of becoming a global power with a world-class military capable of projecting strength anywhere on earth. That seemed implausible as recently as 1996, when the U.S. Navy forced Beijing to back down from further provocative missile tests in the Taiwan Strait. Back then, China had zero aircraft carriers, no "blue-water" fleet, little radar coverage, and no means of challenging American naval supremacy just off its own coast.

Today it's the United States that faces military embarrassment. China has the world's largest navy, a modern air force, and deadly "carrier killer" missiles that could threaten U.S. ships 900 miles away. The PLA Navy has built more than twice as many ships as the U.S. Navy since 2000. Meanwhile, the U.S. Air Force has never been smaller and the technological gap is fast shrinking. China's industrial base looks like America's own 1945 "arsenal of democracy," yet U.S. military production is deeply reliant on Chinese rare earths and minerals that would dry up in a conflict. Wargame simulations show the **U.S. could run out of multi-million-dollar precision missiles—crucial in a sea and air war—in just three weeks**. Some experts fear stockpiles will run dry in just one.

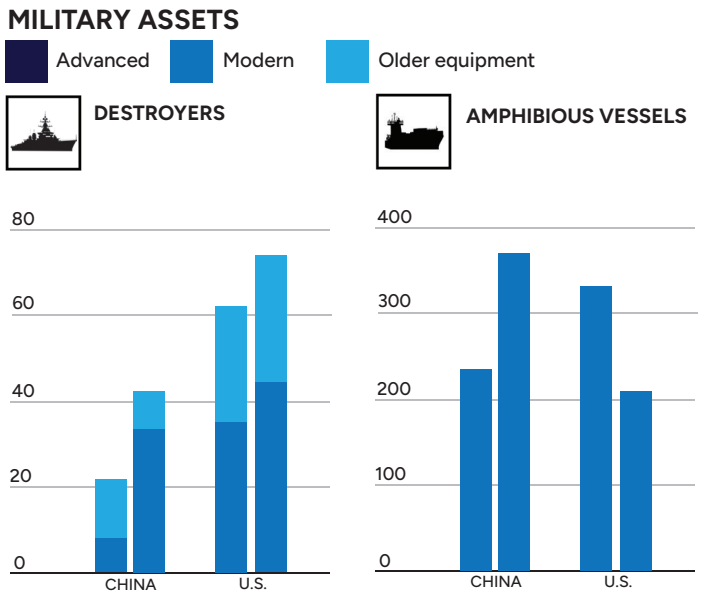
America's military is certainly battle-tested, but years of Democrat rule have weakened physical fitness standards to accommodate women and overweight males. The Biden administration forced servicemen out over their political and religious beliefs even as it missed recruitment targets.

All of this has been known for years, yet establishment Washington seems shockingly unconcerned, even cavalier, about an event that would devastate the American economy—if not end the current world order for good. They may not enjoy that luxury for long.

America's weakness is China's opportunity. Taiwan is the perpetual thorn in Beijing's side, a 75-year running rebellion against Chinese Communist Party (CCP) domination whose constitution still claims itself the sole legitimate ruler of all China. Ending that embarrassment has become a fixture of CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping's "China Dream": Achieving the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" by 2049, marking a century since the communists won the Chinese Civil War and exiled their opponents to Taiwan. The result would remake the global order in his image.



Source: Wall Street Journal/IISS Military Balance+



Source: Wall Street Journal/IISS Military Balance+

Xi has ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to be sufficiently modernized and prepared to invade Taiwan by 2027—the centennial of the PLA's founding in 1927. The PLA has responded that it's on track to reach full "mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization" of the military in 2027 as tools to coerce reunification. 2027 also marks the 21st Party Congress, when Xi may secure a fourth term as party leader, the first to do so since Mao.

2027 is just one possible target, of course, and there are reasons to believe China may never launch such an expensive and risky war. But it's worth asking what China's preparations are driving at, if not war in the near future. If war is looming, how prepared are we to win?

This Restoration News Investigation answers that question by examining Communist China's strategic buildup as well as critical vulnerabilities that could cripple our ability to wage a protracted war. This isn't a comprehensive discussion of U.S. military strategy or a call for a more aggressive foreign policy. Rather, it's a warning to a complacent nation that World War III may be closer than we think... and victory is anything but assured.

Unification by Force

There's no treaty obligating the United States to defend Taiwan, unlike Japan or South Korea. Conflict with Beijing isn't inevitable under America First leadership. But it isn't hard to imagine scenarios that could pull America into one.

Scenario 1, Unexpected Blockade — Under the guise of a training exercise, the PLA Navy initiates a blockade around Taiwan, interdicting foreign ships in the South China Sea. The U.S. threatens to break up the blockade by force, if need be. Europe sends strongly worded letters of condemnation but no material aid. Predictably, Beijing's negotiations with the Taiwanese government go nowhere as intended. PLA marines begin an amphibious landing, supplemented by paratroopers and precision missile strikes that decimate the Taiwanese navy and air force. The nearest U.S. carrier group under USS George Washington, stationed in Japan, expects to reach the island within 72 hours. U.S. ships attempt to aggressively break up the blockade and are fired upon by PLA Navy vessels. Fighting escalates from there... and it lasts for years.

Scenario 2, Creeping Siege — An especially contentious presidential election between Taiwan's three major political parties ends in January 2028, when a victor narrowly ousts the sitting government with just a plurality of ballots cast. (Taiwanese presidents are elected by direct popular vote and routinely receive below 40% of the vote.) He is not inaugurated until late May. The nation is tense. In the intervening months, the president-elect's legitimacy is bombarded by CCP-orchestrated online attacks—powered by advanced generative AI—that suggest election fraud and foreign manipulation, fueling demonstrations. In February, a cyberattack cripples much of the country's electrical grid and financial system. The president-elect's party blames the outgoing government for the national security failure. The government blames China. Without access to their bank accounts, panic sparks looting and riots in Taipei as residents hoard food and gasoline.

