

# Sino-Vietnamese Relations, Sino-US Relations and Regional Security

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Presentation to

Virtual Emerging Vietnam 2021 Conference: Moving Beyond COVID

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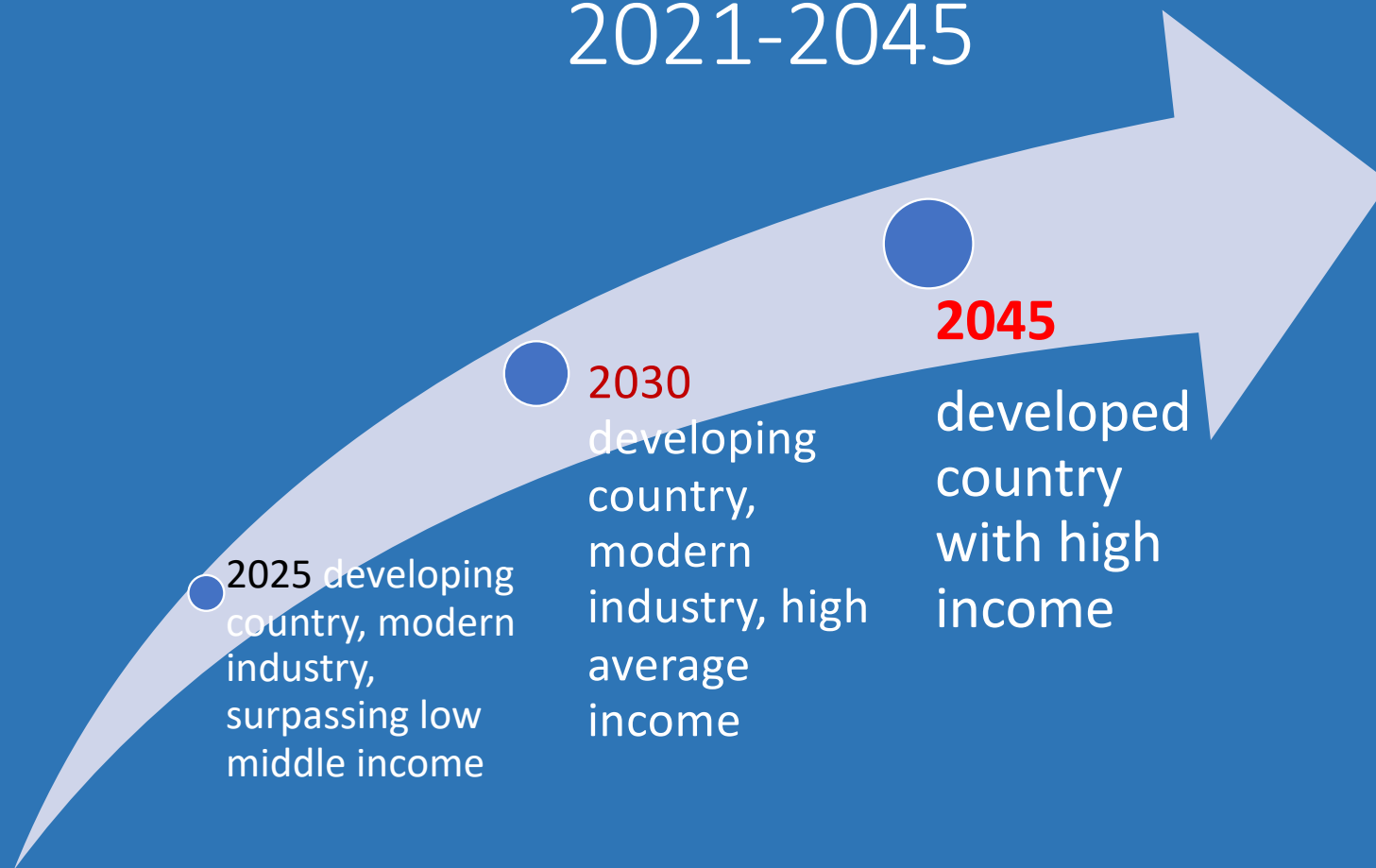
# Outline

1. 13<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress
2. Sino-Vietnamese Relations
3. Sino-US Relations
4. Regional Security

