



## THE QUESTION OF GUAM: A PIVOTAL ISLAND'S CHANGING REALITIES

*Mats Engman & Larissa Stünkel*

*For decades, Guam has played an important role in U.S. military strategy. The two main military bases in the island, Anderson Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam, have been elevated as strategic hubs in the U.S.' Indo-Pacific strategy. However, a rapidly changing security environment which in many parts rests upon a perceived increase in Chinese military capabilities pressured Washington to modernize and upgrade U.S. defense capabilities on Guam. However, the ambiguous political status of Guam, which forms the very base of the U.S.' military engagement on the island, severely limits the local population's input in decision-making processes. This Issue Brief seeks to explain the importance of Guam in U.S. military thinking, taking stock of the changing security environment and its implications for the Pacific island, as well as address the situation and role of the local population.*

### Guam's Renewed Salience

Guam is a small island in the Western Pacific and for decades it has played an important role in U.S. military strategy. With China's ongoing military modernization, developments in the South China Sea, and an intensifying Sino-American rivalry, Guam is receiving more attention. Perhaps most tellingly, a video posted online by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), that allegedly depicted an attack on one of the U.S. island's military bases, sparked fears that the threats to Guam should be taken seriously. The video itself, however, received criticism for its blatant insinuation and for repurposing footage from Hollywood movies.<sup>1</sup>

Underscoring Guam's role as a critical hub for the U.S.' strategic defense policy in the Asia-Pacific region, a critical aspect has thus far been missing among those scenario-based discussions. Turning the lens away from what might happen to Guam in the scenario of a military contingency, this paper will shed light on what makes Guam such a focal point in Washington's newly found Indo-Pacific interest. From a "vital overseas platform [...] throughout the Cold War",<sup>2</sup> to the re-centering of the island in Washington's defense circles under the Trump administration,<sup>3</sup> the renewed attention the island draws speaks volumes to the importance of Guam, especially now that Sino-American tensions are so highly strung.

Deriving its strategic value in large parts from its geographic location, Guam's importance is also dependent upon a persistently ambiguous political status which is part and parcel of the U.S.' engagement with Guam. A change in perceptions about the security environment in the Western Pacific has added further impetus for Washington in recent years to reconsider the island's future role when it comes to defense planning.<sup>4</sup> Ranging from infrastructural upgrades to altercations in tactical planning and a rise in local indigenous opposition, a host of factors are at play that, taken together, underpin the island's cornerstone-like status.

***“It is the very opaque nature of the political status that persistently stirs up controversy.”***

### **An Island Unaccounted for**

In May 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a small victory for Guam's inhabitants when it ruled that the existing law on holding plebiscites violates the U.S. constitution.<sup>5</sup> The case “Davis versus Guam” shed light on the issue of political ambiguity which has for years been a thorn in the side for many among the island's population. Arnold Davis' case, having petitioned for a reform of what he deemed unfair voting regulations, has now officially opened doors for a change in plebiscite requirements. Up until then, Guam's government had maintained that only “native inhabitants” could vote in a potential referendum on the future of Guam's political status. And it is the very opaque nature of the political status that persistently stirs up controversy, not least since Guam was bought under de facto U.S. control in 1899, albeit briefly interrupted when Japan claimed the island between 1941 and 1944.<sup>6</sup>

With the passing of the Guam Organic Act in 1950, the official status changed to “organized, unincorporated territory” of the United States. As

such, all political decisions fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Congress in Washington. Nonetheless, Guam's inhabitants are not granted full citizenship rights, such as voting in the presidential election, despite having been granted de facto U.S. citizenship.<sup>7</sup> Up until 1972, Guam's representation in Congress was managed directly through the U.S. president anointing a governor, a trend which has since been overhauled, giving the people of Guam a chance to vote for the island's representative. However, the governing role does not provide the individual holding the post with any significant political power but remains a mere representational function. At present, all of Guam's internal and external affairs are handled by the Department of Interior, with the U.S. Congress holding the ultimate veto power, rendering Guam's local legislative powers obsolete.<sup>8</sup>