In March, the PLA Navy encircles the island in a "peace-keeping operation" to protect Chinese nationals and vessels operating in local waters. The U.S. and Japan condemn the move, but hesitate to respond given Beijing's humanitarian aid to the island: Crates of water, medical supplies, and food donated to Taiwanese citizens by a government "gravely concerned about the well-being of all Chinese people." Beijing offers to deploy thousands of engineers, doctors, and firefighters to help restore the country's failing infrastructure. Taipei refuses, calling it a "cynical ruse."

98% of Taiwan's energy is imported; under Chinese interdiction, civilian traffic effectively shuts down nationwide, starved of fuel. Next goes the fragile electrical grid—83% of which is powered by imported fossil fuels—while a second cyberattack disables water and water treatment services. (FEMA warns that these are likely to be the first public services to go down in a major cyberattack.)

Source: U.S. Defense Department Annual Report to Congress, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2024."

In April—when tidal and weather conditions are best for an amphibious invasion—the outraged PLA Navy announces one of its smaller vessels was "suddenly and deliberately attacked" and sunk by "terrorists operating from the rogue province." The U.S. calls it a false flag operation. Russia, Iran, and others decry America's support for such "a naked act of terrorism." Europe balks and does nothing. Beijing announces it's extending peace-keeping operations to the island proper and orders an invasion, citing Taipei's inability to maintain order or protect Chinese nationals. Fighting breaks out on the beaches between PLA ground forces and desperate Taiwan army elements. PLA Rocket Forces and drones eliminate Taiwan's energy-starved navy and air force. The U.S. dispatches two carrier groups to lift the siege… soon sparking war.

Scenario 3, Sudden Strike — One spring morning, Americans awake to learn they're at war. In the pre-dawn hours, mainland PLA Rocket Forces launched hundreds of precision-guided ballistic and cruise missiles at U.S. bases in Guam, South Korea, and Japan. They target runways, soft aircraft shelters, ports, carriers, fuel and ammo depots, radar systems, command centers, and the barracks where tens of thousands of U.S. servicemen are still asleep in their bunks. The media calls it "the worst attack since Pearl Harbor," but in truth it's like Pearl Harbor in a dozen places at once. It will take years to rebuild the ships and aircraft lost in these swift and deadly strikes.

The carnage is captured on iPhones by disheartened sailors and uploaded to TikTok, whose CCP-aligned owner immediately amplifies the footage for its 170

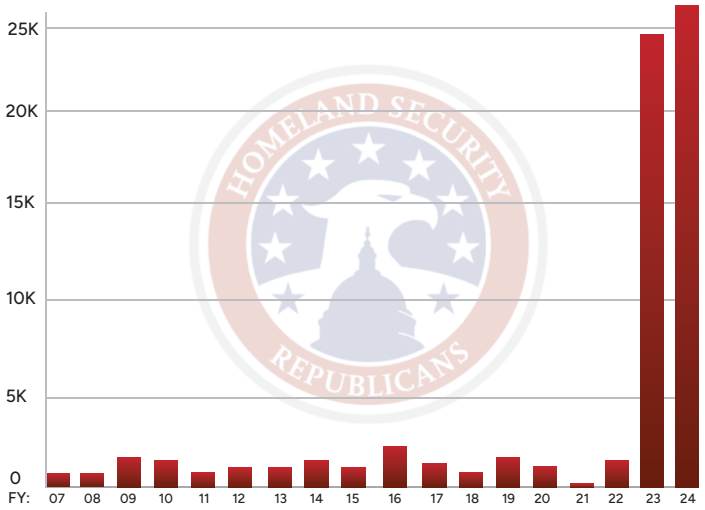
million (largely teenage) American users. TikTok's 767 million Chinese users, in contrast, receive patriotic clips depicting Taiwanese civilians and smiling PLA soldiers celebrating their "long-overdue reunification" with the "true government" on the mainland.

22,000 miles above, Chinese Shijian-17 ("Practice") satellites—heretofore masked as benign—attempt to maneuver close enough to ram or detonate near American communications and GPS satellites, disabling most. (While unproven in combat, Beijing has been developing these capabilities since at least 2016.) Massive cyberattacks target the electrical grid, water systems, and oil and gas pipelines across the American homeland. Remote-operated kill switches clandestinely embedded in Chinese-fabricated solar panels and microchips wreak havoc on millions of electronic devices. The President vows vengeance to a bleary-eyed public, but U.S. military forces are still reeling as PLA marines storm Taiwanese beaches at dawn.

The American public panics as X posts reveal bomb attacks on key bridges, electrical substations, airports, ports, and military bases carried out by unknown terror cells. No one knows how many people are dead, but the videos are gut-wrenching. (Later investigations reveal the terrorists are Chinese nationals trained by the PLA's paramilitary arm, nearly all of whom entered through the Biden administration's open southern border.) Then news breaks of mass shootings in major cities across the country, including Washington, D.C., with shadowy sniper teams seemingly targeting American civilians at random. With too many places to protect, Homeland Security is overwhelmed trying to hunt down the shooters. People begin hoarding and looting. Americans are furious at China's unprovoked aggression in Taiwan, but they're more terrified about further attacks on the homeland. We've never been hit like this before… and the war will continue for years to come.

Is any of this plausible? Experts certainly think so. A House Homeland Security subcommittee reported last year that annual illegal crossings by Chinese nationals soared from 2,000 to 24,000 between 2022 and 2023. Prior to that, it averaged 1,000 per year from 2007–2021, with Border Patrol apprehending just 342 Chinese nationals in 2021. The vast majority are military-age single men. Border Patrol estimates there may be 65,000 such individuals in the country today. When Trump pointed out on the campaign trail these intruders are "building a little army in our country," NPR belittled his claim as "baseless." The fact is **only China knows what they're doing here**, given how difficult it is to illegally emigrate from a totalitarian country with strict border control.

