

Beyond Military Signals: Narrative Early Warning Indicators in China's Taiwan Strategy

8th Psychological Operations Group

The Problem

What if an early warning indicator framework had existed before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, one that treated narrative shifts as strategic signals rather than background noise? In the months leading up to February 2022, Western intelligence ultimately assessed that an invasion was imminent, but key opportunities for earlier, higher confidence warning were lost by prioritizing visible military indicators over cognitive domain signals. In hindsight, coordinated Russian narratives — claims of genocide, manufactured pretexts, and sudden moral justification for force — shifted weeks to months before decisive military movements reached their final stages. Had these narrative indicators been systematically tracked and integrated with intelligence assessments, policymakers may have achieved higher certainty earlier, creating more time to position forces, shape alliances, and deter escalation.

This research does not assume that a future Taiwan contingency would mirror the indicators observed prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. China is neither Russia, nor Taiwan Ukraine. Beijing has closely studied the Ukraine conflict, just as the United States and its partners have, and any future escalation would likely reflect lessons learned from that war. The value of the Ukraine case lies not in replicating specific indicators, but in demonstrating that narratives in the cognitive domain can reveal escalatory intent earlier than traditional military signals. That insight provides a methodological foundation for examining how narrative indicators might precede escalation in a Taiwan context.

Applied to Taiwan, the implications are significant. A future crisis would likely unfold under compressed timelines in which the earliest moments of escalation are defined less by visible military movement and more by shifts in narrative intent. If a comparable early warning framework existed, one capable of detecting coordinated narrative escalation and pretext building across PRC aligned media and official messaging, it could provide weeks or even months of additional strategic clarity before traditional indicators reach their final irreversible stages. That time advantage matters. It shapes whether deterrent forces can be postured deliberately rather than reactively, whether alliances align early or late, and whether decision makers act with confidence rather than uncertainty.

Crucially, escalation toward Taiwan may not take the form of a single, overt invasion. Plausible pathways include subversion through internal destabilization and fifth column activity, a quarantine imposed under a lawfare justification, a full maritime and air blockade designed to isolate the island, or an outright invasion across the Taiwan Strait. Unlike Ukraine, Taiwan cannot be approached over a land border. The Strait creates both operational constraints and warning opportunities, making early detection of intent especially critical. This problem matters because in modern conflict, the window to deter is often closed not by lack of capability, but by delayed recognition of intent.

Literature Review

Recent analyses of China's coercive pressure toward Taiwan indicate that traditional military early warning indicators are becoming increasingly unreliable tools for detecting intent, largely because persistent PLA activity has shifted the baseline against which escalation is assessed. ASPI observes that Chinese air and maritime operations now occur with such regularity that movements once interpreted as escalatory signals are indistinguishable from routine behavior. As military presence and pressure become the norm rather than the exception, observable force

movements lose their discriminating power as early indicators of escalation, functioning instead as confirmation that coercive activity is already underway. In this environment, reliance on traditional indicators risks delayed recognition of intent, creating a need for alternative signals capable of distinguishing meaningful shifts from normalized activity (ASPI, 2026).

Strategic assessments further indicate that PRC coercive strategies toward Taiwan are deliberately structured to obscure intent while incrementally advancing strategic objectives by remaining below the threshold of overt conflict. CSIS wargaming demonstrates that quarantine and blockade scenarios are designed to apply pressure while preserving ambiguity, legality, and deniability. These actions are not intended to signal imminent war, but to test responses, shape the operating environment, and alter the status quo without triggering decisive counteraction. As a result, observable military activity often serves as a lagging confirmation of escalation rather than an early indicator, compressing decision timelines and limiting deterrent options once intent has already shifted (CSIS, 2025).

Across these assessments, narrative activity emerges as a domain in which changes in intent are more likely to appear earlier than in observable military behavior. Analyses of PRC coercive practices emphasize the role of legal justification, sovereignty enforcement, and legitimacy framing in preparing and sustaining pressure against Taiwan. Rather than serving merely as after-the-fact justification for military actions, these narratives actively shape expectations, constrain response options, and prepare audiences for escalation. Patterns of narrative alignment and coordination across state media, semi-official actors, and affiliated information channels therefore represent observable behaviors that may signal shifts in intent before corresponding changes in military posture occur, positioning the narrative domain as a candidate source of leading indicators.

From an operational perspective, the value of early warning lies not in predicting the precise form or timing of conflict, but in enabling earlier positioning and deterrence before escalation

becomes difficult to reverse. Once coercive actions intensify, escalation pathways narrow and response options become constrained. As Senator Roger Wicker argues, “the core purpose of the U.S. military is to prevent war,” a task that depends not only on possessing capability, but on recognizing intent early enough to apply strength deliberately rather than reactively (Wicker, 2024). Failure to detect and respond to escalation signaling early has repeatedly limited deterrent options in past conflicts, reinforcing the need for indicators that surface intent before traditional military signals fully materialize.

Taken together, existing assessments support the position that escalation toward Taiwan is preceded by identifiable and measurable shifts in PRC narrative behavior that function as leading indicators of intent. On this basis, this research advances four explicit, testable hypotheses. First, prior to escalatory PLA exercises, PRC-aligned media ecosystems will exhibit increased alignment around themes of internal security, sovereignty enforcement, legitimacy justification, and external victimization compared to periods preceding routine military activity. Second, narrative coordination across PRC state media, semi-official actors, and affiliated social media accounts will increase before major exercises, as reflected in synchronized amplification, attribution of blame, and legitimizing rhetoric. Third, narrative characteristics will shift toward heightened moral justification, threat construction, and external blame attribution in advance of major exercises relative to routine ones. Fourth, these patterns of narrative alignment and coordination will emerge earlier than observable changes in PLA force posture, making them leading indicators of escalating intent rather than retrospective confirmation of military activity. If these hypotheses are supported, narrative alignment and coordination would provide the information operations practitioners with a measurable means of detecting adversary intent earlier than traditional indicators, enabling earlier positioning, counter-messaging, and deterrence actions before escalation becomes difficult to reverse. This shifts the role of

information operations from reactive narrative response to proactive intent detection in the cognitive domain, expanding decision space at moments when deterrence is still possible.

The Scope

This study focuses on patterns of narrative coordination associated with PLA exercises relevant to Taiwan, as these events represent the most concentrated and consistently observable manifestations of PRC coercive activity in the contemporary operating environment. PLA exercises around Taiwan occur with sufficient frequency and variation to provide a data-rich setting in which narrative behavior can be examined across routine, intensified, and escalatory contexts. The study examines how narratives align and shift across PRC state media, state-affiliated actors, and relevant information channels before, during, and after selected exercises, with the purpose of identifying observable narrative behavior that may function as an early warning indicator of preparatory or escalatory dynamics. The study does not assess persuasion effectiveness, measure changes in public opinion, evaluate military readiness or capability, or infer internal leadership decision-making. These boundaries are intentional and keep the analysis centered on observable narrative behavior rather than downstream outcomes.

The analysis covers PLA exercises and related narrative activity from 2024 to the present. This two-year window captures multiple exercises under broadly similar geopolitical and information conditions, making it possible to assess whether narrative coordination patterns are consistent or changing over time. Earlier periods reflect a different information environment shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial stages of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and earlier platform moderation practices. Including those periods would introduce additional noise and weaken comparison with contemporary PLA signaling. At the same time, limiting the study to a single year would likely provide too little variation to assess broader narrative trends. A two-year

window therefore provides sufficient depth for trend assessment while remaining analytically manageable.

Each exercise is analyzed using a consistent before–during–after structure. Narrative activity is examined in the approximately 15 days leading up to the exercise, throughout the exercise period, and in the approximately 15 days following its conclusion. This enables comparison against a short baseline, identification of exercise-associated changes, and assessment of whether patterns persist or fade afterward. The study does not include a separate non-exercise control period; instead, it relies on consistent comparisons repeated across multiple exercises, which supports pattern identification relevant to early warning rather than causal attribution.

Geographically, the study is centered on Taiwan as the primary object of PLA coercive signaling. Exercises are included only when they are relevant to Taiwan or framed in narratives connected to Taiwan’s security, sovereignty, or regional status. The First Island Chain, especially Japan and the Philippines, is treated as key context because these states are frequently referenced or implicitly implicated in PLA exercises and associated PRC narratives. Other regional actors, including South Korea, Vietnam, and states bordering the South China Sea, are considered only when they appear within narratives tied to Taiwan-focused exercises. Geographic inclusion is therefore narrative conditional, ensuring the analysis remains focused on how China signals intent toward Taiwan.

Seven PLA exercises conducted between 2024 and early 2026 are included as analytical anchors to enable repeated observation of narrative behavior under comparable signaling conditions. These include Joint Sword–2024A (May 23–24, 2024), launched immediately following Taiwan President Lai Ching-te’s inauguration and framed as a punitive response, which matters because it combined joint precision strikes with the first integration of the China Coast Guard in a combat exercise, signaling a blended blockade and invasion rehearsal. Joint Sword–2024B (October 14–15, 2024), conducted around Taiwan’s National Day, emphasized

sustained sea-air patrols and blockade control of key ports, reinforcing legitimacy and deterrence narratives tied to political milestones. A multi-theater blockade exercise (December 11–13, 2024) involved all three sea-facing PLA theater commands operating simultaneously across waters east of Taiwan and the broader Western Pacific, marking the first rehearsal of a coordinated First Island Chain-wide blockade scenario. In early 2025, an unannounced southwest Taiwan Strait shooting drill zone (February 26–27, 2025) near Kaohsiung tested routine-versus-escalatory narrative framing by pairing a declared training zone with a surge in aircraft and naval activity close to major population centers. This was followed by joint drills around Taiwan without a codename (April 1, 2025), which served as a narrative and operational precursor to escalation by signaling seriousness without formal exercise branding. Strait Thunder–2025A (April 2, 2025), the first named sub-operation within a larger exercise sequence, escalated messaging through explicit references to precision strikes and blockade enforcement. Finally, Justice Mission 2025 (December 29–30, 2025), conducted after a major U.S. arms package announcement, represented the largest and most explicitly deterrent set of drills to date, simulating extended blockade and anti-intervention operations across multiple zones. Together, these exercises span punishment, blockade, and invasion-enabling scenarios, providing repeated and varied cases for examining how PRC narrative coordination shifts across different forms of Taiwan-focused coercive signaling.