### **The “Tip of the Spear”**

Given the limited engagement of local voices in the political process, it becomes apparent that it is Guam's strategic geographic location, situated approximately 4,000km from Beijing and about 6,000km from Hawai'i, which seems to matter most in Washington. Having infamously been dubbed “the tip of the spear”,<sup>9</sup> Guam played a decisive role for the U.S. during the Second World War Pacific campaigns. Apart from offering a safe logistics and reach-back hub, the island also provided a tactical staging area offering an ideal range for forward deployment of military contingents in the Western Pacific. During the period of the Second World War this multitude of strategic positives became a guarantor for the U.S. in regaining control of Guam from Japan, and thereby taking control of Guam's deep-water harbor as well as airfields.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, Admiral Nimitz, the United States Pacific Fleet Commander, established the forward Pacific Command Headquarters on the island in 1944, which allowed for a faster operational pace and a direct communication's line for other military operations in the Asia Pacific region during the war.<sup>11</sup>

Following the end of the Second World War, Guam eventually developed into a key base to support

the United States Pacific strategy, which included the construction of Anderson Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam. These served as vital hubs during the Korean War<sup>12</sup> and the Vietnam War<sup>13</sup> through hosting long-range bomber aircraft. The island also hosted Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s as well as surplus military supplies.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it was well known for being the supply hub for munitions during the Gulf War.<sup>15</sup>

Retaining its prominent status among policymakers in Washington, both of Guam's military bases host various temporarily deployed units. Notable exceptions are a Thermal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) unit<sup>16</sup> as well as a submarine squadron relocated from Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i, both of which are the only permanently stationed units.<sup>17</sup> Upon launching the U.S.' Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2017,<sup>18</sup> however, Guam's strategic position was elevated to be the prime outpost for U.S. operations in the Western Pacific.<sup>19</sup> Most prominently, the Anderson Air Force base is now considered a vital mid-way point for the rotational deployment of bomber aircraft in the region,<sup>20</sup> which includes B-52s and B1-Bs as well as B-2s. Moreover, Naval Base Guam will regularly host different naval units in support of Washington's pivot to the Indo-Pacific as a whole. Together with Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, Guam now represents the U.S. with the possibility to project military force whilst simultaneously underscoring its commitment to allies in the region, ranging from Japan and South Korea to Taiwan. It is against this backdrop that Guam's geography plays an important part for the U.S. military as it affords the American armed forces with an advantage in deploying to various locations with relative ease.<sup>21</sup>

## Changing Security Environment

When in October 2020 the aforementioned PLA video turned the spotlight on Guam as a potential target for China's quickly advancing military force, it turned out to be the latest in a series of provocations in a downward spiraling spat between the United States and the People's Republic of China.<sup>22</sup> A

recent report published by the Royal United Service Institute (RUSI) also provided a detailed overview of China's military technology advancements. The report remarked in passing that a new type of nuclear-capable bomber was rumored to be in an advanced prototype stage of development.<sup>23</sup> While not containing further technical details, RUSI's analysis did hint that the new bomber could be a game-changing development that may alter the strategic military balance between the U.S. and China in the Western Pacific – citing Guam as a prime target for this new bomber, albeit presuming that it will take time for it to be ready for deployment by the PLA.

***The most imminent threat scenario for Guam might not hinge as much on North Korea as on Beijing's ambitions to regain control of Taiwan.***

For Guam's U.S. forces, the video and the RUSI report merely meant that it revved up demands to improve the island's increasingly vulnerable and ageing defense infrastructure. Already in 2017, fears had come to the fore that North Korean missiles were capable of striking Guam<sup>24</sup> after Pyongyang successfully test-fired two medium-range missiles.<sup>25</sup> Apparently aimed at testing Washington's resolve on making concessions in denuclearization talks, North Korea's missile tests sparked further concerns that its nuclear capabilities could add an additional layer of uncertainty in the face of an actual military confrontation. Not only would these missiles pose a risk for U.S. bases on Guam, but it would likewise prove a risk for the safety of the island's inhabitants.