# 1. Thirteenth National Party Congress



# From Developing to Developed Country, 2021-2045



# Foreign Relations

- Independence, self-reliance, co-operation and development
- Handle properly and effectively relations with
  - neighbouring countries
  - major countries
  - strategic partners and
  - other partners

# Proactive and Active International Integration

- Actively participate in building regional and global **multilateral institutions**
  - ASEAN
  - ASEAN-led institutions
  - United Nations
    - UN Security Council
    - UN Peace-Keeping South Sudan
  - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation(APEC)
  - Mekong Sub-region cooperation
  - Multilateral Free Trade Agreements

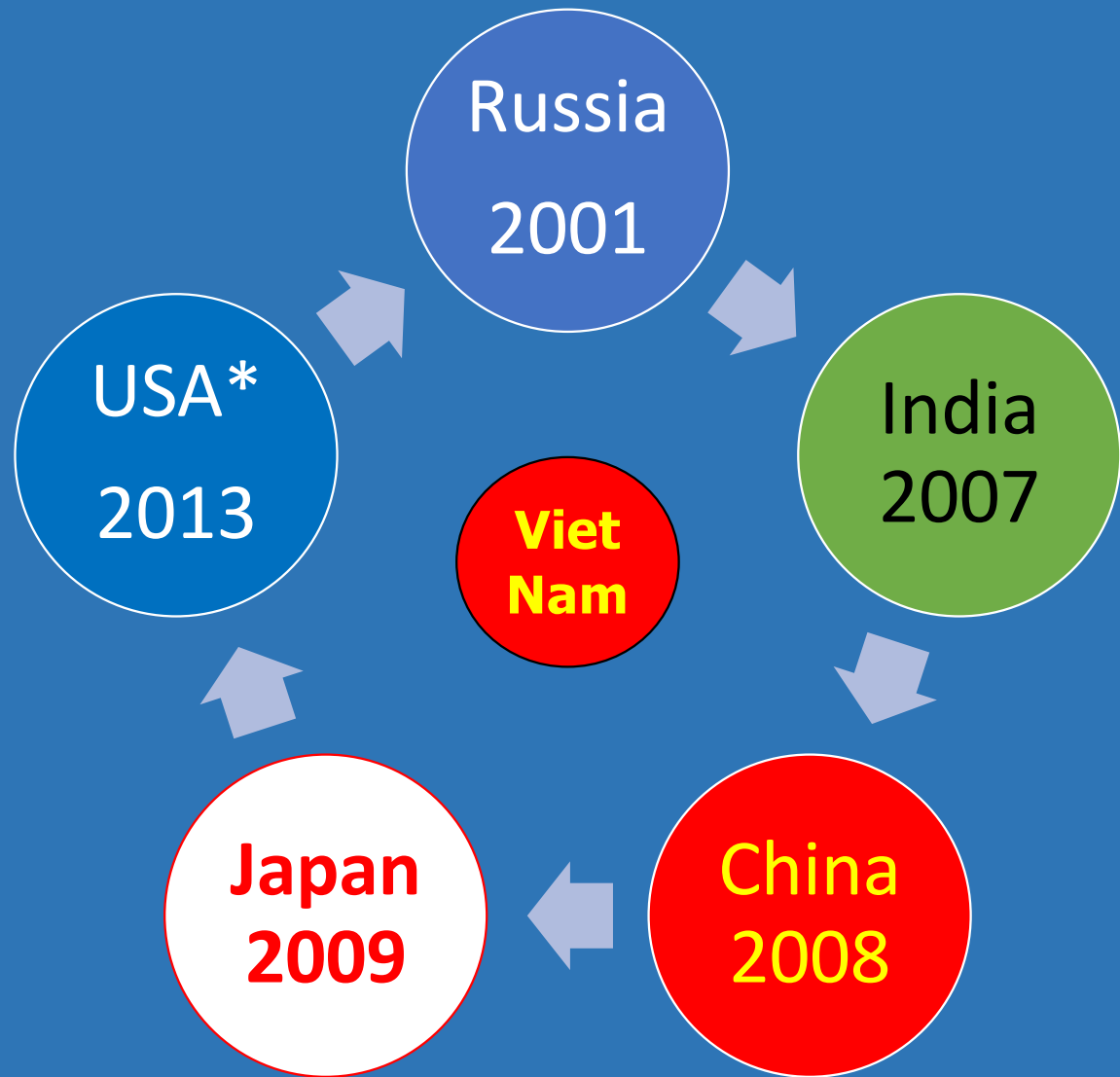
# Some Theoretical and Practical Issues About Socialism and the Path to Socialism in Viet Nam