Characteristics of PLA Exercises Examined

Case (Exercise)	Trigger / Strategic Context	Operation Type Practiced	Who Was Involved	Where It Occurred	Scale & Intensity	Distinctive Feature
Joint Sword–2024A (May 23–24, 2024)	Response to Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's inauguration	Punitive signaling; invasion-enabling rehearsal	PLA Eastern Theater Command; all services; China Coast Guard	Around Taiwan Strait, ECS & SCS approaches ; close	~30–50 ACFT; ~15–25 VSL; ETC-led; PLAAF, PLAN,	First integration of CCG into a combat exercise

Case (Exercise)	Trigger / Strategic Context	Operation Type Practiced	Who Was Involved	Where It Occurred	Scale & Intensity	Distinctive Feature
				proximity to Taiwan	PLARF, CCG involved; high-intensity joint ops; live-fire; missile, air, maritime integration.	
Joint Sword–2024B(Oct 14–15, 2024)	Taiwan National Day; pressure on new administration	Sustained blockade & anti-interdiction operations	PLA Eastern TC (with likely Northern/Southern support)	Multi-directional approach around Taiwan	~30–50 ACFT; ~15–25 VSL; ETC-led; joint services; sustained tempo; multi-axis ops; blockade-focused.	Refined blockade control of key ports
Multi-Theater Blockade Exercise(Dec 11–13, 2024)	Escalation of regional deterrence posture	Full Taiwan blockade; anti-interdiction	Northern, Eastern, & Southern Theater Commands; Rocket Force	Waters east of Taiwan; Western Pacific; First Island Chain	~40–60 ACFT; ~20–30 VSL; ETC + NTC + STC; PLAN, PLAAF, PLARF; high-intensity; extended AO; multi-theater coordination.	First all-theater Taiwan-focused blockade rehearsal
SW Taiwan Strait Shooting Drill Zone(Feb 26–27, 2025)	Unannounced escalation near population centers	Ambiguous pressure; escalation normalization	PLA Eastern TC (air & maritime elements)	Southwest Taiwan Strait near Kaohsiung	<20 ACFT; <10 VSL; ETC units; moderate scale; elevated intensity due to proximity; unannounced drill zone.	No warning; routine-vs-escalatory narrative ambiguity
Joint Drills Around Taiwan (No Codename)(Apr 1, 2025)	Eastern TC announcement preceding named exercise	Deterrence signaling; escalation setup	PLA Eastern TC; joint services	Around Taiwan	~20–40 ACFT; ~10–20 VSL; ETC-led; joint services; moderate intensity; preparatory coordination.	Narrative precursor to Strait Thunder

Case (Exercise)	Trigger / Strategic Context	Operation Type Practiced	Who Was Involved	Where It Occurred	Scale & Intensity	Distinctive Feature
Strait Thunder–2025A (Apr 2, 2025)	Formal naming of escalation sequence	Precision strikes; blockade enforcement	PLA Eastern TC; long-range strike units	Taiwan Strait & surrounding airspace	~20–40 ACFT; ~10–20 VSL; ETC-led; PLAAF, PLAN, PLARF; short-duration; high intensity; reported long-range live-fire.	First named sub-operation within larger exercise
Justice Mission 2025 (Dec 29–30, 2025)	After major U.S. arms package to Taiwan	Extended blockade; anti-intervention	Multiple PLA theaters; joint forces	Multiple zones around Taiwan & First Island Chain	~50–70 ACFT; ~25–40 VSL; multi-TC; joint forces; peak intensity; live-fire; multi-zone blockade & anti-intervention ops.	Most explicit external-interference deterrence framing

This study does not attempt to determine PRC leadership intent directly. Instead, it treats changes in narrative alignment, timing, and thematic emphasis around PLA exercises as observable indicators of escalatory behavior. Findings are interpreted as indicators of increased escalation risk rather than predictions of specific actions or timelines, supporting earlier strategic awareness without overstating certainty or claiming direct insight into internal deliberations.

Taken together, these boundaries define a focused examination of narrative coordination around Taiwan relevant PLA exercises that supports consistent comparison across cases and disciplined interpretation of observed patterns.

Research Design

This study employs a mixed cross-sectional and longitudinal research design to examine narrative variance surrounding PLA military exercises relevant to Taiwan. The design is

cross-sectional because it analyzes multiple exercises as distinct cases, allowing for comparison of narrative patterns across different types of coercive signaling events. It is also longitudinal because each exercise is examined over time, comparing narrative behavior before, during, and after the event to identify temporal shifts associated with escalation dynamics.

Each PLA exercise constitutes a single case. Within each case, narrative activity is observed as a time-series, capturing changes in narrative traits during the period leading up to the exercise, throughout the exercise itself, and following its conclusion. This structure enables identification of within-case narrative shifts, including changes in key amplifications, emotional framing, attack vectors, logical vulnerabilities, and indicators of incitement or justification. Comparing these pre- and post-exercise periods allows assessment of how narrative coordination evolves in relation to specific signaling events.

Cross-sectional comparison across cases enables assessment of variation in narrative behavior between different types of exercises. For example, some exercises may be associated with narratives emphasizing maritime control, quarantine, or blockade logic, while others may exhibit narratives aligned with invasion preparation or internal security framing. Comparing narrative patterns across these cases helps determine whether distinct signaling objectives are associated with different narrative coordination profiles.

By combining cross-case comparison with within-case temporal analysis, this design allows the study to assess both how narratives change over time around individual exercises and how those changes differ across exercises. This mixed design supports identification of recurring narrative patterns that may function as early warning indicators of escalating coercive intent.

Data and Analytic Methods

Data Sources and Structuring

The primary data source for this study is EdgeTheory, a narrative intelligence platform that tracks open source and deep/dark web content across news and social media channels.

EdgeTheory organizes this content into topic specific modules, and all data used here is drawn from the 8th Psychological Operations Group Taiwan module. This module monitors PRC state media, state affiliated outlets, independent regional media (focused around Japan and the Philippines), and Pacific Region social media channels for narrative activity related to Taiwan.

Narrative items (pieces of content the platform collects) are classified along several dimensions that serve as the key variables in this study. Every item receives an incitement score from one to ten, measuring how much the content is designed to provoke a reaction rather than inform. The platform also identifies the logical vulnerabilities present, meaning the rhetorical tactics used to move an audience rather than persuade through evidence, such as appeal to emotion, appeal to authority, or false dilemma framing. Attack vectors capture the psychological pressure mechanisms at work, including aversion to foreign influence, appeal to isolationism, and political animosity. Emotion profiles track how often anger, fear, joy, disgust, and sadness appear above a threshold level across collected items. Sparkline visualizations record item volume over time for three narrative keywords — Invasion Narratives, One China Narratives, and Reunification Narratives — making surges and collapses visible across a time window. Finally, “Top Connection” data identifies which sources, themes, and locations are driving the most amplification, making it possible to distinguish whether independent media or state directed outlets are leading the conversation at any given moment.

EdgeTheory produces structured analytical briefs for defined time windows. For this study, 20 briefs were collected, 18 of which cover the six exercises analyzed. Each exercise is associated with three briefs, one tracking narratives the two weeks before the exercise, another covering two weeks after, and a consolidated 30-day brief encompassing the full period before and after the exercise. The remaining two briefs cover periods with no exercise activity and serve as the

baseline reference points for data in the study. The first baseline spans March 10 to 24, 2024, roughly seven weeks before Joint Sword 2024A and the cleanest baseline window in the full data set. The second spans September 1 to 15, 2025, between Strait Thunder 2025A and Justice Mission 2025. A supplementary structured indicator table produced by the 8th POG consolidates the before and after data for Justice Mission 2025 into a standardized format and serves as the primary quantitative reference for the study’s highest intensity case.

Table 1 summarizes the key characteristics of each analytical window in the full data set. Unique Sources refers to the number of distinct outlets and accounts contributing content during that window, which reflects how broadly the narrative was being picked up and spread. Total Items is the raw count of individual pieces of content collected, giving a sense of overall volume. Average Incitement is calculated across a representative sample of the thirty most amplified items per time period and indicates the typical intensity of the content on a one to ten scale. Taken together, these three measures show at a glance whether a given window looks like routine baseline activity or something more coordinated and elevated.

Analytical Window	Unique Sources	Total Items	Avg Incitement(per 30 items)	Overall Assessment
Baseline 1 — March 10 to 24, 2024	57	257	2.0	Moderate and reactive. No coordination surge detected.
Baseline 2 — September 1 to 15, 2025	87	598	2.5	Moderate and cautious. No coordination surge detected.
Joint Sword 2024A — Before Window	163	682	3.7	High coordination pattern. Triggered by Lai inauguration.
Joint Sword 2024B — Before Window	76	573	1.6	Moderate. National Day milestone framing, Joy dominant.
Blockade Exercise — Before Window	67	544	2.7	Moderate. Operationally driven with no clear political trigger.

Analytical Window	Unique Sources	Total Items	Avg Incitement(per 30 items)	Overall Assessment
SW Taiwan Strait Drill — Before Window	74	875	3.6	Elevated. Unannounced exercise with proximity framing present.
Strait Thunder 2025A — Before Window	277	1,329	3.9	High coordination pattern. Named exercise sequence, Anger dominant.
Justice Mission 2025 — Before Window	96	760	3.43	High coordination, crescendo pattern. Triggered by U.S. arms sale, Anger at peak.

Table 1. Summary of all analytical windows included in the study. The two baseline windows appear at the top for direct comparison against exercise before windows.