U.S. BORDER PATROL APPREHENSIONS OF CHINESE NATIONALS AT THE SOUTHWEST BORDER



Source: House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability.

The 2002 Beltway sniper attacks offer a chilling real-world example of how orchestrated mass shootings would tie up the entire national security apparatus for months, if not years. It took 1,500 federal agents and countless local and state police officers three weeks to track down two shooters in a single metropolitan area. The snipers weren't driven by clear and predictable motives, but by a desire to inflict chaos and confusion with random shootings. It worked; the city ground to a virtual halt out of fear of being the next victim.

The electrical grid is especially vulnerable to sabotage, and if it goes offline it's extremely difficult to restore. There are tens of thousands of substations running from Florida to Oregon that form three interconnected power grids across the continental United States. Downing just one could cause a cascade that takes down the other two. One recent study concluded that infecting just 50 electricity generators would knock out power along most of the East Coast, stranding Americans in pitch-black subway tunnels and elevators. The cost to repair: $1 trillion.

And China has done it before. In February 2023, hackers tied to a state tech giant broke into the internal network of Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments, a small utility that services a handful of Massachusetts towns. **For more than 300 days,** they stealthily collected sensitive information on local electrical grid operations — **totally unbeknownst to U.S. authorities**, who only discovered the breach just before Thanksgiving. Chinese hackers simultaneously attempted to breach Texas' electrical grid in 2023, which operates independently of the rest of the country's grids.

In mid-2023, Chinese hackers with ties to the country's intelligence service penetrated Verizon and AT&T, targeting phone lines tied to Kamala Harris, Donald Trump, and J.D. Vance. In the 18 months it took to notice the breach, they obtained IP addresses and phone numbers from over one million Americans. A CCP spokeswoman accused outraged Washington officials of "using cybersecurity to smear and slander China."

Earlier this year, U.S. officials **discovered "rogue communication devices" in Chinese solar power inverters** offering remote access to China's intelligence agencies, which could turn them off and destabilize the grid. "That effectively means there is a built-in way to physically destroy the grid," one expert said. In 2019, officials at the Port of Houston intercepted a 500,000-pound transformer manufactured by China's Jiangsu Huapeng Transformer Company. Analysts discovered "hardware backdoors" allowing remote access to shut it down. Yet since 2006, we've installed some 300 large Chinese-made power transformers into America's power grid, raising fears that embedded microchips could give hackers a backdoor into the grid.

As to the threat to our pipelines, recall that in 2021 Russian malware hackers held Colonial Pipeline ransom, which operates a 5,500-mile fuel **gasoline and diesel pipeline supplying 45% of the East Coast's fuel.** The attack lasted a full week; local gas stations began running dry within three days. By day four, 50% of Virginia's gas stations were empty, while the rest were forced to ration fuel in gas lines.

As for other threats, authorities arrested two Chinese researchers last July attempting to smuggle samples of a crop-killing fungus into Detroit, which had the **potential to devastate U.S. food production**. And we haven't forgotten the bioweapons research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology that unleashed a global pandemic just five years ago.

Don't Count on Deterrence

Of course, the best scenario is one in which none of these events come to pass and China quietly shelves all invasion plans, given how costly and uncertain war with the United States would be. In other words, U.S. military strength successfully deters Chinese aggression. Is that plausible?

Skeptics correctly point out how devastating even the best-case scenario is for the PRC. Sanctions cut off trade with virtually all developed countries and its export-driven economy seizes up. China loses access to vital food and fertilizer and high-quality machine tool imports. The PLA expedition would suffer gargantuan casualties and may founder on Taiwan's beaches. Even in victory, occupying Taiwan would prove brutal and difficult. A single Taiwanese company, TSMC, produces a significant portion of the world's advanced microchips. Yet the island would be too devastated to grant China decisive control of the global semiconductor industry. And the economic fallout isn't likely to dissipate for years, if ever.

Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

All of these are reasons Beijing would choose not to go to war. But deterrence assumes the CCP is still weighing the costs and benefits, when there's ample evidence to suggest party leaders have been preparing for this conquest for generations. In other words, it's safer to assume Xi's already made up his mind.

China remains a thoroughly communist dictatorship under Xi Jinping, who's predicated his legitimacy on restoring national greatness—including unification with the "rogue province." Both the People's Republic of China and Republic of China (Taiwan's official name) maintain there is "one China." But Beijing fears Taiwan will seek formal independence, with Xi calling it "the biggest obstacle to achieving the reunification of the motherland, and the most serious hidden danger to national rejuvenation" in 2019. "We make no promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option of taking all necessary means," he added.

There's reason to fear that drift toward independence. While the population is ethnically Chinese, just 2.4% identify as "Chinese" compared with 68% in 2008; the rest view themselves as exclusively Taiwanese or both. Taiwan is also Western-aligned, democratic, and deeply anti-communist, an unavoidable symbol of the limits of CCP rule. Just as Soviet-backed Cuba was a thorn in Washington's side for decades, Taiwan is a bitter embarrassment to Beijing.

"The complete reunification of our motherland is an overall trend, a righteous cause, and the common aspiration of the people. Our motherland must be reunified, and it will surely be reunified," Xi pronounced at the 130th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth. His 2024 New Year's address warned against U.S. involvement: "No force can prevent China's reunification with Taiwan."

The issue may be all the more pressing given that China's economy has entered a slump it may never recover from. The country is aging incredibly quickly, driven by its rapid industrialization and One Child Policy, leaving China with nearly half the number of 5-year-olds as fifteen-year-olds. The days of cheap Chinese factories are over; today, Mexican labor costs are lower than Chinese. The result is a challenge to Xi's authority that could topple the entire CCP system of government—and when governments fail on the domestic front, they often go hunting for wars to shore things up at home. Hence China's methodical efforts to decouple itself from the West and become economically self-sufficient.

Is China Preparing for War?