“we must actively integrate into the world, implement a foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development, and **multilateralize and diversify international relations**, on the basis of respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit”

## 17 Strategic and 12 Comprehensive Partnerships

South Korea, Spain, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, France, Malaysia, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand



\*comprehensive partner



# Future Forecast – Viet Nam

## Four dangers becoming more severe:

1. Falling further behind economically (falling into the middle income trap)
2. Deviating from the socialist path
3. Corruption and mandarinism
4. Plot of peaceful evolution

## 2. Sino-Vietnamese Relations

- 1991 Normalisation of relations
- 2000 Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation in the New Century
- 2003 *vừa hợp tác, vừa đấu tranh* (Cooperation and Struggle)
  - đối tác (partner of cooperation)
  - đối tượng (object of struggle)
- 2008 – Strategic Partner/**Joint Steering Committee on Bilateral Relations**
- 2009 – Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
- 2013 – Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership

# 12<sup>th</sup> Joint Steering Committee for Bilateral Relations (video link, July 2020)

## Positive Developments

- Cooperation between ministries and agencies, and exchanges between localities expanded
- “the management of border lines, boundary markers and border gates has been implemented well, while cross-border economic activities have been promoted despite the complicated developments of COVID-19 pandemic... Agreed to strengthen coordination in border management and protection...”

# 12<sup>th</sup> Joint Steering Committee for Bilateral Relations (video link, July 2020)

## Outstanding Issues

- Vietnam's trade deficit
- Slow progress on projects funded and managed by Chinese contractors
- Slow implementation of Chinese loans and non-refundable aid
- Trade: Vietnam pressed China to facilitate cross border trade, import more Vietnamese agricultural produce, and step up Chinese investment in hi-tech and environmentally friendly sectors in Vietnam

# High-Level Contacts 2021

- President to President
  - Xi Jinping-Nguyen Xuan Phuc, telephone, May 24
- Prime Minister to Prime Minister
  - Pham Minh Chinh and Li Keqiang, phone, June 4
- Foreign Minister to Foreign Minister
  - Bui Thanh Son and Wang Yi, phone, April 16
  - Bui Thanh Son and Wang Yi, in person, June 8
- Minister to Minister (Public Security)
  - To Lam and Zhao Kezhi, in person Hanoi, February 19
    - 7<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting cooperation against crime
    - Zhao also met Defence Minister Ngo Xuan Lich and VCP Secretary General Nguyen Phu Trong

# Military-to-Military Exchanges

## April 23-24, 2021

- 6<sup>th</sup> Vietnam-China **Border Defence Friendship Exchange**
  - Quang Ninh and Guang Xi provinces
  - Co-chaired by Defence Ministers Sr. LTGEN Phan Van Giang and General Wei Fanghe
- 7<sup>th</sup> Vietnam-China **Defence Strategic Dialogue**
  - Co-chaired by Deputy Defence Ministers Hoang Xuan Chien and Shao Yuanming, held in Dongxing City
- Vietnam & China **Coast Guards** 1st joint patrol for 2021, Gulf of Tonkin delimitation line, 28 April
- 30<sup>h</sup> **Joint Naval Patrol** Gulf of Tonkin, 24-25 June

# Other Exchanges 2021

- Joint Border Guard Patrols
  - Lao Cai Province-Honghe & Maguan, Hekou, 21 January
  - Dien Bien Province- Meng Kang Station, 21 May
  - Ha Giang Province and Yunnan, 21 June
  - Lao Cai Province-Hekou District, Yunnan, 25 June
- Vietnam-China Chiefs of Navy, online talk, 28 May
- Online symposium on Relations between CPV and CPC, June
  - Deputy party secretary level – Ho Chi Minh City & Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