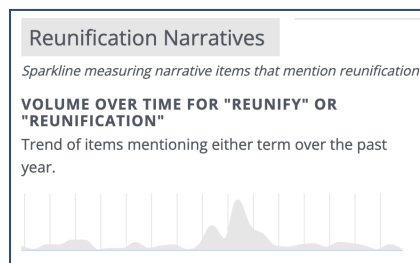
Analytic Methods

Analysis proceeds in two stages. The first establishes what the narrative environment looks like in periods with no exercise by examining both baseline windows across all indicator dimensions. This produces a documented reference point for normal activity: how many sources are typically active, what the average incitement level runs at, which attack vectors appear at routine levels, how the sparkline tracks behave when no exercise is on the horizon, and which type of outlet leads amplifications. That reference point matters because without it, any shift observed in the exercise windows could simply reflect elevated day to day variation rather than an indicator of coordinated military action.

The second stage compares the window before each exercise against that baseline reference across the same set of variables. Five comparisons drive the analysis. Source count and item volume measure the overall scale of narrative mobilization. The incitement average measures content intensity relative to the documented baseline level. Logical vulnerability and attack vector profiles measure whether the thematic and rhetorical character of the content has moved from routine patterns into a cluster associated with exercise preparation. Sparkline trajectory identifies whether item volume shows the kind of sustained multi day surge seen around exercises or the flat, stable behavior and isolated single event spikes seen in the baseline

windows. And top amplifier source type identifies whether independent regional media or PRC state media are leading amplification, which is one of the clearest observable signs of coordinated, top down messaging.

Within each case, the before window is also compared directly to the after window. This comparison captures a two phase structure that appears across the high intensity exercises: a mobilization phase before the exercise defined by sovereignty enforcement, punitive framing, and anger dominant content, followed by a consolidation and reframing phase after the exercise where content pivots toward legitimization and reunification themes. Justice Mission 2025 illustrates this most clearly, with One China narrative volume collapsing and Reunification narrative volume rising sharply within the first two days after the exercise concluded.



See Sparklines: "One China Narratives" and "Reunification Narratives" from [Justice Mission 2025 \(all\)](#)

Four outcome categories are applied across the hypothesis evaluations. A hypothesis is confirmed when the predicted pattern appears consistently across multiple cases with direct quantitative support from the baseline comparison. It is confirmed with precision when the hypothesis holds but requires a more specific formulation than originally stated. It is confirmed directionally when the pattern is consistently present but structural gaps in the baseline data limit full numeric verification. It is indeterminate when testing the hypothesis would require external data that is not available in this study, specifically independent records of PLA force posture changes.

Causal Interpretations

This study does not claim that narrative behavior causes military action. What it does claim is that coordinated narrative shifts represent observable evidence of preparatory intent signaling, and that those shifts are measurably different from routine baseline activity. The distinction matters because the same content could in principle reflect reactive communication management rather than deliberate advance preparation. The baseline comparison is what makes it possible to tell the difference. When the narrative environment departs from its documented baseline state in consistent, measurable ways across multiple cases, that departure is analytically meaningful even if direct causation cannot be established.

One distinction shapes how the findings should be read across cases. Some exercises in this study were preceded by identifiable political triggers. Joint Sword 2024A followed Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's inauguration. Justice Mission 2025 followed a major U.S. arms package announcement. In those cases, the narrative environment surged within hours of the triggering event, well before the exercise began. Other exercises, particularly the Blockade Exercise, appear to have been executed on an internal operational timetable without a specific precipitating public event. In those cases, the coordination visible before the exercise is less pronounced. This matters for early warning because the indicator framework performs most reliably when a political trigger activates coordinated messaging. ASPI has observed that some of the most significant Chinese military activities in 2025 followed periods of relatively subdued activity and were likely driven by internal readiness cycles rather than external provocations, which is a direct challenge to the reliability of narrative indicators in operationally driven scenarios. That challenge is addressed directly in the fourth hypothesis evaluation.

A second consideration concerns the baseline windows themselves. The two baseline windows are separated by eighteen months, and the narrative environment grew substantially over that span, with the number of active sources increasing fifty-three percent and total item volume

increasing one hundred thirty-three percent in the absence of any exercise. This means thresholds calibrated to the 2024 baseline will be less sensitive when applied against a 2025 or 2026 environment. Some indicators that reliably distinguished exercise windows from periods with no exercise in 2024 have partially normalized into the routine activity level by 2025. This does not undermine the findings, but it does mean the framework requires ongoing recalibration rather than fixed application, and it makes the growth of the baseline narrative environment itself a finding worth noting.

Findings

The following section presents the results of testing each of the four hypotheses against the full data set. The hypotheses are presented in order of the strength of support found. A cross cutting finding on the growth of baseline activity over time follows the four hypothesis evaluations, as it has direct implications for how all four findings should be applied going forward.

H2: Narrative Coordination Increases Before Major Exercises

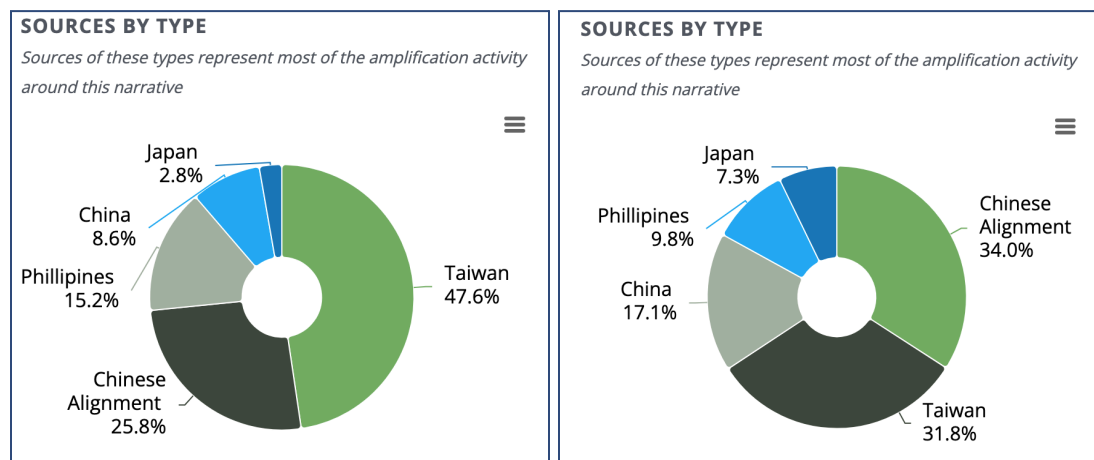
This hypothesis predicted that narrative coordination across PRC state media, semi official actors, and affiliated social media accounts would increase before major exercises, reflected in synchronized amplification, attribution of blame, and legitimizing rhetoric. This hypothesis is confirmed.

Confirmed. This hypothesis is supported across five of six cases with direct quantitative evidence from the baseline comparison.

The most direct evidence comes from comparing source counts between the baseline windows and the time frames before exercises. In both windows with no exercise occurring, the narrative environment supported 57 sources in March 2024 and 87 in September 2025. In the Joint Sword 2024A before window, triggered by Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's inauguration, that number reached 163, nearly three times the March 2024 baseline level. Strait Thunder 2025A

and Justice Mission 2025 showed comparable mobilization. That kind of source multiplication is unlikely to happen organically. It reflects a deliberate activation of a coordinated network of outlets all responding to the same political signal.

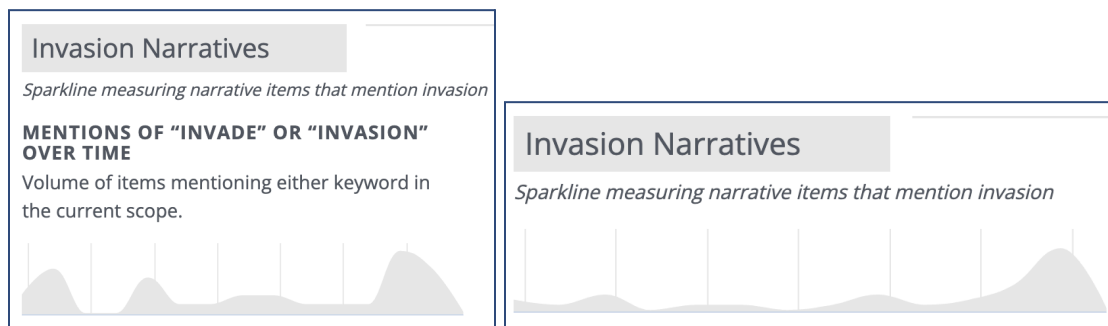
The incitement data reinforces this. When no exercise was occurring, the average incitement score across sampled content ran at roughly 2.0 in March 2024 and an estimated 2.5 in September 2025. In the before windows for Justice Mission 2025 and Strait Thunder 2025A, those averages reached 3.43 and 3.6 respectively, representing increases of roughly seventy to ninety percent above the March 2024 baseline level. Content was not just more plentiful before these exercises. It was meaningfully more provocative. The top amplifying source in the Justice Mission 2025 before window was Beijing Bulletin, a PRC state media outlet. In both windows with no exercise, the leading sources were independent regional outlets including Focus Taiwan and Liberty Times. That shift from independent media to state media at the top of the amplification stack is a structural signal of top down coordination that has no equivalent in either baseline window.



See Sources by Type from [Baseline Sep 1-15, 2025](#) (left) and [Justice Mission 2025 before](#) (right).