Plenty of evidence suggests so. China has systematically lowered reliance on foreign imports from 22% of GDP in 2023 to 18% in 2023, the lowest in 25 years. While true autarky is probably impossible, **Xi intends to get as close as possible with his "Made in China 2025" policy** launched in 2015. The plan aims to replace reliance on foreign technology in the fields of robotics, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, automated manufacturing, aerospace equipment, and pharmaceuticals. "Only by holding the critical core technology in our own hands can we fundamentally safeguard national economic security, national defense security, and other security," Xi announced.

Washington may vastly outspend Beijing on defense—$877 billion to $292 billion last year—even without President Trump's proposed $1 trillion budget. During the Cold War, the U.S. devoted 9–11% of its GDP to the military; today it's 3%, nearly twice the 1.6% China officially allocates. Yet that disparity is misleading for a country that engages in extensive state-owned enterprises at the military's behest, and considers "private" companies an extension of CCP power. (TikTok's algorithm, for instance, is a national security secret.) China grew its public military budget 7.2% last year, and experts believe the dictatorship spends 40–90% more on its military than is publicly revealed.

Chinese Aircraft Carrier - FUJIAN (CV-18) class

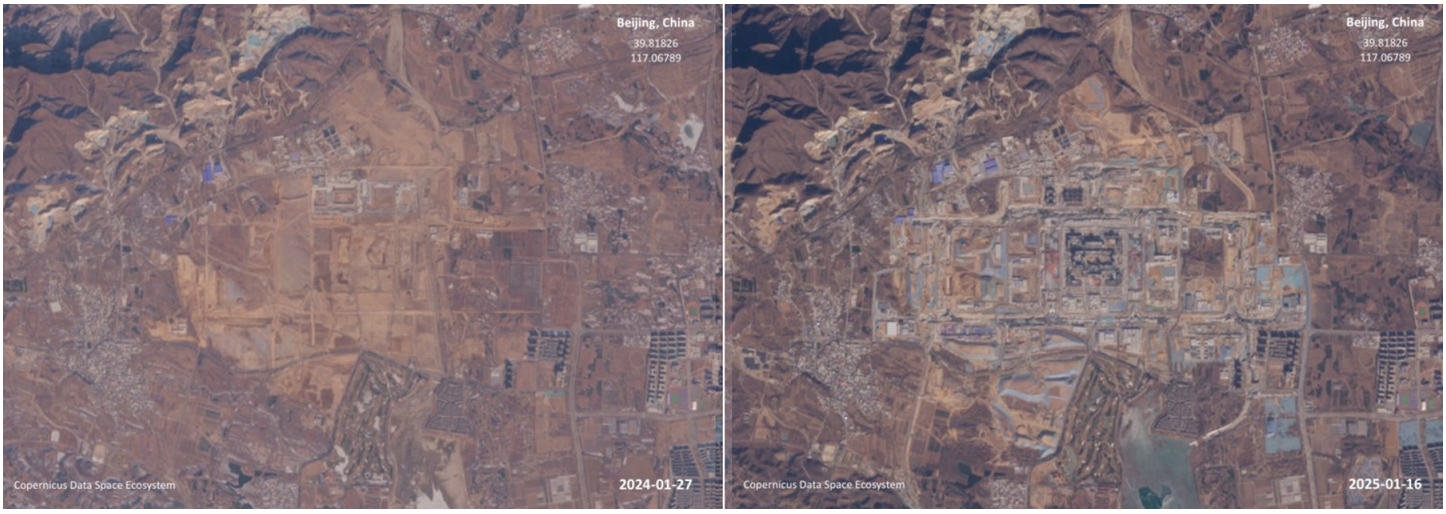
More importantly, China's manufacturing base is outpacing our own. While "China's defense industrial base is operating on a wartime footing," warns the Center for Strategic & International Studies, America's "industrial base is largely operating on a peacetime footing." **America lacks the critical ability to "surge" production during wartime as we did in World War II**, with just 17 million workers in the manufacturing labor force—60 million including all of NATO—versus China's 162 million workers.

At the same time, the PLA is acquiring **"high-end weapons systems" 5–6 times faster than we are**. China built 400 modern 5th-Generation fighter jets between 2021 and 2024 and increased annual production of its J-20 stealth fighter, while reducing dependency on Russian aircraft engines.

Disturbingly, **China has launched more ballistic missile tests in the past half-decade than the rest of the world combined**. The PLA doubled its ballistic and cruise missile stockpile over that same period, both of which are essential to its Anti-Access/Area Denial strategy to prevent U.S. ships from approaching Taiwan. CCP reports—which are inherently untrustworthy—purportedly show fully automated factories capable of assembling 1,000 cruise missiles per day. The PLA leads the world in developing hypersonic missiles, "superfast weapons" capable of reaching the continental United States. (Ours are still being tested.)

Of the 700 launchers for land-based missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, **462 can reach the West Coast**. Experts note a 200% increase in intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) production since 2016, many of which are mobile and therefore hard to seek and destroy.

Beijing instituted a new draft policy on Jan. 1, 2025, for all males 18 years or older, the third time China has updated its conscription law in just the past five years. Analysts believe it's meant to counter rising unemployment and broaden the country's mobilizable



base. The PLA already boasts 2 million active-duty personnel and 510,000 reservists, about half again as many as the U.S. Much of this growth has benefitted the PLA Navy's marine expeditionary forces, who operate a small base in Djibouti that's extended China's influence into the Indian Ocean. That base, incidentally, is just seven miles from Camp Lemmonier, the most prominent U.S. base in Africa and home to AFRICOM. Last year, China upgraded the base's piers to accept aircraft carriers; it sits along major oil tanker shipping routes through the Red Sea.