# Viet Nam-China Working Groups



Sea Area Beyond the Mouth of the Gulf of Tonkin

Consultations on Cooperation for Mutual Development at Sea

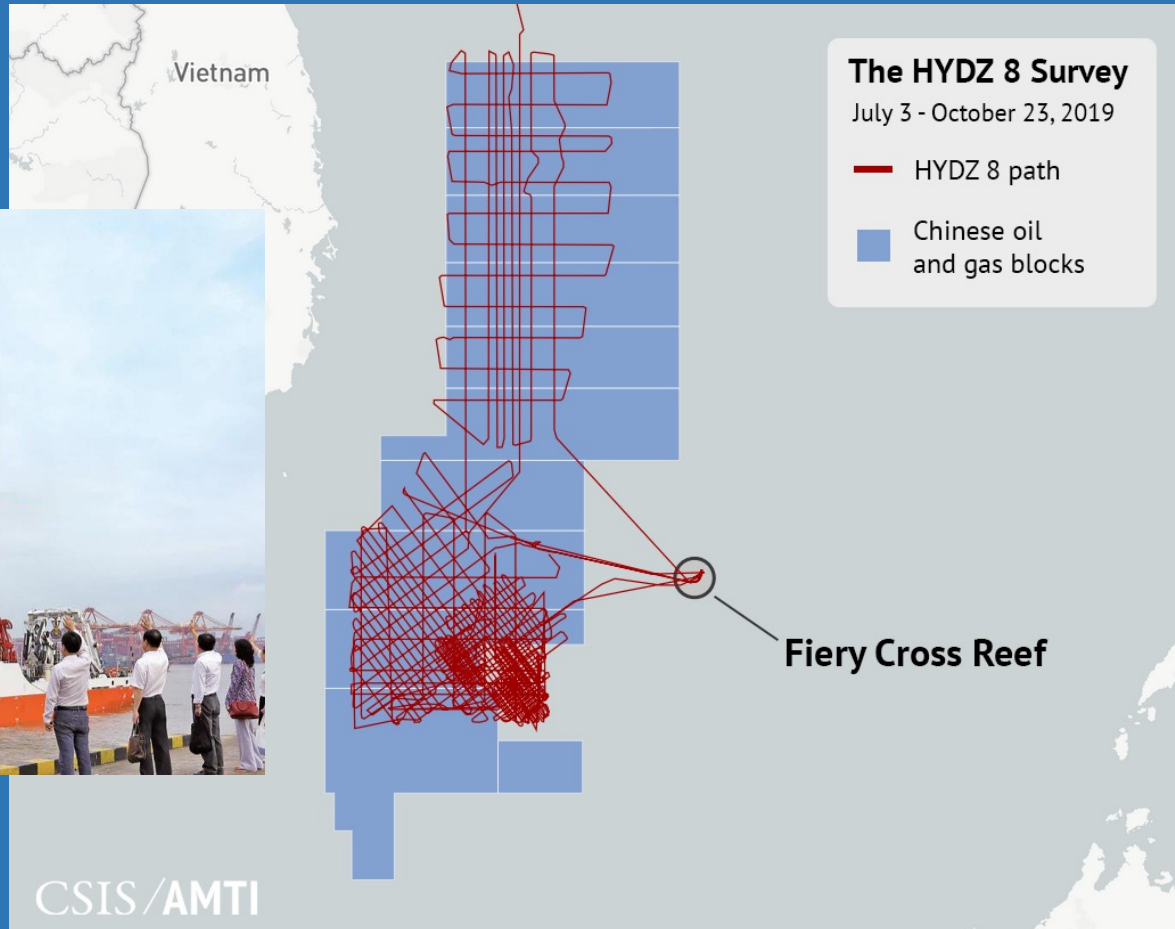
Cooperation in Less Sensitive Sea-related Areas



# The East Sea (Biển Đông) Dispute

- 2009 – China's Nine Dash Line
- 2011 Vietnam-China Agreement on Basic Principles Guiding the Settlement of Sea-Related Issues and Directions
- 2014 – Mega oil rig Hai Yang Shi You 981
- 2017-18 – Vanguard Bank/Repsol of Spain
- 2019 – Vanguard Bank and Red Orchid (Rosneft)
- 2021 Zarubezhneft acquires Rosneft's two shareholdings, Block 06.1 and Block 05.3/11, and minority stake in the Nam Con Son pipeline

# Vanguard Bank July –October 2019



Hai Yang Dizhi 8  
survey ship

# ASEAN-China and South China Sea June 7, 2021

- 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (SOM DOC)
  - Meeting held in Chongqing City
  - First meeting since 18<sup>th</sup> SOM COC, Da Lat, October 2019
  - Reactivate ASEAN-China Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (SOM DOC)
  - Reach a Code of Conduct by 2022