Even though these potential missile strikes were ultimately nothing more than a threat at that point, Washington's response clearly shifted the focus, making clear that the island is as vital as ever for U.S. force projection. According to senior defense

officials, this became particularly clear when news surfaced that the assertive North Korean rhetoric had prompted defense strategists in Washington to draw up contingency plans, which included a pre-emptive strike scenario against North Korean missile launch sites.<sup>26</sup> The reveal of new missile systems at this year's military parade in Pyongyang, in theory, spoke directly to those fears being unearthed once again due to North Korea quickly advancing on military technology. As if to confirm this concern, South Korean defense experts alleged that the new missile systems are much more sophisticated than previously thought, posing a much more pronounced threat than a few years ago.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, the most imminent threat scenario for Guam might not hinge as much on North Korea as on Beijing's ambitions to regain control of Taiwan. Either way, U.S. president Donald Trump's provocative economic approach towards Beijing did cater directly to Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision to improve China's international standing through visible action. Apart from an ever deepening tit-for-tat on the economic front, bipartisan action in the U.S. to pass the TAIPEI Act in early 2020 further impeded on the growing Sino-American divide.

***Guam's role as a central hub for military operations provides the U.S. with additional flexibility in deployment as well as an increase in the speed at which these operations could be carried out.***

Washington's actions stand in direct contrast to Chinese president Xi Jinping's insistence that there is only "One China", and that achieving unification with Taiwan is an "inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."<sup>28</sup> Given

this overtly tense situation, questions were raised whether Xi's goals were, more than ever before, becoming a not so distant reality.<sup>29</sup> After all, Beijing at the very least appeared to have stepped up its pressure vis-à-vis Taipei by sending more warplanes across the Taiwan Strait and the unofficial median line, as well as holding active naval drills within the island's vicinity.<sup>30</sup> These incursions became even more frequent after the U.S. administration sent a number of high-ranking officials to the island over the span of several months in mid-2020.<sup>31</sup>

In an effort to salvage the image of the U.S. as a responsible ally willing to stand up to China, Washington ultimately sent Defense Secretary Mark Esper to visit Guam, as well as Palau and Hawaii in August 2020.<sup>32</sup> Besides turning the trip into a high-profile in meet-up with Japan's Defense Minister Taro Kono, Esper's mission largely centered on conveying the message that "maintaining peace and stability in the region" will be the long-term priority.<sup>33</sup> Unequivocally singling out China and Russia as the primary competition for U.S. superiority, he stood firm in his assertion that is China's "challenging"<sup>34</sup> behavior which warrants a similarly strong response if the U.S. wants to maintain the status quo.

With China again and again showcasing its improved military capabilities, the challenge to the status quo appears to be no longer just a theoretical scenario. Instead, the military balance in the Western Pacific appears to increasingly tip in favor of China which Washington aims to counterbalance. Doing so, however, inevitably exposes Guam as the backbone of the Indo-Pacific strategy to possible military attacks. For any form of military contingency related to Taiwan, or should a direct confrontation be imminent, the bases in Guam will play a crucial role, in addition to those in South Korea and Japan given their geographic proximity.<sup>35</sup> This will be particularly important given that Beijing's long-term objective could be to deny, or at the very least severely restrict, any kind of U.S. military operation in the region, which would likely also hinge on an array of newly built military bases in the South China Sea as a strategic back-up for the PLA.

Accordingly, Guam's role as a central hub for military operations provides the U.S. with additional flexibility in deployment as well as an increase in the speed at which these operations could be carried out whilst decreasing the risk of having to rely on carrier task forces. While in theory the U.S. could capitalize on Guam's centrality, wargames conducted by RAND concerning a possible conflict over Taiwan proved to be alarmingly costly for the U.S. Additionally, as RAND's David Ochmanek phrased it, "the United States starts losing people and hardware in the theatre very quickly".<sup>36</sup>

It therefore did not come as a surprise that the U.S.' current head of the Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Phil Davidson, responded to media inquiries about Guam's security by calling for "a 360-degree persistent and integrated air defense capability" that the current THAAD installation cannot provide for.<sup>37</sup> Davidson's remarks echoed demands made by the Indo Pacific Command in a report to Congress in early 2020 which underlined the growing erosion of U.S. military superiority vis-à-vis Beijing.

