

Foreword

In July 2021, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin gave a speech in Singapore outlining U.S. interests and relations with nations in Asia. In his remarks, Secretary Austin struck a firm but conciliatory tone toward China noting the following:

Beijing's claim to the vast majority of the South China Sea has no basis in international law . . . We continue to support the region's coastal states in upholding their rights under international law. And we remain committed to the treaty obligations that we have to Japan in the Senkaku Islands and to the Philippines in the South China Sea. Unfortunately, Beijing's unwillingness to resolve disputes peacefully and respect the rule of law isn't just occurring on the water. We have also seen aggression against India . . . destabilizing military activity and other forms of coercion against the people of Taiwan . . . and genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Now, these differences and disputes are real. But the way that you manage them counts. We will not flinch when our interests are threatened. Yet we do not seek confrontation. So let me be clear: As Secretary, I am committed to pursuing a constructive, stable relationship with China.¹

In this speech, Secretary Austin clearly identified the military and diplomatic moves China has made over the last decade that have destabilized international relations in Asia. For the region, the most important of these are the threats to invade Taiwan and the expansion of Chinese bases into the South China Sea, which threaten Japan and the Philippines, important U.S. allies in Asia. But China has also mounted efforts against the U.S. homeland that include theft of U.S. economic property and cyberattacks on a wide array of targets inside the United States. These aggressive actions have recently been complemented by sharp rhetoric from senior Chinese officials that suggest China currently has enough military power and economic, diplomatic, and informational influence to achieve its goals in Asia, to include seizing Taiwan.

For all of these reasons, Secretary Austin has identified China as the United States' primary *pace* threat, a term used to identify the adversary that has the best chance of mounting a grave challenge to U.S. defense policy in the near future. China has earned this status because it has—or will soon have—the ability to fully compete with American military, economic, political, and technological power. Winning the competition with China will first require that the U.S. Army and its soldiers understand the challenge China poses. This special issue of *Military Review* serves that purpose by offering selected articles on China published by the journal over the last five years. Readers will find that the articles address recent Chinese actions broadly, from possible military actions in Taiwan and the South China Sea to the use of economic and financial power in Asia and the United States. *Military Review* hopes that this issue shows China as an ambitious and innovative state willing to use all the instruments of power to compete. Without question, China has become the *pace* threat for the United States and its military. ■

Note

1. "Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Participates in Fullerton Lecture Series in Singapore," U.S. Department of Defense, 27 June 2021, accessed 30 August 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2711025/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-participates-in-fullerton-lecture-serie/>.