In 2022, the PLA Navy launched its third aircraft carrier, CV-18 Fujian, which is expected to be fully operational this year. China boasts the world's largest navy, with 370 ships and submarines. Many of them are significantly smaller than U.S. Navy vessels, but would enjoy a homefield advantage in a fight off China's coast. The U.S. still leads China in nuclear attack submarines (52 to China's 6). Analysts believe Beijing has already met or surpassed American submarine production, however, and will double its fleet of attack submarines by 2030.

China is the world's largest shipbuilder, with 230 times more shipbuilding capacity than the United States. It's also believed to be virtually self-sufficient after two decades of development in gas turbine and diesel engines, shipboard weapons, and electric systems. Shanghai's gigantic Jiangnan Shipyard, which builds everything from aircraft carriers to amphibious landing craft, **boasts more capacity than all U.S. shipyards combined**.

Over the past half-decade, the PLA Navy has undertaken its most aggressive training exercises and extended deployments around Taiwan, sailing as far as the Philippine and Bering Seas. That includes sea trials for the new Type 075 Yushen amphibious assault ship, capable of deploying helicopters and ground assault vehicles for a beach landing.

The PLA Navy has launched 12 military exercises since 2018 simulating war with Taiwan and the U.S.: Amphibious invasion, bombing runs, night-time combat, missile barrages, and precision missile strikes on key facilities. In May 2024, just three days after Taiwan's president was inaugurated, the PLA launched "Joint Sword" combined arms exercises involving the navy, army, air force, and rocket force in Taiwanese waters. They returned in October to practice "clos[ing] in on Taiwan Island from multiple directions." And in May 2025, Taiwan announced a "sharp uptick in Chinese military operations" after PLA aircraft launched 61 sorties around the island.

In February, European satellites captured images of China's "wartime command site" under construction 20 miles southwest of Beijing. Dubbed "Military City," it's a sprawling 2.3 square mile control center **ten times larger than the Pentagon**. It's likely connected to the Beijing subway system for rapid government evacuation and features its own runways. Six missile-shaped structures may contain shielded communications arrays to shrug off an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) following nuclear attack. And they're building it fast, with at least ten cranes and 24/7 lighting suggesting a feverish construction pace.

Analysts have discovered deep holes bored into shock-absorbing granite, indicating at least **three miles of hardened bunkers to house CCP leadership in the event of nuclear war**. That's reminiscent of the bunkers Mao Zedong fled to in his 1969 border conflict with the Soviet Union. Mao famously printed posters urging Chinese to "dig tunnels deep [and] store grain everywhere" in preparation for a nuclear war that year, and today China's largest cities are riddled

with hundreds of miles of tunnels. In the same spirit, "Military City" is believed capable of supplying 50,000 personnel for six months.

These aren't housing for frontline combat troops. There are no known barracks or tank depots at the site, though it does feature extensive drone-operating facilities that have been used to scout out targets in Taiwan. The unnamed site is meant to be the **largest hub in history for coordinating military operations** — yet the oft-bombastic Beijing is eerily quiet about this mega-project. One wonders, why build it except to prepare for a major war with a nuclear power? Only China knows.

It Won't Be Short

"You will be home before the leaves fall from the trees." –Kaiser Wilhelm II, August 1914

Military officials have played wargames simulating conflict with China for decades. In the most recent wargame from Nov. 2024, the United States emerged victorious but wounded for years to come, Taiwan in rubble, and the PLA utterly shattered. That's good news... assuming the war wraps up in a month, they say. Why?

"The U.S. military **spent its entire inventory** of Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles by the **end of the first week** and ran out of Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile-Extended Range missiles **after a month**," the Wall Street Journal observed. "Taiwan used up its entire inventory of Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles after a week.

"It would be very difficult to sustain a fight without these weapons."

The CEO of Anduril, a major defense contractor, is even more pessimistic:

"The reality is, if we got into a hot conflict with a great power, we would run out of munitions in a week. We've built these capabilities that are incredibly exquisite, incredibly custom, with really complicated supply chains."

"No one should think the war will be short," the U.S. Naval Institute warns, and for good reason. After just a few weeks, America's ability to carry out attacks without entering China's Anti-Access/Area Denial no-go zone would likely grind to a halt. American factories simply would not be able to keep up with their Chinese counterparts, dooming America in a years-long war of attrition on the far side of the Pacific Ocean.

Any war over Taiwan would largely be fought by sea and air, with ships, aircraft, and ground units launching precision missiles at key targets over unthinkably vast distances. Strategists anticipate fighting the war from Japan with heavy reliance on our advantage in stealth bombers, long-range anti-ship missiles, and nuclear submarines. As wargames showed, Chinese odds improved the closer the fighting got to the mainland. Allied forces would attempt to make Taiwan a "porcupine" too difficult to seize, while China would focus on capturing the island's ports and airfields to lock out American reinforcements, and if possible, land a "knockout blow" against our fleets. Even the best outcomes suggest **America could suffer half as many casualties in three weeks of fighting as across 20 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan**.

"The air campaign unfolds at the speed of a missile; the ground campaign unfolds at the speed of a man crawling in the mud," wargame participants wrote. America's missiles may be superior, yet **we don't have nearly enough of them to fight a long war so far from home**. Production timelines are between 12 and 30 months per missile, with total manufacturing well under 1,000 per year at the high-end—**and many of those have been gifted to Ukraine**. The current plan to scale up Patriot missile production from 500 to 750 per year recently hit a snag due to a shortage in seekers, which guide the missiles to their target, that won't be solved until at least 2027.

In one simulated week, U.S. Pacific forces expended their entire reserve of 440 Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASM) and 600 Taiwan-based Anti-Ship Cruise Missile (ASCM). The U.S. team couldn't even tap into its reserve of 500 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile-Extended Range (JASSM-ER), **as the planes which launch them would be shot down if they attempted to get in range of PLA targets**, or ship-based Tomahawk missiles for the same reason.