## U.S. Response

First calls for crucial upgrades to be initiated already surfaced in 2017 when a report by U.S. based think tank - the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) - outlined that the potential for tensions to arise in the region warrants a substantial response from Washington. The CSIS report explicitly focused on the role of the U.S. military as a vital link in the Asia-Pacific region for any efforts that seek to maintain the current status quo.<sup>38</sup> The potential for the erosion of U.S. military superiority depended on investing in critical defense hubs, particularly on Guam. Given that tensions between Washington and Beijing have scaled up under the Trump administration, defense planning in the American capital has focused heavily on improving Guam's defensive capabilities.

Already prior to the Trump administration's vigorous push, the Obama administration indicated that it would relocate almost half (approx. 9,000 soldiers) of U.S. Marines currently deployed to Okinawa, Japan.

Once complete, some 5,000 of them will have been deployed to Guam, 2,700 to Hawai'i, and some 1,300 to Darwin in Australia. Accordingly, projects have been underway in Guam to prepare for such a large scale move of personnel and equipment. The new base, Camp Blaze, is located in the vicinity of the Anderson Air Force base and will be able to host the 5,000 marines and approx. 2,400 dependents. The move is expected to begin in 2024 and would ideally be completed within 18 months.<sup>39</sup> Not only does this elevate Guam's position among defense circles, but it is also essentially a lifeline for Washington to fall back on in the event of a military confrontation as it will improve the force's deployment readiness and force strength.

***Faster response times for bomber deployment mirror the urgency that Washington places on the forces stationed there.***

Apart from accommodating more military personnel, a new fuel pipeline, completed in 2018, allows for faster refueling of aircraft and significantly reduces the time needed to refuel as the pipeline offers "double [...] [the] throughput".<sup>40</sup> It effectively replaces the ageing infrastructure that could no longer adequately sustain the fuel needs of Andersen Air Force Base. With more aircraft refueled at a faster speed, Andersen Air Force Base will prove to be both vital in sustaining military operations as well as a possible target, given that fuel reserves are fundamental to sustain operating aircraft.

Additionally, plans are currently underway that could see the air force base receive a "Stand Off Weapons Complex" according to the 2021 budget proposal.<sup>41</sup> Besides much needed renovation work, the budget foresees improvements to be made to the time required to load bomber aircraft. Up until now, loading bombers had been handled manually, requiring a significant amount of personnel and taking more than ten hours to complete. Updating

this vital choke point with technology that is capable of reducing the loading time to less than three hours indicates a change in the perceived threat level facing American troops. Faster response times for bomber deployment mirror the urgency that Washington places on the forces stationed there.

Another possible upgrade to mitigate the perceived threat level is to deploy an additional missile defense system. This had already been demanded in a public announcement by the commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Philip Davidson, who advocated for an Aegis ashore system to be installed on Guam permanently.<sup>42</sup> Aegis ashore systems provide a highly capable missile and air defense system that would allow the Pacific Command to be able to react swiftly to possible attacks and would add additional security since the already installed THAAD systems are insufficiently equipped for multi-pronged attacks.

***With a new administration slated to remain heavy-handed on security in the Asia-Pacific, Washington is running a real risk of further alienating the local population.***

Nonetheless, the zooming-in approach to upgrading Guam rather than other existing bases has already drawn criticism that the Marines stationed there will be too far removed from potential conflict areas to respond in a timely manner, at least for the time being. Moreover, deploying a vast number of Marines to Guam simultaneously may complicate deployment further as strategic air and naval lift capabilities have already been shown to be difficult to realize in the region.<sup>43</sup>

## **A Spear with a Broken Tip?**

Painting a picture of Guam as a mere strategic outpost in the Pacific, however, fails to account for the impact this expanding influence has on the local population. Since becoming a de facto U.S. territory, the island's indigenous people, the Chamorro, have been lamenting the U.S. military's usage of native lands for military installations.<sup>44</sup> Apart from disowning many Chamorro without any – or if any, then predominantly inadequate – compensation, Washington has also failed to treat the native population with the respect they deserved.