Before each high-intensity exercise in the dataset, PRC state outlets did not simply amplify the same message; they released coordinated but distinct narrative packages targeting different pressure points, all within a compressed 24–48-hour window. The Joint Sword 2024A NARINT

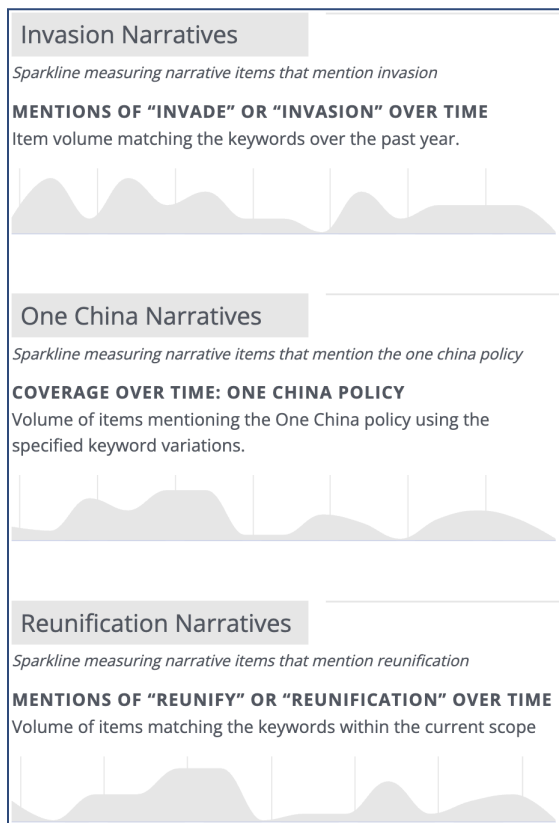
brief documents this most explicitly, characterizing the overall diffusion pattern as “tightly clustered release times across multiple official outlets and spokespeople” with “seamless replication of core phrases.” In practice, this surfaces as a spike in certain narrative keywords (identified in sparklines below), along with the firing of three distinct packages in sequence: Xinhua releases the Lai-as-provocateur frame within hours of the May 20 ceremony; Ecns.cn and China News Service release the US-as-instigator frame the same morning; and Ecns.cn releases the sanctions frame the following day at 01:11 UTC. Each targets a different audience from a different outlet within 25 hours of the same event. The Justice Mission 2025 NARINT brief shows an identical structure, with Xinhua and Ecns.cn releasing the arms-sales retaliation narrative on an identical timestamp, and the Strait Live-Fire Drill before brief uses the phrase “multiple concurrent issuances” directly. In both baseline windows, by contrast, each narrative originates from a single outlet and travels independently with a 1–2 day lag in diffusion. The coordinated release of complementary rather than identical packages is evidence of top-down orchestration that requires advance preparation across multiple outlets and is analytically distinguishable from organic reactive coverage. This pattern holds across five of six pre-exercise windows and is absent from both baseline windows. Note the spike in narrative items using aggressive key words just two days before two different exercises.



See Sparklines: “Invasion Narratives” from [Joint Sword-2024A \(before\)](#) (left), [Strait Live-Fire Drill \(before\)](#) (right).

Justice Mission 2025 produces an additional two qualitative signatures across the brief sections that correlate to its status as the largest of the seven exercises we tracked. Because of its size,

we would expect to observe similarly larger narrative movements prior to the event. These findings distinguish it structurally from lower-ranked exercises in ways not fully captured by incitement scores or source counts alone. First, its pre-exercise targeting breadth is unique in the dataset: where every other high-intensity exercise directs its blame framing at one or two primary actors, Justice Mission 2025 runs three simultaneous coordinated campaigns against Japan, the United States, and Taiwan’s domestic leadership, each with its own originating outlet, timestamp, and diffusion profile documented in EdgeTheory’s custom analytic section tracking State Media Incitement. The China vs Pacific analytics section is also the only one in the dataset to invoke the Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Proclamation, representing Beijing’s deepest available historical-legal toolkit and signaling that JM25 was framed as a foundational sovereignty moment rather than a discrete punitive response. EdgeTheory further identified that these specific names were 1) not present in the narratives surrounding other exercises and 2)



appeared simultaneously and were sustained across multiple sources and narratives before the JM25 exercise, indicating coordination. Second, where other pre-exercise windows concentrate coordinated state media releases into a 24–48-hour burst, JM25 documents a week-long sustained release running from December 19 through December 26 across three themes, indicating a longer preparation phase consistent with a larger operational footprint. Taken together, these signatures support the expectation that the qualitative dimensions of the brief sections contain information about the seriousness and complexity

See Sparklines from [Justice Mission 2025 \(before\)](#)

of intent that quantitative aggregation does not fully convey, and that the degree of multi-front targeting, the presence of internal information lockdown signals, and the duration of the pre-exercise release window may serve as independent proxies for exercise scale.

H1: Thematic Alignment Around Sovereignty and External Victimization

This hypothesis predicted that before escalatory exercises, PRC-aligned media would show increased alignment around themes of sovereignty enforcement, legitimacy justification, internal security, and external victimization compared to periods of routine activity. This hypothesis is confirmed, though the evidence requires a more precise formulation of what increased alignment actually means.

Confirmed with precision. The discriminating condition is not the presence of sovereignty themes but their coordinated clustering and acceleration.

Sovereignty and one-China themes are present in the baseline windows. That is expected. China runs a continuous messaging campaign on these topics regardless of whether a military exercise is approaching. What changes before major exercises is not that these themes appear, but how they behave. In periods with no exercise, sovereignty content is reactive and distributed, consisting of individual diplomatic protests, responses to foreign policy moves, and isolated incitement items scattered across a two week window. Before the high intensity exercises in this data set, the same themes appear in concentrated, reinforcing clusters. Multiple vectors fire simultaneously. Aversion to foreign influence, appeal to isolationism, and political animosity appear together in elevated counts rather than individually at routine levels. The sparkline tracks acceleration across multiple narrative threads at the same time rather than showing the single event spikes seen in baseline windows.

The March 2024 baseline provides a useful illustration of the distinction. That window shows an aversion to foreign influence count of twelve, which is actually the highest raw count of that

variable anywhere in the full data set, including the exercise before windows. At first glance this appears to challenge the hypothesis entirely. But the context explains it. The top theme in the March 2024 baseline was U.S. strategy in the Taiwan Strait, reflecting Balikatan exercise (U.S. Military Joint Exercise) announcements and South China Sea activity at the time. What is absent from that March 2024 window is the cluster of multiple elevated characteristics. There is no elevated appeal to isolationism, no political animosity targeting Taiwan leadership, and no simultaneous sparkline acceleration across multiple narrative tracks. The window before exercises have all of these simultaneously. Thus, the thematic cluster, not the presence of any single theme, is the indicator. The difference between ambient distributed content and tightly synchronized concentrated content is the thematic alignment H1 predicts, and it is detectable in the brief assessment language even when raw vector counts appear similar.

XENON NARRATIVE ANALYSIS BRIEF		Isaac Weber			
SECTIONS	Narrative Scoring	Logical Vulnerabilities	Narrative Attack Vectors	Emotion Profiles	
	AMPLIFIERS	DATE	CONTENT	ATTACK VECTORS	
Summary	PTV News People's Television ...	23 Dec 2025	Marck Espejo, maglalaro sa Taiwan matapos ang 2025 SEA Games	Marck Espejo will play in Taiwan after the 2025 SEA Games. This news is from PTV News and you can find more information on their website and social media channels.	• Anti-Semitism View Details
Key Themes	China News Service... Ecns.cn	17 Dec 2025	Spokesperson reiterates resolute opposition to foreign interference in Taiwan question	China firmly opposes foreign interference in Taiwan. A spokesperson warned that pursuing independence through external support or military means threatens Taiwan's...	• Aversion to Foreign Influence View Details
Narrative Indicators	Ecns.cn China News Service...	14 Dec 2025	(W.E. Talk) Takaichi's erroneous remarks on Taiwan imply three hidden motives: expert	Xiang Haoyu of CIIS believes Sanae Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan are intentional, driven by political and strategic motives tied to Japan's rightward shift. He accuses her of...	• Appeal to Isolationism View Details
State Media Incitement	Ecns.cn China News Service...	14 Dec 2025	(W.E. Talk) Japanese PM Takaichi's wrong remarks on Taiwan 'dangerously divisive': David...	David Gosset criticizes Japanese PM Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan, deeming them "dangerously divisive." He argues the comments undermine fragile trust between China and...	• National Trauma View Details
China vs Pacific Narrati...	Chinese MFA Spok... China Xinhua News	22 Dec 2025	Xinhua Commentary: 80 years on, the world must safeguard post-war order, WWII victory	Xinhua condemns Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi's remarks regarding Taiwan, calling them a challenge to the post-war international order. They criticize Japan's failure t...	• Political Animosity View Details
Invasion Narratives	China News Service... Ecns.cn	19 Dec 2025	China strongly condemns U.S. plan to sell massive advanced weapons Taiwan: FM	China strongly condemns the U.S.'s planned \$11 billion arms sale to Taiwan, calling it a violation of the one-China principle and a threat to peace. China views this as an...	• Appeal to Isolationism View Details
One China Narratives	China News Service... Ecns.cn	18 Dec 2025	Mainland spokesperson rebukes Japanese PM's erroneous claim	China's spokesperson rebuked Japan's PM for claiming Taiwan should be resolved through dialogue. The spokesperson emphasized Taiwan is China's internal affair,...	• Appeal to Isolationism View Details
Reunification Narratives	China News Service... Ecns.cn	17 Dec 2025	China opposes Japan's attempts to create trouble and mislead public on major issues: FM	China condemns Japan's actions, accusing them of creating trouble and misleading the public on crucial issues like Taiwan. China's Foreign Ministry disputes Japan's stance,...	• Aversion to Foreign Influence View Details
Geospatial					
Key Amplifications					
Connections					
Sources					
Entities					
Context					

See "Aversion to Foreign Influence," "Political Animosity," and "Appeal to Isolationism" all featured in attack vectors for Justice Mission 2025

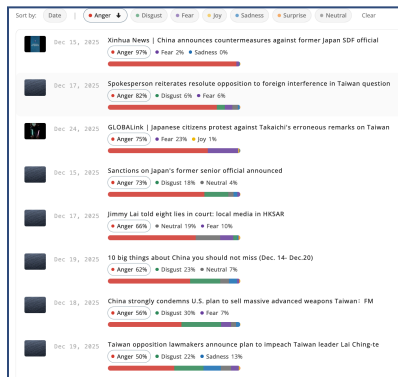
H3: Emotional Framing Shifts Toward Anger and Threat Construction

This hypothesis predicted that narrative characteristics would shift toward heightened moral justification, threat construction, and external blame attribution before major exercises relative to routine activity. This hypothesis is confirmed in the direction predicted, with the caveat that the baseline data has a structural gap that limits full quantitative precision.