Munitions Usage

	2028 INDOPACOM (2024 total inventory)	Ukraine/ Israel (Y/N)	Wargame usage (3 weeks)	Status at End of Operation
LRASM	440 (50)	N	440	All used in 3-7 days
JASSM (Basic)	800 (1200)	Y	0	Not preferred because of short range
JASSM-ER	500 (400)	Y	500	Run out at ~30 days
Tomahawk IV/V	4000 (4000)	N	Few	Ships mostly out of range until week 4
MST	150 (0)	N	Few	
Taiwan ASCMs	600 (200)	N	700	All used in a week

Source: Center for Strategic & International Studies.

America lost 3,744 fighter jets in the Vietnam War against a poorly equipped, outmoded opponent. Establishing air supremacy—the Pentagon's top priority since 1942—over Taiwan would be incredibly costly, perhaps impossible. In the simulation, **90% of allied aircraft were destroyed by PLA missiles**, and those that survived faced severe range restrictions given China's vast size. Others were destroyed on the ground in missile attacks against Pacific air bases, which are not hardened against attack—despite generals' pleas to armor them since at least 2008. "Non-stealthy aircraft are not even survivable against China," participants warned, yet just one-third of our fighter inventory is equipped with advanced stealth and sensor suites. A shocking Rand Corporation study puts the U.S. at parity with China in a fight over control of the island's airspace:

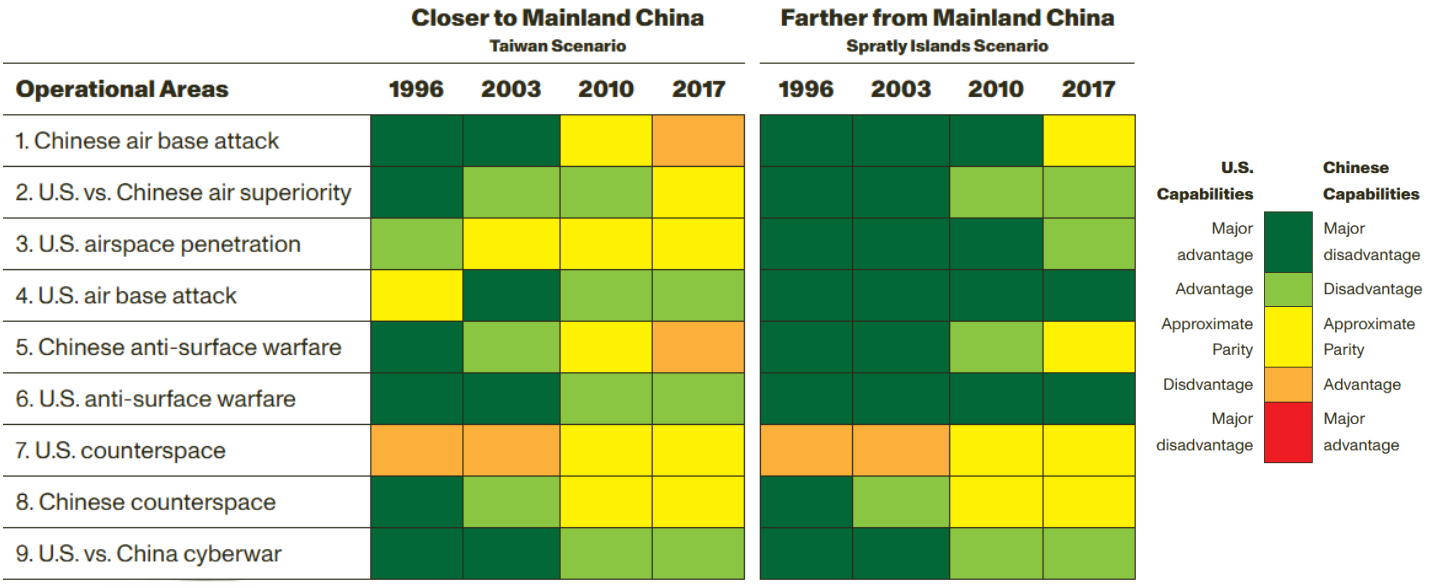
> **"The models evaluate the number of fighter aircraft that the United States would need to maintain in the Western Pacific to defeat a Chinese air campaign. The results suggest that U.S. requirements have increased by several hundred percent since 1996. In the 2017 Taiwan case, U.S. commanders would probably be unable to find the basing required for U.S. forces to prevail in a seven-day campaign."**

The U.S. team lost as many as 255 5th-Gen. F-35 fighters ($100 million apiece), 200 4th-Gen. fighters ($30–95 million), and 30 B-21 bombers ($668 million) in these simulations. Replacing those losses would take between two and six years, depending on the particular aircraft. Even without losses, America must roll out 72 new 5th-Gen. fighters annually just to maintain current figures—**yet actual production is just 42 per year**.

The simulated Navy lost two aircraft carriers—**costing $26 billion and the lives of 12,000 sailors and aviators** — 15 large surface ships, three nuclear attack submarines, and two amphibious ships for ferrying Marines to Taiwan. Most were sunk by anti-ship missiles informed by the PLA's skywave radar system, which can detect targets as far as 1,200 miles away. Even at "surge" production levels, **replacing these ships would take decades**: 40 years for the carriers, 15 years for the surface vessels, 7.5 years for the submarines, and two years for the amphibious ships.

The wargame's conclusions aren't reassuring. The Air Force "is not structured to fight in INDOPACOM [the Pacific theater]," one participant wrote. Another: "Taiwan was the most stressing scenario that the [Defense Department] can face in INDO-PACOM." The Rand Corporation ranks the U.S. at a disadvantage in anti-surface warfare, despite the PLA Navy's weaknesses. "Is the U.S. ready to accept losses if Carrier Strike Groups (CSGs) are sunk?" a third participant asked.

Even in victory, Taiwan's economy would almost certainly collapse for generations and tank advanced microchip production. There's also the ever-present danger of nuclear escalation, and the far more mundane danger that we don't have the logistical or manufacturing capacity to fight World War III.