Large-scale protests have been a regular sight on the streets of the Pacific island, not least since the North Korean threats in 2017. Already in 2011, upon a decision made by the Department of Defense to relocate fighter jet training from Okinawa (Japan) to Guam, the military drew harsh criticism from local Guam indigenous groups for their top-down handling and being inconsiderate of local needs. Back then, the main concern centered on noise pollution from jets landing and taking off, which has returned as a prominent issue in recent years given plans to shift more military aircraft to Guam along with the planned move of about 5,000 Marines from Okinawa.

As tensions between the U.S. and China are unlikely to be resolved, and with a new administration slated to remain heavy-handed on security in the Asia-Pacific, Washington is running a real risk of further alienating the local population. This became particularly apparent when more Chamorro remains were unearthed on base construction sites but given short shrift among defense planners at the Department of Justice in 2020.<sup>45</sup> Besides angering the local Chamorro groups in what they perceive to be a major disturbance of their cultural heritage, the handling of the remains also drew harsh criticism for foregoing rigorous archaeological examinations at the original burial sites.<sup>46</sup> Finding innovative ways to give the local population a real influence and being open to compromise in the use of training areas and firing ranges may prove an important policy if they

wish to avoid further demonstrations and conflicts.

## Conclusion

The fact that Guam's role as a strategic outpost is being reconsidered in Washington's defense circles speaks to the renewed importance of the island for the U.S.' Asia-Pacific defense strategy. Since its incorporation as a U.S. territory the island has functioned as a key geographic location, which was further elevated as Washington took control of Guam. Governed under ambiguous principles since then, these serve as the basis for the U.S. military to assert control whilst leveraging Guam's strategic geography to its advantage. This has become particularly pronounced in recent years, as the Trump administration took a hardline approach vis-à-vis Beijing. Driven in large part by economic considerations, recalibrating its foreign policy to be increasingly heavy-handed also hinged upon considerations that the PLA under Xi Jinping had been making speedy technological as well as tactical advancements. Strongly linked to Xi Jinping's efforts to make China a truly global player and revving up the confrontational rhetoric on reclaiming Taiwan by force if necessary, it perhaps did not come as a surprise that the U.S. under Trump decided to up the ante.

Primarily driven by concerns that the PLA's strengthened military capabilities represent a real threat to security in the Asia-Pacific region, this vividly exposed the fragilities of both the military infrastructure as well as the tactical positioning of Guam. A first step taken under the banner of strengthening the bases on Guam was a major infrastructure investment plan. Apart from building more accommodation facilities for a large personnel influx over the next years, the Department of Defense also invested in tactical infrastructure upgrades. These range from improved refueling capacities, especially for fighter jets, to reloading bombers at higher speeds and possible deployment of new missile defense systems.

While the changes under way on Guam might speak to a much-needed recalibration of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China, these do simultaneously

pose a potential risk for conflict to arise, either over Taiwan or maybe Guam itself. An exacerbated threat perception as voiced by the Trump administration may have unwillingly fanned the flames as escalating tensions already impede on Sino-American relations. Besides harsher rhetoric on both sides, the technological and infrastructural upgrades on Guam seem indicative of trust deteriorating on both sides. These threat-driven changes may also stir up further local opposition to the U.S. military presence in Guam, exposing the island's ambiguous status as a potential liability for Washington.