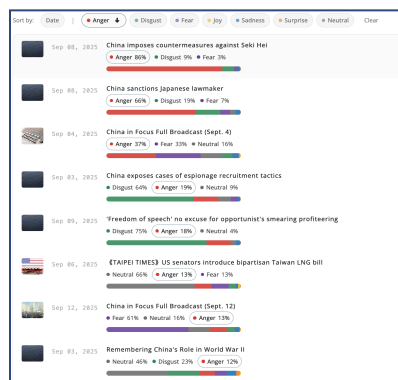
Confirmed directionally. The emotional departure from routine activity is clear and consistent, though full numeric verification is constrained by incomplete baseline emotion data.

Baseline windows contain a structured emotion count table notably lacking in any content with a majority of motion classified as “anger,” while most other windows before exercises contain at least double the number of “angry” items as that of the next dominant emotion, usually “fear.” Both further contain clear assessment language about the incitement score of the content. The March 2024 baseline describes incitement as varying widely with higher scores appearing

mainly in sovereignty related items. The September 2025



baseline describes it as mostly low to moderate with few items reaching a 6/10. The windows before exercises tell a different story. The Justice Mission 2025 before window records an anger score of nine, meaning nine of the thirty sampled items had anger as their dominant emotional register above fifty percent. Fear was present at six. The language in the brief



assessments for Joint Sword 2024A and Strait Thunder 2025A similarly uses phrases like deliberate escalation, punitive signaling, and sharp intensification that are entirely absent from both baseline assessments.

See “Key Amplifications” sorted by Anger from Justice Mission 2025 (before) (above) and Baseline Sep 1-15, 2025 (below).

The logical vulnerability data adds precision to this finding. Appeal to emotion, which measures how much content is designed to generate a strong emotional response rather than engage the

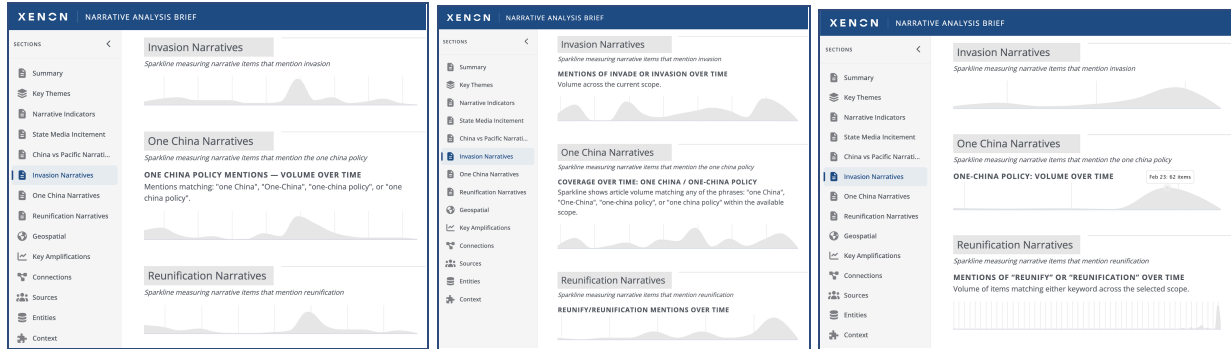
audience on the merits, ran at six in the March 2024 baseline and eight in the September 2025 baseline. In the Justice Mission 2025 before window it reached fifteen, an increase of roughly ninety percent above the higher of the two baseline readings. Ad hominem content, which directly attacks named political figures, ran at two to three in baseline windows and reached six in the Justice Mission 2025 before window. This is consistent with the punitive framing pattern H3 predicted. Before politically triggered exercises, content is not just more intense generally. It is specifically directed at named actors and designed to generate outrage rather than inform.

H4: Narrative Patterns Emerge Before Observable Force Posture Changes

This hypothesis predicted that the patterns of narrative alignment and coordination identified in H1 through H3 would emerge earlier than observable changes in PLA force posture, making them leading indicators of escalating intent rather than confirmation of activity already underway.

Indeterminate. The data shows that narrative surges precede public exercise announcements, but independent force posture timelines are required to test the full hypothesis.

The evidence within the full data set establishes one part of the prediction clearly. Narrative surges precede the public announcement of exercises in most cases. The Strait Thunder 2025A window shows sparkline acceleration beginning approximately one week before the exercise was announced. Joint Sword 2024A shows three sparkline spikes two days before the Eastern Theater Command's public announcement. The Strait Live-Fire Drill shows a sixty-two item single day spike in the One China track the day before the exercise. In each of these cases, something in the narrative environment changed before the exercise became public knowledge. That is meaningful. It means the information environment is not simply reacting to public announcements. It is moving ahead of them.



From left to right: Strait Thunder 2025A — spike 1 week before announcement. | Joint Sword 2024A — spike 2 days before announcement. | Strait Live-Fire Drill — sixty-two item single day spike in the One China track the day before the exercise.

What the data cannot establish is whether that narrative movement also preceded internal PLA force posture changes, which is the operationally significant question. Ships repositioning, airspace reservations being filed, and readiness levels being elevated all happen before an exercise becomes publicly visible. If those movements happened before the narrative surges, then the narrative is still a leading indicator relative to public knowledge but a lagging indicator relative to the actual kinetic preparation. If they happened after, the hypothesis is fully supported. The present study has no way to determine which is the case because it does not contain independent timestamped records of PLA force posture changes. If merged with classified assessments and watch centers, these narrative intelligence tools and techniques could yield early warning before physical repositioning becomes evident.

ASPI's observation that some of the most significant Chinese military activities in 2025 followed periods of relatively subdued narrative activity and were likely driven by internal readiness cycles rather than external provocations adds further uncertainty (ASPI, 2026). The Blockade Exercise is the clearest example in this data set, where force posture changes and narrative activity appear to have moved concurrently rather than sequentially. However, simultaneous acceleration of distinct narratives suggests coordination regardless of PLA operational plans, forming up to two weeks before the exercise took place. EdgeTheory's assessment of narratives in the two weeks before Joint Sword-2024A analyzed 682 narrative items, identified narratives

consistent across them, and tracked amplification from both political and operational narratives and sources. The most reliable pre-exercise indicator was identified as the convergence of narrative accelerations, not movement in a single thread: (1) a PRC-originated political blame narrative and (2) a military or operational activity narrative.

Joint Sword 2024A demonstrates this clearly. A high-intensity political narrative framing Lai as a separatist requiring punishment accelerated in parallel with reporting of increased PLA and coast guard activity days before the inauguration. Assessments of indicators rated both as “Strong” indicators, and analysis of implications assessed them as synchronized with the political timeline.

This dual-track pattern scales across exercises:

- Justice Mission 2025 shows simultaneous acceleration across multiple political blame narratives.
- Strait Thunder 2025A reflects the most complex case, with parallel acceleration in PLA readiness, cyber activity, and sovereignty framing.
- The Blockade Exercise shows acceleration only in operational narratives, without a central political provocation.
- Baseline windows show acceleration limited to Taiwan Ministry of National Defense event reporting, not PRC justification framing.

The consistent pattern is a division of labor: political narratives establish justification while operational narratives signal readiness. When both accelerate together, messaging and military preparation are aligned on the same timeline. This dual-track synchronization is a stronger pre-exercise indicator than either narrative stream alone and helps distinguish politically triggered exercises from purely operational activity.

Cross-Cutting Finding: The Baseline Narrative Environment Is Growing

Baseline March 10-24, 2024
8TH POG TAIWAN

● AI BOTTOM LINE **257 NARRATIVE ITEMS**

57 sources in the 8th POG Taiwan module are amplifying 257 narrative items revealing escalating geopolitical tension and strategic messaging surrounding Taiwan.

- China intensifies pressure on countries interacting with Taiwan, reinforcing the one-China principle; this underscores Beijing's efforts to isolate Taiwan diplomatically and discourage international recognition or visits involving Taiwan officials.
- Rising US-Taiwan security cooperation, including delivery of US MQ-9B drones, highlights increasing militarization and support amid China's regional assertiveness, signaling deepening US involvement in Taiwan's defense.
- Taiwan's favorable global perception and expanding international partnerships, such as with Paraguay and Nordic countries, demonstrate Taiwan's soft power and resilience despite diplomatic challenges from China.

View →

See [Baseline Mar 10-24, 2024](#)

Baseline Sep 1-15, 2025
8TH POG TAIWAN

● AI BOTTOM LINE **598 NARRATIVE ITEMS**

87 sources in the 8th POG Taiwan module are amplifying 598 narrative items reflecting heightened geopolitical tensions and strategic narratives around Taiwan and China.

- China's military assertiveness is underscored by the Fujian aircraft carrier's Taiwan Strait transit amid US-Japan military exercises, signaling power projection and regional dominance ambitions.
- Divergent narratives around Taiwan's status intensify, Chinese nationalism opposes independence, while Taiwan's leadership counters with resilience rhetoric, fueling diplomatic friction and propaganda battles.
- Sino-US strategic dialogue and escalating sanctions reveal a complex interplay of confrontation and communication, with both sides seeking to manage disputes yet preparing for continued rivalry across diplomacy, technology, and security.