Source: Rand Corporation, "An Interactive Look at the U.S.-China Military Scorecard."

Overseas Commitments

President Trump's expedition to fight the Houthis in Yemen offers a real-world picture of how quickly those stockpiles can run out. The operation tied up two carrier groups which launched 1,000 air strikes and 12,000 sorties in March alone, firing 800 munitions. U.S. forces also lost 16 MQ-9 Reaper drones ($30 million apiece). That's on top of the $1 billion in missiles the Biden administration deployed against the Houthis from 2023 to 2024.

The Ukraine War has been a steady drain on American resources for three years. Under Operation Atlantic Resolve, we're paying for Kiev's social programs: Billions of dollars for "guaranteed minimum income for low-income families," housing and utility subsidies, "internally displaced persons," humanitarian assistance, and even civil servant salaries.

To date, the U.S. has provided **$64 billion in military aid and another $50 billion in financial aid** to the failing (and famously corrupt) Zelenskyy regime. We've gifted 201 howitzer artillery pieces, 76 tanks, 41 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), and 480 Patriot-style air defense systems. Last March, the **Pentagon asked for $10 billion to replace stockpiles sent to Ukraine**.

The war has also revealed a critical vulnerability in America's arsenal: Drones. Both Russia and Ukraine have employed cheap, attritable drones (costing $5,000 to $50,000 per unit) that overwhelm sophisticated defense systems. "A $20,000 loitering munition disabling a $50 million air defense battery is not just a tactical win; it's a strategic revolution," observes Restoration News contributor Will Thibeau. As of this writing, Ukrainian and Russian drone warfare have reached new heights—devastating cities and wiping out irreplaceable strategic bombers stuck on the tarmac—thanks to equipment produced in China.

Ukraine and Russia are fabricating as many as 70,000 per month. In contrast, Thibeau—a retired Army Ranger—points out the U.S. has never fielded so much as 5,000 one-way attack drones in our entire history. For the cost of a single Gerald R. Ford-class supercarrier ($13 billion), we could buy 600,000 drones capable of annhilating enemy defenses and denying airspace at scale.

The Houthis deploy even cheaper drones to attack American forces in Yemen. The Biden administration reportedly denied an Army outpost access to anti-drone air defense systems months before Houthi drones assaulted the outpost, killing three soldiers. Experts fear China could similarly **overwhelm U.S. naval forces and air bases with thousands of drones sent on a one-way suicide mission**.

Death by Supply Chain

Successful wargames assume the U.S. would be able to properly fuel, feed, and rearm its resource-hungry forces operating 6,700 miles away from the West Coast. But how? In 1945, America's Merchant Marine was the largest in the world and essential for winning wars across two oceans. Today, with just 185 flagged ships, America's commercial shipping fleet has never been smaller... or more short-handed, with **just 10,000 merchant mariners compared with China's 2 million seamen**. Many components are sourced from a handful of Japanese and European companies, who produce carbon fibers used in missiles, satellites, and space launch systems. Germany supplies the specialty glass tubes used in night-vision systems. As in World War II, the trick will be safeguarding the shipping lanes so these components can even reach American factories.

"Both sides suffered heavy losses" in simulated wargames, the Wall Street Journal observes, "but the U.S. defense industrial base was severely stressed." House Select Committee on the CCP reports show we have a shockingly limited production of solid rocket motors, processor assemblies, castings, ball bearings, munitions seekers, and microelectronics. **American factories lack qualified workers, facility space, testing and evaluation equipment, and even machine tools**. In wartime, it'd take years to expand them due to red tape, insurance, property leasing, and construction slowdowns.

Then there's America's baffling reliance on Communist China to supply our Armed Forces—even as we prepare to fight them.

Of the top 10 global defense companies, half are Chinese, including the top two. The Pentagon's 2024 National Security Scorecard reports China as the top foreign supplier to America's military-industrial complex. Between 2005 and 2023, the number of Chinese suppliers in the U.S. defense-industrial supply chain nearly quadrupled from 12,000 to 45,000. Unsurprisingly, many of these parts are fake or low-quality—a Senate Armed Services Committee investigation concluded **China provided 700,000 counterfeit electronic parts used in military equipment** ranging from SH-60 Seahawk helicopters, C-130J cargo planes, and P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

Around 40% of U.S. weapons systems and infrastructure use Chinese semiconductors. Lockheed Martin's Javelin anti-tank missile factory in Troy,

Alabama requires 200 semiconductors per missile, for instance. Gerald R. Ford-class supercarriers use 6,500 Chinese microchips.

Communist China is the second-highest supplier of **components used in our nuclear modernization program**, the famous "triad" of missiles, submarines, and bombers. It's also the largest or near-largest supplier in the fields of AI and machine learning, advanced ceramics and metals, robotics, advanced manufacturing, space technologies, data transmission, wind and solar technologies, communications and sensors, and biotechnologies (including vaccines and pharmaceuticals).

Most alarming is our economic dependence on rare earth minerals and metals mined in the PRC. Despite their name rare earths are anything but scarce. North and South America have the largest reserves of both on the planet, meaning we could be self-sufficient with enough will and investment. Instead, tough environmental regulations, a volatile market, and low profit margins mean most of the world leaves them in the ground… while **China enjoys a virtual monopoly on global rare earths exports**. Their dominance began in the 1980s, when the CCP began heavily subsidizing rare earth mining, undercutting Western producers who couldn't compete with China's cheap labor and lax environmental regulations. Even countries that continue to mine them, such as Australia, still ship the rare earths to China for final processing.

Today, the PRC produces 95% of the world's gallium, used in 5G telecom systems; 80% of its praseodymium, critical to aircraft engines; 95% of its terbium, employed in radar displays; 90% of gadolinium, a component in smart munitions and precision optics; 60% of its graphite, crucial for batteries; and 50% of antimony, the most important mineral you've probably never heard of.