After all, as both the U.S. and China have been propping up their military capabilities, it may not be the actual technological advancement that would cause conflict to arise. Given that both sides have been engaged in a heated rhetorical tug-of-war, the risk of an actual conflict breaking out (which would put Guam at the very heart) may be based on misperceptions on both sides over the other's intentions. For Guam, the tit-for-tat exchange is likely to do more harm than good in the long run. ■

***Authors** - Major General (ret.) Mats Engman, is a Distinguished Military Fellow at ISDP. His expertise lies in security policy, military strategy and crisis management, and his work has a particular focus on developments in East Asia, and the Korean Peninsula.*

*Ms. Larissa Stünkel is a Junior Research Fellow at ISDP's Stockholm China Center. She holds a Master's Degree in Asian Studies from Lund University, Sweden, and a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies from Leiden University, the Netherlands.*

*The opinions expressed in this Issue Brief do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute for Security and Development Policy or its sponsors.*

*© The Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2020. This Issue Brief can be freely reproduced provided that ISDP is informed.*

#### **ABOUT ISDP**

*The Institute for Security and Development Policy is a Stockholm-based independent and non-profit research and policy institute. The Institute is dedicated to expanding understanding of international affairs, particularly the inter-relationship between the issue areas of conflict, security and development. The Institute's primary areas of geographic focus are Asia and Europe's neighborhood.*

[www.isdp.eu](http://www.isdp.eu)

## Endnotes

1. “China’s Hollywood-style Guam attack video dismissed as propaganda,” *South China Morning Post*, September 25, 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3102993/chinas-hollywood-style-guam-attack-video-dismissed-propaganda>
2. “Installations in Guam During the Cold War – Department of Defense Legacy Resources Management Program.” *Department of Defense Legacy Program*. Accessed 28 November 2020. [https://www.denix.osd.mil/cr/historic/cold-war/installations-in-guam-and-the-northern-mariana-islands/fact-sheet/37\\_Installations%20in%20Guam%20During%20the%20Cold%20War%20\(Legacy%2009-454\).pdf](https://www.denix.osd.mil/cr/historic/cold-war/installations-in-guam-and-the-northern-mariana-islands/fact-sheet/37_Installations%20in%20Guam%20During%20the%20Cold%20War%20(Legacy%2009-454).pdf)
3. Ngirairikl, Oyaol. “US, Japan defense chief to meet today in Guam,” *The Guam Daily Post*, August 29, 2020, [https://www.postguam.com/news/local/us-japan-defense-chiefs-to-meet-today-in-guam/article\\_3a377b02-e91d-11ea-b365-7b4502863c9b.html](https://www.postguam.com/news/local/us-japan-defense-chiefs-to-meet-today-in-guam/article_3a377b02-e91d-11ea-b365-7b4502863c9b.html)
4. Mclearly, Paul. “PACOM Chief Warns Of Threat To Guam; China Presses Hard,” *Breaking Defense*, September 18, 2020. <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/09/pacom-chief-warns-of-threat-to-guam-china-presses-hard/>
5. “Arnold Davis wins ‘final victory and justice’ in plebiscite appeal,” *The Guam Daily Post*, May 5, 2020. [https://www.postguam.com/news/local/arnold-davis-wins-final-victory-and-justice-in-plebiscite-appeal/article\\_63606a24-8e15-11ea-a537-f7a6e957e167.html](https://www.postguam.com/news/local/arnold-davis-wins-final-victory-and-justice-in-plebiscite-appeal/article_63606a24-8e15-11ea-a537-f7a6e957e167.html)
6. “Guam’s Future Political Status: An Argument for Free Association with U.S. Citizenship.” *University of Hawai’i Blog*. Accessed 15 November 2020. [http://blog.hawaii.edu/aplpj/files/2011/11/APLPJ\\_04.1\\_gutierrez.pdf](http://blog.hawaii.edu/aplpj/files/2011/11/APLPJ_04.1_gutierrez.pdf)
7. “Guam’s Future Political Status: An Argument for Free Association with U.S. Citizenship.” *University of Hawai’i Blog*.
8. Ibid.
9. “Guam: the tip of the spear in US military might,” *Radio New Zealand*, September 10, 2017. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/sunday/audio/201857960/guam-the-tip-of-the-spear-in-us-military-might>
10. Kazumine, Akimoto, “The Strategic Value of Territorial Islands from the Perspective of National Security.” *Review of Island Studies 1* (June 2012): pp.54-69. <https://www.spf.org/islandstudies/research/a00008.html>
11. Hopkins, William B. “The Pacific War: The Strategy, Politics, and Players that Won the War.” Minneapolis: *Zenith Press*, 2010.
12. Schwartz, Meghan. “Ceremony honors veterans of Korean War,” *The Daily Post Guam*, October 5, 2018. [https://www.postguam.com/news/local/ceremony-honors-veterans-of-korean-war/article\\_92e86136-c777-11e8-8089-0b77611c8aac.html](https://www.postguam.com/news/local/ceremony-honors-veterans-of-korean-war/article_92e86136-c777-11e8-8089-0b77611c8aac.html)
13. Halloran, Richard. “The War Is Suddenly Grim for the B-52 Fliers on Guam,” *The New York Times*, December 30, 1972. <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/12/30/archives/the-war-is-suddenly-grim-for-the-b52-fliers-on-guam-the-war-turns.html>
14. Malcolm, Andrew H. “48,000 refugees jammed on Guam,” *The New York Times*. May 10, 1975. <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/05/10/archives/48000-refugees-jammed-on-guam-3-new-ships-make-influx-largest-since.html>
15. Babauta, Chloe. “Guam’s strategic importance: From coaling station to tip of the spear,” *Pacific Daily News*, n.d. <https://eu.guampdn.com/story/news/2018/09/02/guams-strategic-importance-coaling-station-tip-spear/1048589002/>
16. Mchenry, Tomothy. “Guam’s first permanent THAAD unit nearly complete,” *PNC Guam*, November 4, 2016. <https://www.pncguam.com/guam-s-first-permanenet-thaad-unit-on-guam-nearly-complete/>
17. Dumat-Ol Daleno, Gaynor. “Submarine squadron expands,” *Pacific Daily News*, n.d. <https://eu.guampdn.com/story/news/local/2016/01/11/submarine-squadron-expands/78617472/>
18. “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific – Advancing a Shared Vision.” *Department of State*. Accessed 3 December 2020. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Free-and-Open-Indo-Pacific-4Nov2019.pdf>
19. Cagurangan, Mar-Vic and Alex Rhowuniong. “Operational build-up: Guam is at the center of US military’s Indo-Pacific