View →

See [Baseline Sep 1-15, 2025](#)

Comparing the two baseline windows reveals a pattern that cuts

across all four hypothesis evaluations and has direct implications

for how the findings should be applied going forward. In March

2024, the narrative environment in the 8th POG Taiwan module

included 57 active sources and 257 total items over a fifteen day

window with no exercise. By September 2025, the same type of

baseline window showed 87 sources and 598 items, a fifty-three

percent increase in unique sources and a one hundred thirty-three

percent increase in total item volume, with no exercise driving

either number.

This growth matters because the thresholds that distinguish

exercise preparation from routine baseline activity are not fixed.

Appeal to authority as a logical vulnerability, for example, ran at

five in the March 2024 baseline and had risen to ten by

September 2025, approaching the levels seen in windows before

exercises in 2024 and early 2025. An indicator that reliably

distinguished exercise windows from periods with no exercise one

year ago may be partially normalized into routine activity the next. The Justice Mission 2025

data reinforces this trajectory, documenting the growth of PRC affiliated social media accounts

in the module from twenty-eight thousand to forty-five thousand over a one year period. The

infrastructure generating this content is not static.

The operational implication is straightforward. A framework that fixes its thresholds to a 2024

baseline and does not update them will gradually lose sensitivity as the baseline environment

expands. What looks like a meaningful surge above a 2024 reference point may fall within

routine variation against a 2026 reference point. The two baseline windows in this study make that drift visible and establish that continuous recalibration is a structural requirement of any early warning system built on narrative indicators.

Meaning and Impact

Key Findings Summary

This study set out to test whether shifts in PRC-aligned narrative behavior around PLA exercises targeting Taiwan could serve as early warning indicators of escalating intent. Across six exercises and two windows with no exercise spanning 2024 to 2025, the evidence supports that position in three of four hypotheses and leaves the fourth open as a question that requires additional intelligence to resolve.

The most clearly supported finding is that narrative coordination measurably increases before major exercises. Source counts multiply, incitement levels rise, state media outlets displace independent regional media at the top of the amplification stack, and the sparkline tracks monitoring Invasion, One China, and Reunification narratives show sustained surges that have no equivalent in either baseline window. The largest single day spike in the full data set, sixty-two One China narrative items in a single day, occurred the day before the Strait Live-Fire Drill. The highest source count, one hundred sixty-three unique outlets, occurred in the two weeks before Joint Sword 2024A. Neither baseline window came close to either of those numbers, and neither showed the kind of coordinated acceleration pattern that preceded the high intensity exercises. That contrast is the foundation of the early warning argument.

Thematic alignment and emotional framing both shift in predictable directions before those same exercises, though the picture requires some nuance. Sovereignty and one-China themes are always present in the narrative environment, including in periods with no exercise. What distinguishes the exercise before windows is not that those themes appear, but that they appear

in a coordinated cluster alongside escalating attack vectors and a sharp rise in anger dominant, punitive content. The emotional character of the narrative environment before a politically triggered exercise is observably different from the emotional character of routine baseline activity, even when the raw incitement numbers look similar.

The question of whether narrative changes precede PLA force posture changes remains open. The data shows that narrative surges precede public exercise announcements in most cases, sometimes by as much as a week. But whether they precede internal military preparations is a question this study cannot answer without independent force posture data, and it is the single most important gap to close in follow on research.

Taken together, the findings establish that the narrative domain is not just a communication layer that runs alongside military activity. It is a measurable environment with a documented baseline state, predictable escalation signatures around politically triggered exercises, and observable indicators that are detectable before events become publicly visible. That is the core contribution of this research.

Limitations

The most consequential limitation to the conclusions that can be drawn from this study is the absence of independent force posture data. H4 asks whether narrative indicators precede kinetic preparations, and that question is simply untestable with narrative data alone. Until the sparkline timelines documented here can be compared against timestamped records of PLA ship movements, airspace reservations, and readiness changes, the leading indicator claim remains a strong hypothesis rather than a confirmed finding.

Operational Suggestions and Policy Implications

The findings support three concrete recommendations for how narrative monitoring should be integrated into early warning practice. The first is that narrative monitoring around Taiwan

should be continuous and persistent rather than event activated. One of the clearest findings in this study is that the narrative environment begins shifting before exercises are publicly announced. A monitoring posture that only activates after an exercise becomes public has already missed the window this framework is designed to provide. Persistent collection against a rolling baseline, with the capacity to detect departures from that baseline in near real time, is the minimum requirement for early warning utility. Senator Roger Wicker has argued the purpose of maintaining military strength is to prevent war, and that requires recognizing intent early enough to act before escalation becomes difficult to reverse (Wicker, 2024). A narrative monitoring system that only confirms what military indicators have already shown is not serving that purpose.

The second recommendation is that the baseline reference points used to define normal activity must be updated regularly. This study documents that the baseline narrative environment grew by fifty-three percent in sources and one hundred thirty-three percent in item volume between March 2024 and September 2025 without any exercise driving those numbers. A framework that fixes its alert thresholds to 2024 levels and does not update them will progressively lose the ability to distinguish genuine coordination surges from elevated routine activity. The practical implication is that baseline windows should be collected and processed at regular intervals, at minimum every six months, and the reference thresholds used by analysts should be recalibrated each time.

The third recommendation is that arms sale announcements and statements by foreign officials regarding Taiwan should be treated as trigger events that activate heightened monitoring immediately. The data consistently shows that the narrative environment begins to surge within hours of these political events, well before any military movement is visible. The Justice Mission 2025 window saw structured amplification confirmed within hours of a U.S. arms package announcement, with more than twenty companies named repeatedly across state media within

the same day. That kind of response speed means the early warning window opened and started closing before traditional indicators had moved at all. Treating these political triggers as monitoring activation events would capture the earliest portion of that window and provide the most decision time.

Additional Research Needed

The highest priority extension of this research is the integration of independent PLA force posture data. What this study cannot determine is whether the narrative surges documented here preceded internal military preparations or only preceded public announcements. Answering that question requires comparing the narrative timelines in this study against timestamped records of PLA ship deployments, airspace filing activity, and readiness changes drawn from sources such as the Department of Defense annual report on Chinese military developments (DoD, 2025), commercial satellite imagery tracking, and open source military monitoring databases. If narrative surges consistently precede observable force posture changes by even a few days, the early warning value of this framework increases substantially. If they are concurrent or lag behind, the framework still has value but its role shifts from leading indicator to confirming signal. Either answer is analytically useful, and the question is resolvable with available data sources.

The second priority is expanding the baseline data. This study uses two baseline windows, which is enough to establish a reference point but not enough to characterize how quickly or consistently the baseline narrative environment is growing over time. Adding baseline windows from 2022 and 2023 would extend the longitudinal view and make it possible to model the growth rate of the narrative infrastructure more rigorously. It would also help determine whether the fifty-three percent source increase and one hundred thirty-three percent item increase observed between 2024 and 2025 represents an accelerating trend, a steady rate, or an anomaly tied to specific geopolitical conditions during that period.

Third, the emotion classification data should be standardized across all future analytical windows, including those collected in periods with no exercise. Building the emotion scoring fields into the standard brief template for all time periods rather than only exercise windows would allow future versions of this framework to make fully numeric emotional comparisons across months or even years to confirm analytic judgements.

Finally, the framework should be extended to additional exercises as they occur. This study covers six cases over two years. The patterns it identifies are consistent, but consistency across six cases does not establish that they will hold across twelve or twenty. As China's exercise program continues to evolve and as the geopolitical environment around Taiwan changes, additional cases will either reinforce the framework's reliability or surface new variations that require it to be refined. Treating this as a living analytical framework rather than a completed study is the disposition that will sustain its operational relevance over time.

Target Audience Analysis

Transition

Thus far, this study established that PRC narrative activity surrounding Taiwan is not background noise. It follows identifiable patterns, escalates before PLA exercises, and is coordinated across outlets in ways that distinguish it from organic media coverage. Phases 1 and 2 answered what the narrative environment looks like and when it moves. What remained unanswered is who the CCP is deliberately targeting through that movement. Identifying the intended audience behind each narrative campaign transforms the analytical picture: rather than observing that coordination is occurring, it becomes possible to assess which populations Beijing is attempting to soften, demoralize, or deter, and through which media channels that effort is being operationalized. The EdgeTheory live watches reviewed across seven time windows contain structured audience assessments that, taken together, reveal a consistent and

segmented influence architecture. This section consolidates those findings across three focal exercises Joint Sword 2024A, Strait Thunder 2025A, and Justice Mission 2025, with supplementary data from four additional live watches where cross-cutting patterns provide analytical support.

Analytical Framework

Each EdgeTheory live watch includes a target audience section that scores identified segments on two dimensions: Threat Saliency (A), measuring emotional intensity and psychological targeting effectiveness, and Specificity of Targeting (B), measuring how precisely the content is tailored to a defined demographic. A composite score derived from both dimensions provides a priority ranking. For this analysis, sources cited within each audience assessment are classified by their relationship to the Chinese party-state. State-owned and officially controlled outlets,

Target Audience 1: Mainland Chinese urban male party cadres aged 45–60, politically engaged with high institutional trust, focused on national sovereignty and regional stability around Taiwan.

This group is the primary audience for the officially sanctioned narratives emphasizing China's rightful sovereignty over Taiwan and framing the U.S. arms sales and Taiwan's "separatist" provocations as violations of China's core interests. The dense legalistic language citing the "one-China principle," references to the Anti-Secession Law, and detailed denunciations of U.S. military-related companies and Taiwanese officials indicate a message crafted for politically sophisticated cadres who are gatekeepers and influencers within the Party and state apparatus. Frequent invocation of terms like "red line" and "resolute countermeasures" (e.g., sanctions against 20 U.S. companies and 10 executives) underscores efforts to mobilize and reassure loyal cadres of the leadership's strong stance on Taiwan sovereignty. These narratives include references to historical events (e.g., WWII Victory Day and Taiwan Restoration Day), signaling a generational cohort for whom these are salient historical touchstones. The overall tone is authoritative and threat-focused, intended to harden ideological commitment and support for anticipated policy and military measures around Taiwan. This group's high institutional trust makes them less vulnerable to counter-narratives but highly susceptible to escalation framing and the call for unity against foreign interference.