Antimony is the mineral that arguably won the Second World War. It's vital to the tungsten steel used in bullet cores as well as armor-piercing shells, bullet primers and tracer ammunition, armor plating for tanks, precision optics, night-vision goggles, infrared sensors, laser sighting, flares, communication equipment, flame-retardant fabrics, and even nuclear weapons. An F-35 fighter uses 920 pounds of the stuff, an Arleigh Burke destroyer 5,200 pounds, and a Virginia-class nuclear submarine a whopping 9,200 pounds.

Amazingly, 90% of the antimony consumed by the U.S. military in World War II came from a single mine in central Idaho, also responsible for 40% of our tungsten steel production across the war. Production

Antimony: The mineral that arguably won World War II.

slowed after the war, then the EPA shuttered the mine in 1997 to—of all things—protect local chinook salmon. A private company has explored reopening the mine, which is also rich with gold and silver, since 2009, at the cost of $1.5 billion. Local "green" groups are battling them every step of the way.

Due to the Ukraine war and a global shortage, antimony prices have skyrocketed in the past four years from under $10,000 to $50,000 per ton. In December, China halted antimony exports to the United States in retaliation to the Biden administration's ban on advanced microchip sales to Beijing. That leaves us dependent on the second-largest exporter: Russia.

In 2022, the Pentagon suspended deliveries of F-35 fighter jets because **their engines contained samarium and cobalt improperly sourced from China**, which produces 70% of the world's samarium-cobalt supply. Those metals are also used in the M1A2 Abrams tank and Aegis AN/Spy-1 3D radar system, used to defend surface vessels from incoming missiles and interface with other allied ships. Neodymium, 85% of which comes from China, is similarly crucial to the Navy's DDG-51 Hybrid Electric Drive installed in the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer.

Other, more conventional problems plague the military supply chain. In May 2021, the U.S. Army—believing artillery had lost its central importance on the battlefield—requested permission to cut annual spending on its 155mm howitzer artillery shells by half, reducing production to 6,200 per month (75,000 per year). "It doesn't affect the industrial base," an Army spokesman explained. "We will still be able to produce, and we can ramp up production quickly in the future if need be."

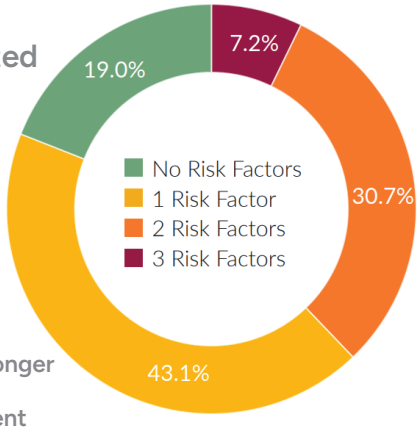
Russia invaded Ukraine eight months later, and strategists soon observed artillery was responsible for 80% of casualties on both sides. Washington has since donated 3 million 155mm shells to Kiev, which is demanding even more. **Now we're struggling to replace them**. From 2014–2015, shell manufacturing dropped so precipitously amidst defects and safety violations that the U.S. added zero new shells to its stockpile. In 2021, production fell by half due to cracks in the shells. The plan to replace the aging Virginia plant that manufactures the propellants used in the shells is a decade behind schedule and double its anticipated cost, forcing us to import Chinese and Indian chemicals to meet quotas.

The Army reports 80% of the vendors sourced for the M113 armored personnel carrier replacement program carry at least one "risk factor"—either they're a single supplier, lack inventory, have a long average lead time for replacement parts, or are located overseas. Half the parts in the program to replace the Blackhawk helicopter family are sourced from China, Japan, Germany, and other overseas countries.

PROGRAM PART CRITICALITY

The three risk factors evaluated in this analytic include:

- Parts that have no reported inventory
- Parts that do not have more than one supplier
- Parts that have a longer than average lead time for replacement



Credit: Department of Defense

China is the top foreign source of parts used by the Air Force, which reports 70% of critical technologies come from adversarial nations. That includes the B-21 Raider replacement for the aging B-1 and B-2 stealth bombers. Overregulation means it took 23 years to bring the F-35 fighter to full production, a decade and $183 billion over original estimates. (Contrast that with the F-14 Tomcats, which reached full production just two years after their initial design in 1968.)

Just 33% of the Navy's vendors are U.S.-based. Another 27% are in allied nations, while the plurality—40%—in adversarial nations such as China. The standout issues: the F-35 Lightning II carrier-based fighter is heavily reliant on Chinese vendors, while 84% of vendors for the replacement for the Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine carry at least one risk factor.

America faces a severe shortage of engineers, electricians, pipefitters, and metalworkers at its shipyards. **We added just five new warships to our fleets between 2005 and 2020; the PLA Navy added 144**. In 2018, the Pentagon assessed it'd need 35,000 additional personnel to support President Trump's planned 355-ship Navy. Five years later, it was still short 25,000 men.

Preparing for the Worst

President Trump and Defense Sec. Pete Hegseth are set on restoring America's military preeminence, but they face a massive uphill battle. **Despite the enormous size and scale of our military-industrial complex, it's shockingly ill-prepared to win the next world war**. And experts fear a war with one rival power—be it China or Russia—will quickly draw in the others.

After 1945, America was prepared to fight two major wars at the same time. Today we're unprepared to fight even one. Given Beijing's bellicosity, we may not be able to avoid it.

RestoretheMilitary.com is our answer to that challenge. This joint project by **Restoration News** and **Restoration of America** is aimed at reestablishing an elite warrior ethos in each service and re-shoring military equipment production. We used to have a clear dividing line between warfighters and civilians, and between the warriors and warrior support; we desperately need it back. Solving this mountain of challenges will take far more than a single presidential term—it will require a generation of firm, focused leadership with the vision of establishing American dominance in the 21st century.

We have to stop thinking too small or looking for quick fixes to big problems. Time is running out.

Hayden Ludwig is the Executive Director of Research for Restoration News