- Strategy amid Beijing's Muscle Flexing," *Pacific Island Times*, August 8, 2020. <https://www.pacificislandtimes.com/single-post/2020/08/08/Operational-buildup-Guam-is-at-the-center-of-the-US-military%E2%80%99s-Indo-Pacific-Strategy-amid-Beijing-muscle-flexing>
20. Losey, Stephen. "The Bones are back: B-1s return to Guam," *Air Force Times*, October 23, 2020. <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/10/23/the-bones-are-back-b-1s-return-to-guam/>
  21. Kan, Shirley A. "Guam: U.S. Defense Deployments." *Congressional Research Service*. Accessed 3 December 2020. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22570.pdf>
  22. "China's Hollywood-style Guam attack video dismissed as propaganda," *South China Morning Post*, September 25, 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3102993/chinas-hollywood-style-guam-attack-video-dismissed-propaganda>
  23. Bronk, Justin. "Russia and Chinese Combat Air Trends – Current Capabilities and Future Threat Outlook." *RUSI Whitehall Report 3-20* (October 2020). Accessed 7 December 2020. [https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/russian\\_and\\_chinese\\_combat\\_air\\_trends\\_whr\\_final\\_web\\_version.pdf](https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/russian_and_chinese_combat_air_trends_whr_final_web_version.pdf)
  24. Mazarr, Michael J. et al. "The Korean Peninsula: Three Dangerous Scenarios." *RAND Perspective*. Accessed 14 December 2020. [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE262/RAND\\_PE262.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE262/RAND_PE262.pdf)
  25. Choe, Sang-Hun. "North Korean Threat to Guam Tests Credibility of Kim and Trump," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/10/world/asia/north-korea-guam-missiles-kim-trump.html>
  26. McFadden, C. et al. "B-1 Bombers Key to a U.S. Plan to Strike North Korean Missile Sites," *NBC News*, August 17, 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/north-korea/b-1-bombers-key-u-s-plan-strike-north-korean-n791221>
  27. "N. Korea fast narrowing missile technology with S. Korea: defense development agency chief," *Yonhap News Agency*, October 20, 2020. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20201020005800325>
  28. Tharoor, Ishaan. "The end of Xi Jinping's Taiwan dream," *The Washington Post*, January 14, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/01/14/end-xi-jinpings-taiwan-dream/>
  29. Templeman, Kharis. "China's Military Incursions Around Taiwan Aren't a Sign of Imminent Attack," *The Diplomat*, October 22, 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/chinas-military-incursions-around-taiwan-arent-a-sign-of-imminent-attack/>
  30. "Taiwan slams China over military incursions," *Deutsche Welle*, September 22, 2020. <https://www.dw.com/en/taiwan-slams-china-over-military-incursions/a-55020855>
  31. Hille, K. and Shepherd, C. "China cranks up tensions in Taiwan Strait as US diplomat visits Taipei," *Financial Times*, September 18, 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/eb60c80d-2829-48f5-b664-064f16f5fa7e>
  32. "US defense chief Esper to visit Palau, Guam and Hawaii," *AP News*, August 20, 2020. <https://apnews.com/article/9a5e7bbe855f076713af6dfde3b7fdd>
  33. "Esper Shares U.S: Vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region." *United States Department of Defense*. Accessed 5 December 2020. <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2325499/esper-shares-us-vision-for-a-free-and-open-indo-pacific-region/>
  34. Ibid.
  35. Lague, David. "Pentagon's latest salvo against China's growing might: Cold war bombers," *The Japan Times*, September 3, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/09/03/world/pentagons-china-cold-war-bombers/>
  36. "Defending Taiwan is growing costlier and deadlier," *The Economist*, October 10, 2020. <https://www.economist.com/asia/2020/10/10/defending-taiwan-is-growing-costlier-and-deadlier>
  37. Mehta, Aaron. "INDOPACOM head wants Aegis Ashore in Guam by 2026," *Defense News*, July 22, 2020. <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2020/07/22/indopacom-head-wants-aegis-ashore-in-guam-by-2026/>