# COVID-19 Vaccine

- Early June Vietnam approved emergency use of Sinopharm
- China donates 500,000 Sinopharm vaccines, 20 June
- Vaccines to be used for:
  - Chinese citizens in Vietnam
  - Vietnamese who plan to work or study in China
  - People who live near the border
- Chinese Embassy presses Vietnam on Sinopharm “asap”
- Vietnam reliant on AstraZeneca vaccine

### 3. Sino-United States Relations



# What Xi Jin-ping's China Wants

## Eight Key Goals\*

1. Keep the Chinese Communist Party in power
2. **National unity and territorial integrity** (Uighur separatists, Hong Kong, Taiwan [and implicitly **four shas**])
3. Develop economy, avoid middle income trap
4. Environmental protection
5. **First class military (peer to US)**

\*Source: international expert on China, under Chatham House Rules

# What Xi Jin-ping's China Wants

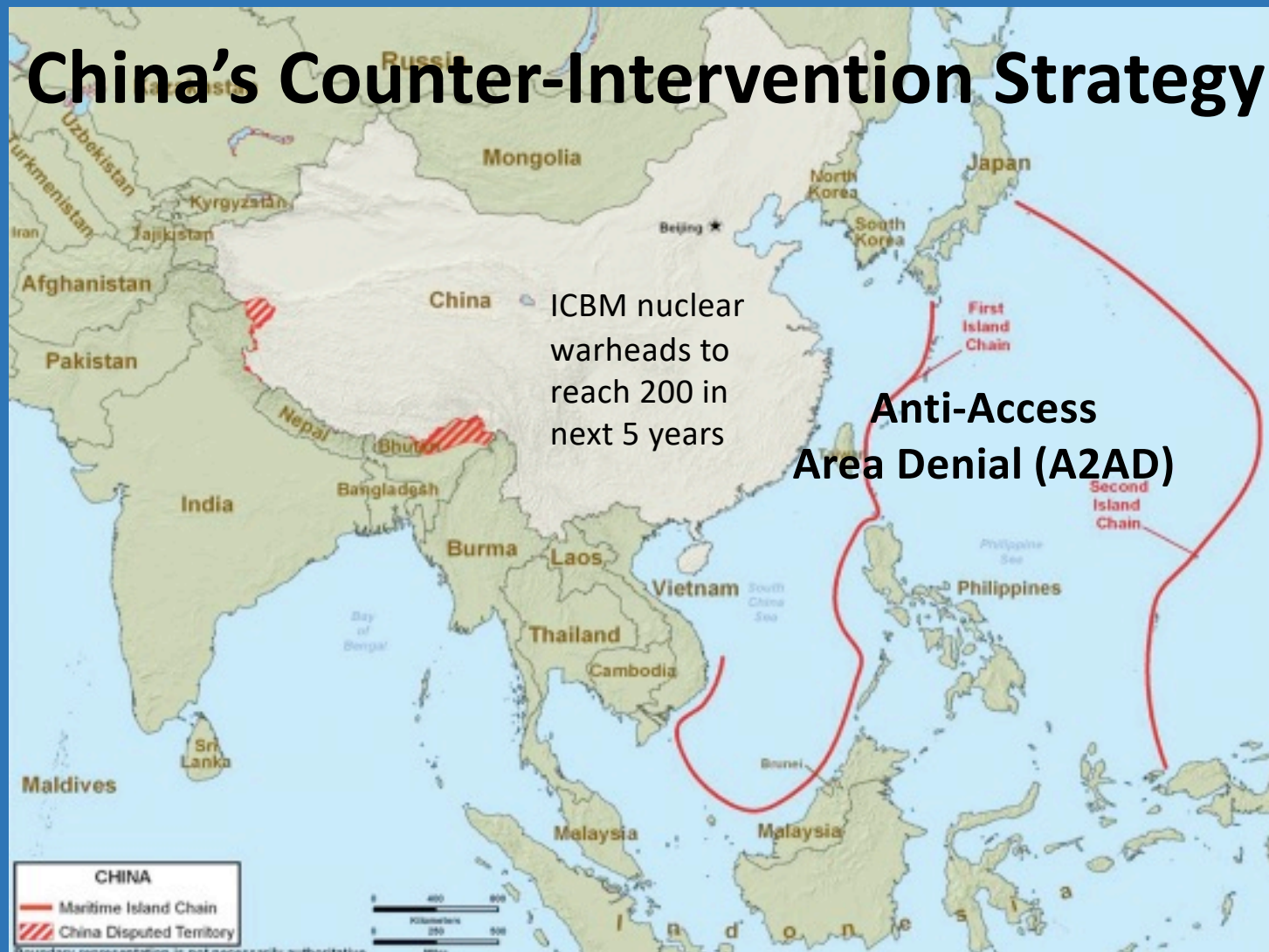
## Eight Key Goals continued\*

6. **Push U.S. back from first island chain maritime zone**  
security for second strike nuclear deterrent via SSBNs
7. Continental security – Belt and Road Initiative, grow markets, gravitational pull towards Beijing
8. **International system with China at the centre, concentric sets of interests, shape rules based order**

\*Source: international expert on China, under Chatham House Rules



# China's Counter-Intervention Strategy



China has more than 1,250 ground launched ballistic and cruise missiles with range 500 to 5,500 km



# Xi Jinping on the Communist Party of China 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

- “The Chinese people will absolutely not allow any foreign force to bully, oppress or enslave us and anyone who attempts to do so will **face broken heads and bloodshed** in front of the iron Great Wall of the 1.4 billion Chinese people.”
- “We must accelerate the **modernization of national defence and the armed forces.**”
- “We must take resolute action to utterly **defeat any attempt to ‘Taiwan independence’...**”

# Biden Administration and China

- “China... has rapidly become more assertive. It is the only competitor potentially capable of combining economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system.”
- Response: restore U.S. credibility and global leadership to ensure that “America, not China, sets the international agenda” working with allies and partners
  - *U.S. Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (March 2021)

# Biden Administration and China

## Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

- “Revitalizing our core strengths is necessary but not sufficient.”
- When China behaves aggressively and coercively, and undermines rules and values of an open and stable international system “**we will answer China’s challenge**”
- “Strategic competition does not, and should not, preclude working with China when it is in our national interest...”