- Threat Saliency Score: 9 — High incitement against U.S. arms sales, exploitation of ideological conformity, strong resonance with legalistic and historical framing.
- Specificity of Targeting Score: 9 — Formal language, diplomatic citations, official spokesperson pronouncements, and historical references match this audience's media consumption and ideological register.

Composite Score: 9.0/10

including Xinhua, CGTN, Global Times, China Daily, Ecns.cn, and China News Service, operate under direct PRC government editorial control and carry institutional party-state messaging. Outlets with structural, ownership, or editorial ties to CCP entities, including South China Morning Post, Beijing Bulletin, CRNTT Hong Kong, Nanyang Siang Pau, and Huanqiu, carry PRC-adjacent framing through channels that maintain at least the appearance of editorial independence. Independent regional outlets, including Focus Taiwan, Liberty Times, Taipei Times, Rappler, Kyodo News, and the

See "Target Audiences" from *Justice Mission 2025 (after) (china only)*

Philippine press outlets present in the dataset, operate without CCP affiliation and cover Taiwan-related narratives from independent editorial positions, including coverage of PRC military activity and statements as news events rather than as coordinated messaging. During baseline periods, independent regional outlets lead amplification of Taiwan-related content. Before high-intensity exercises, state-controlled and CCP-affiliated outlets displace them at the top of the amplification stack. That displacement is the primary structural coordination signal this classification system is designed to detect.

Audience Segment Findings

Six audience segments appear with sufficient frequency and consistency across the full live watches set to constitute identifiable, recurring targets of PRC narrative operations. Three are present across all focal exercises. Three appear selectively, concentrated in specific exercises where their targeting serves a particular strategic objective.

Segment 1: Domestic PRC Audience — Party Officials and Urban Professionals, 35 to 60

This segment carries the highest composite scores across every live watch in which it appears, ranging from 8.5 to 9.0, and is the most consistently targeted audience in the dataset.

Narratives directed at this group emphasize sovereignty enforcement, historical legitimacy framing through UN Resolution 2758 and post-war international order arguments, and threat construction around foreign interference. The operational purpose is internal cohesion: sustaining the domestic political consensus that legitimizes escalatory options. Sourcing for this segment is drawn almost exclusively from state-owned/official media. In **Joint Sword 2024A**, content reached this audience through Ecns.cn, China News Service (English), and China Daily with dense policy citations and party-leader attribution. In **Strait Thunder 2025A**, CGTN, Global Times, and Huanqiu led amplification. **Justice Mission 2025** used Xinhua, China Daily, and

CGTN in coordinated release windows. The dominance of state-owned/official outlets for this segment is analytically significant: Beijing is not routing internal cohesion messaging through indirect or deniable channels. It moves through the formal state media infrastructure, which functions as both delivery mechanism and signal of institutional priority.

Segment 2: Taiwan Domestic Audience — Moderate and DPP-Skeptical Adults, 28 to 55

This segment is the most structurally important external target in the dataset, appearing across all seven live watches with composite scores ranging from 7.5 to 8.75. Moderate Taiwanese adults who are not ideologically committed to independence but are economically anxious and skeptical of DPP governance represent the population most susceptible to narrative erosion of support for Taiwan's current political direction. Narratives targeting this group frame DPP policies as economically damaging, portray reunification as a pragmatic rather than ideological outcome, and emphasize cross-Strait cultural and family ties as a counterweight to political separation. The sourcing deliberately mixes tiers. State-owned/official outlets provide the foundational narrative framing, while CCP-aligned/affiliated outlets carry that content to audiences through channels that carry more apparent independence and credibility than direct state media. In **Joint Sword 2024A**, South China Morning Post amplified 22 percent of items in the window, the highest share of any single outlet across any exercise in the dataset. In the two-weeks before the **Justice Mission 2025** exercise, Beijing Bulletin led at 13.5 percent, displacing the independent regional outlets that led during both baseline periods. The shift from independent to state-aligned sources at the top of the amplification stack does not occur during baseline periods but is present before every high-intensity exercise in the dataset, leading us to conclude that state-run media is directly initiating and responding to ongoing narrative developments to influence perceptions and actions.

Segment 3: Taiwan Youth, 18 to 35 — Social Media-Engaged and Identity-Vulnerable

This demographic segment appears consistently across **Joint Sword 2024A**, **Joint Sword 2024B**, the **Strait Live-Fire Drill**, and **Strait Thunder 2025A**, with composite scores ranging from 7.5 to 8.0. It is absent from the **Justice Mission 2025** live watches, which concentrate Taiwan-facing targeting on older moderate adults rather than youth. This likely reflects a strategic calculation that economic anxiety produces more immediate pressure than identity appeals in the short window before a major punitive exercise. The targeting mechanism for Taiwan youth relies on cultural affinity narratives, pop culture vectors, and social media-native framing. In **Joint Sword 2024A**, content around Taiwanese celebrities who expressed pro-China identity positions was amplified through Instagram and Weibo. The **Strait Live-Fire Drill** live watches identifies the animated film *Ne Zha 2* as a cultural vehicle alongside pan-Chinese identity campaigns. **Strait Thunder 2025A** adds cyber-focused content exposing Taiwan's internet army, which simultaneously targets youth through identity threat and attempts to delegitimize the DPP's information operations. Sourcing is the most diverse of any segment: CCP-aligned/affiliated outlets including CRNTT Hong Kong and Nanyang Siang Pau carry high volumes, with state-owned/official outlets providing the foundational narrative items that affiliated and regional outlets then amplify.

Segment 4: International Policy Professionals, Diplomats, and Governance Stakeholders

This segment is present in all seven live watches with composite scores ranging from 6.5 to 7.5. The lower scores relative to domestic and Taiwan-facing segments reflect a targeting calculation: international policy audiences respond more to legal and diplomatic framing than to emotional incitement, and they are harder to move. Narratives targeting this group are dense with legalistic content referencing UN Resolution 2758, Cairo and Potsdam declarations, joint communiques, and multilateral norms. The operational purpose is to shape the international

normative environment in ways that foreclose support for Taiwan's sovereignty claims and raise the reputational cost of foreign interference. **Justice Mission 2025** is structurally distinct in how it approaches this segment. It is the only exercise in the dataset to invoke both the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation simultaneously, and those references are coordinated across multiple state outlets within the same window rather than appearing as isolated items. This pattern does not appear in any other exercise live watches, indicating that **Justice Mission 2025** was framed as a foundational sovereignty moment requiring the full historical-legal argument. Sourcing relies primarily on English-language state-owned/official media supplemented by CCP-aligned/affiliated English-language outlets that carry credibility in international policy circles.

Segment 5: Japanese Political and Security Audience — Right-Leaning Policymakers and Military-Adjacent Professionals

This segment is concentrated in the **Justice Mission 2025** live watches and the **Strait Live-Fire Drill** live watches, with composite scores of 8.0. It is de-emphasized in the Joint Sword exercises, which directed Japan-facing messaging more narrowly toward diplomatic condemnation rather than audience-segmented targeting. The **Justice Mission 2025** operation against this segment is the most precision-targeted Japan-specific effort in the dataset.

Narratives exploit historical grievance around Yasukuni Shrine visits, Japanese remilitarization, and PM Takaichi's Taiwan-contingency rhetoric, framed through moral culpability arguments calibrated for consumption by Japan's own policy-skeptical internal audience. The goal is to sow doubt about the legitimacy of Japan's security posture among those most positioned to constrain it from within. Global Times serves as the primary amplifier for this segment across both exercises, consistent with its function as the sharper-register English-language state outlet used when the narrative requires confrontational framing rather than diplomatic tone.

Segment 6: Chinese Diaspora and Cross-Strait Observers Abroad, 30 to 50

This segment appears across the **Blockade Exercise**, **Justice Mission 2025**, and **Strait Thunder 2025A** live watches with composite scores in the 6.0 to 7.0 range. It is the lowest-priority recurring segment but occupies a structurally distinct role: diaspora audiences influence host-country perceptions of China's Taiwan position and, in some cases, maintain economic and political linkages that Beijing views as worth protecting. Narratives targeting this group emphasize peaceful development framing, anti-provocation messaging directed at the United States, and cross-cultural cooperation as an alternative to conflict. The tone is more diplomatic and less emotionally charged than messaging targeting mainland or Taiwan domestic audiences. Sourcing relies primarily on CCP-aligned/affiliated English-language outlets including South China Morning Post, China Daily EU Bureau, Beijing Review, and China US Focus. The deliberate use of affiliated rather than state-owned/official outlets for this segment reflects a credibility calculation: diaspora audiences in Western countries are less receptive to direct state media and more likely to engage with outlets that maintain at least the appearance of editorial independence.

Cross-Cutting Patterns

Three structural patterns emerge from reviewing the target audience data across all seven live watches. First, audience emphasis shifts with exercise type. Politically triggered exercises including **Joint Sword 2024A** and **Justice Mission 2025** concentrate the highest-composite-score targeting on Taiwan domestic moderates and PRC party officials simultaneously, the two audiences whose combined shift in sentiment would most directly affect Beijing's strategic calculus. Operationally driven exercises with less clear political triggers, including the **Blockade Exercise** and **Joint Sword 2024B**, show lower composite scores for Taiwan-facing segments and more emphasis on youth and cross-Strait cultural audiences, consistent with a longer-horizon influence operation rather than acute crisis preparation.

Second, the media tier leading amplification shifts predictably across the exercise cycle. During baseline periods, independent and regional outlets lead coverage of Taiwan-related narratives. Before high-intensity exercises, state-owned/official outlets displace them at the top of the amplification stack. This displacement does not reflect organic editorial interest. It reflects top-down activation of the formal state media infrastructure. The shift is most pronounced in **Justice Mission 2025** and **Joint Sword 2024A**, and it is absent from both baseline windows in the dataset.