38. “US urged to upgrade Guam bases,” *Radio New Zealand*, January 7, 2015. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/263220/us-urged-to-upgrade-guam-bases>
39. “Marine Corps activates Camp Blaz in Guam.” *United States Marine Corps*. Accessed 5 December 2020. <https://www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2367980/marine-corps-activates-camp-blaz-in-guam/>
40. “New pipeline revitalizes Guam fuel infrastructure.” *Defense Logistics Agency*. Accessed 15 December 2020. <https://www.dla.mil/AboutDLA/News/NewsArticleView/Article/1464395/new-pipeline-revitalizes-guam-fuel-infrastructure/>
41. “Air Force President’s Budget FY21.” *United States Air Force Financial Management*. Accessed 5 December 2020. <https://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/FM-Resources/Budget/Air-Force-Presidents-Budget-FY21/>
42. Ryall, Julian. “US Pacific army chief wants Aegis Ashore defence system in Guam amid ‘threat’ from China,” *South China Morning Post*, July 23, 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3094386/us-pacific-army-chief-wants-aegis-ashore-defence-system-guam>
43. U.S. House Armed Services Committee. “20170426 Military Assessment of the Security Challenges in the Indo-Asia-Pacific Region,” *YouTube video*, 2:38:21, April 26, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFbCRbiRVSY&feature=youtu.be>.
44. “Guam: A conflicted island at the centre of a firestorm,” *BBC News*, August 17, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-40957419>
45. Kaur, Anumita. „More human remains disturbed at Dededo base; here’s what sites are recorded so far,” *Pacific Daily News*, August 30, 2020. <https://eu.guampdn.com/story/news/local/2020/08/30/more-human-remains-disturbed-construction-dededo-base/5671628002/>
46. “1,000-year-old human remains found on new Marine Corps base under construction on Guam,” *Marine Corps Times*, October 7, 2020. <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2020/10/07/1000-year-old-human-remains-found-on-new-marine-corps-base-under-construction-on-guam/>