## Regional Security – Vietnam's Future Forecast

- Fierce competition among major powers, potentially volatile
- Disputes over territorial sovereignty, including islands and sea, growing tense and complicated
- Peace, stability, security, safety of navigation and overflight face great challenges and potential conflicts
- ASEAN facing many difficulties
  - *Political Report, 13<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress*

## 4. Regional Security

- U.S. has lost **quantitative advantage** and U.S. **qualitative advantage was shrinking** across several domains as People's Liberation Army fields higher quality systems (2019)
- Greatest danger for U.S. is **erosion of combat-credible conventional deterrence**
- Without credible conventional deterrence China will be emboldened to undermine international order and our values for Free and Open Indo-Pacific
- Indo-Pacific Region remains **priority theater** for Department of Defense
  - *U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture March 9, 2021*

# Combat-Credible Deterrence

- Agile and distributed Joint Force to deter and deny adversary's objectives in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> island chain
- Regain positional advantage by balancing key capabilities across the Indo-Pacific Region
- Network of interoperable allies and partners willing and able to protect their sovereignty from coercion
- Reassure allies and partners of US capacity to conduct complex operations with capabilities that provide decisive advantage

# Biden Administration and the Indo-Pacific

- U.S. will reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world.
- Democratic alliances enable us to present a common front, unified position, pool our strength... **to hold China to account.**
- The U.S. will modernize alliances and partnerships with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea
- Vital national interests compel the deepest connection to the Indo-Pacific
- Engage partner nations India, Singapore, Vietnam

## Conclusion

- Strategic competition between China and US will be the principal driver of change in the region
- China has given priority to modernizing its Southern Theater Fleet
- Chinese military modernization in the Indo-Pacific will continue to accelerate
  - Expanding cyber, space and electronic capabilities
- Grey zone coercive activities will continue



# Conclusion

- Action-reaction cycle between Chinese and U.S. military forces will intensify
- Rules-based order will be contested
- Southeast Asian states will come under increased pressure to take sides
- As the military balance in the Indo-Pacific becomes more unfavorable to the U.S., there is a rising risk that China will become emboldened to alter the status quo – Taiwan
  - Period of concern: late 2020s and 2030s

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