Third, **Justice Mission 2025** is structurally distinct in the breadth and simultaneity of its audience targeting. It is the only exercise in the dataset running concurrent campaigns against three distinct audiences: Japan's security establishment, US policymakers and arms suppliers, and Taiwan's domestic moderate population. Each campaign operated through its own outlet cluster, timestamp, and emotional register. This three-front targeting requires advance coordination across state media, affiliated outlets, and diplomatic channels. Its absence from every other exercise in the dataset makes it a qualitative signature of exercise scale and political intent.

Target Audience Summary by Exercise

Exercise	Primary Target Audience	Compo site Score	Leading Media Tier	Strategic Purpose
JM25 Before (BT11768)	Mainland party officials and professionals, 35 to 55	8.5	State-owned/official (Beijing Bulletin, CGTN)	Internal cohesion; legitimize escalation
JM25 Before (BT11768)	Taiwan moderate adults, 30 to 55	7.5	CCP-aligned/affiliated (SCMP, Asia Times)	Erode DPP support; economic anxiety

Exercise	Primary Target Audience	Composite Score	Leading Media Tier	Strategic Purpose
JM25 After (BT11786)	Taiwan urban adults, 28 to 45, DPP-skeptical	8.75	State-owned/official (Xinhua, China Daily)	Punitive framing; sanctions legitimization
JM25 After (BT11786)	Mainland party officials and professionals, 35 to 60	8.75	State-owned/official (Xinhua, CGTN, Ecns.cn)	Sustain nationalist resolve post-exercise
JM25 After (BT11786)	Japanese security and political professionals, 35 to 60	8.0	State-owned/official (Global Times)	Delegitimize Japan security posture
JS 2024A (BT11788)	Mainland party officials, 45 to 60	8.5	State-owned/official (Ecns.cn, CNS English)	Sovereignty enforcement; anti-Lai framing
JS 2024A (BT11788)	Taiwan moderate adults, 35 to 55	7.5	CCP-aligned/affiliated (SCMP, 22% of items)	Economic threat; DPP delegitimization
JS 2024A (BT11788)	Taiwan youth, 22 to 35	7.5	Mixed: CCP-aligned and state (Ecns.cn)	Identity targeting; celebrity framing
JS 2024B (BT11789)	Mainland party officials and professionals, 35 to 60	8.5	State-owned/official (China Daily, Xinhua)	National Day cohesion; anti-separatism
JS 2024B (BT11789)	Taiwan youth and students, 18 to 28	8.0	CCP-aligned/affiliated (SCMP, China Daily Asia)	Cultural identity; soft reunification appeal
Strait Thunder 2025A (BT11790)	Mainland party officials, 45 to 60 (cyber and info ops)	9.0	State-owned/official (Ecns.cn, Global Times)	Escalatory resolve; internet army framing
Strait Thunder 2025A (BT11790)	Taiwan youth, 18 to 28	7.5	Mixed: state and CCP-aligned (CRNTT HK)	Demoralization; cyber threat exposure
Strait Thunder 2025A (BT11790)	Taiwan business moderates, 35 to 55	7.0	Mixed: state and CCP-aligned (Nanyang Siang Pau)	Economic anxiety; tariff and trade pressure
Strait Live-Fire Drill (BT11791)	Taiwan military-age males, 22 to 40	8.0	State-owned/official (Ecns.cn, China Daily)	Morale erosion; futility framing

Exercise	Primary Target Audience	Composite Score	Leading Media Tier	Strategic Purpose
Strait Live-Fire Drill (BT11791)	Taiwan moderate adults, 28 to 45	7.5	CCP-aligned/affiliated (CRNTT HK, SCMP)	DPP obstruction framing; cross-Strait appeal
Blockade Exercise (BT11787)	Mainland party officials and elites, 30 to 55	8.5	State-owned/official (Global Times, China Daily)	Coercive action legitimization; red line framing
Blockade Exercise (BT11787)	Taiwan and Mainland youth, 18 to 30	7.0	CCP-aligned/affiliated (SCMP, Ecns.cn)	Cultural heritage; shared identity building

Analytical Ceiling and Limitations

The audience segmentation analysis presented here operates within the content-analysis ceiling of the EdgeTheory software. The software identifies target audiences through inference from content characteristics including language register, outlet selection, thematic framing, and composite scoring, rather than from platform-level engagement or demographic consumption data. The segments identified represent intended audiences as inferred from production-side signals, not confirmed reached audiences as measured by actual consumption. Age ranges, professional categories, and geographic focus reflect the best available inferences from outlet selection and narrative framing. Claims about distinct sub-segments within broader categories share a limitation: the software can identify thematic differentiation in content but cannot confirm that differentiation successfully reached the intended sub-segment rather than the broader population. Refining these inferences to the sub-segment level would require pairing EdgeTheory's content-side data with platform-level engagement metadata and demographic inference software capable of measuring actual consumption patterns.

Recommendations for Continuation

Several analytical lines opened by this section warrant continuation in future exercise cycles. First, the three-front simultaneous targeting documented in **Justice Mission 2025** should be treated as the benchmark case for high-intensity exercise audience segmentation. Future live watches covering exercises of comparable scale should be evaluated against that benchmark to determine whether multi-front simultaneous targeting is a repeatable signature of large-scale operations or specific to the political context of **Justice Mission 2025**. Second, the shift in leading amplification tier from independent regional outlets to state-owned/official outlets in the pre-exercise window should be tracked quantitatively in future cycles. Establishing a measurable threshold for that shift would convert it from a qualitative observation into a triggerable indicator. Third, the Taiwan military-age male segment identified in the **Strait Live-Fire Drill** live watches has no close parallel in any other exercise window. Whether that segment becomes a consistent feature of pre-exercise targeting as PLA operational messaging matures, or whether it was specific to the Strait Live-Fire Drill's operational context, cannot be determined from the current dataset and warrants monitoring in subsequent exercises. Fourth, pairing EdgeTheory's content-side analysis with platform-level demographic inference software in a follow-on phase would close the gap between intended audience identification and confirmed audience reach, substantially increasing the operational utility of the segmentation findings.

Offensive Narrative Operations

From Detection to Action

The preceding target audience analysis mapped the architecture of CCP influence operations: who Beijing targets, through which outlets, with what emotional register, and at what point in the exercise cycle that targeting activates. That is the intelligence picture. This section is about what to do with it.

Knowing the CCP's targeting architecture before an exercise occurs is only valuable if it opens a window for action. The purpose of this section is to identify content already present in the broader Pacific information environment that can be used to impose costs on CCP information operations, disrupt their effectiveness, and deny Beijing the narrative space it depends on to prepare its target audiences for escalation. That is what lethality means in this context. Not lethality in the kinetic sense, but in the informational one: content that degrades the adversary's ability to condition its intended audiences, fractures the coordination that makes CCP messaging effective, and gets to those audiences first with narratives that make the CCP's preferred framing harder to land.

The Counter-Narrative Lethality assessments reviewed for this section were drawn from the full before and after windows of all six exercises using Pacific-wide sourcing across **Joint Sword 2024A**, **Joint Sword 2024B**, the **Blockade Exercise**, the **Strait Live-Fire Drill**, **Strait Thunder 2025A**, and **Justice Mission 2025**. Unlike the China-only analysis in the target audience section, this broader aperture is what makes the data actionable. It surfaces organic counter-narratives already in circulation from independent Taiwanese media, regional outlets,

Counter-Narrative Lethality
An assessment of the efficacy of narratives already present that are running counter to pro-China outlets, with sources cited to enable aligned message generation

Finding 1: CCP Narrative on Taiwan as Inalienable Chinese Territory vs. Taiwan's Assertion of Sovereignty and Democratic Identity

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) consistently promotes the narrative that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China, grounded in the "one-China principle," UN Resolution 2758, and historical declarations such as the Cairo Declaration. This narrative is widely circulated through Chinese state media and diplomatic spokespeople emphasizing the illegitimacy of Taiwan's independent political status and branding Taiwan's leadership, especially Lai Ching-te, as separatists threatening regional stability. The purpose is to delegitimize Taiwan's sovereignty, suppress its international participation (notably in WHO and the UN), and justify military and economic coercion.

Counter-narratives come primarily from Taiwan-based outlets such as Taipei Times and Focus Taiwan, which highlight Taiwan's democratic governance, growing international partnerships (with countries like India and Canada), and Taiwan's insistence on self-representation in global forums. Taiwanese officials and lawmakers emphasize Taiwan's status as a self-governing democratic entity with distinct political will, rejecting Beijing's claims and interference. These counter-signals resonate well domestically and with democratic partners but face suppression or limited reach in international forums due to China's diplomatic pressure.

Amplifying Taiwan's democratic narrative and reinforcing support from international democratic governments and institutions degrades CCP coordinated efforts by challenging their monopoly over the "one-China" discourse, bolstering Taiwan's international legitimacy and undermining Beijing's claims.

-  **Tsai's 8 years in government: Transforming Taiwan amid global challenges - Focus Taiwan**
> Chinese Version (Focus Taiwan)
-  **Heavy rain advisories issued for central, southern Taiwan - Focus Taiwan**
Focus Taiwan
-  **European countries, allies express support for Taiwan as WHA opens - Focus Taiwan**
> Chinese Version (Focus Taiwan)
-  **Politicians lament Taiwan stars' pro-China statements - Taipei Times**
Taipei Times

allied government statements, and civil society voices.

These are not narratives that need to be manufactured.

They exist. The task is simply amplification, timing, and targeting: pushing the right content to the right audience through the right channels before the CCP's coordinated release window opens, or immediately after it does, to flood the information environment and reduce the signal-to-noise ratio of what Beijing is trying to deliver.

See “Counter-Narrative Lethality” from [Joint Sword-2024A \(all\)](#)

The analysis below is organized around five recurring counter-narrative lines that appear with the highest assessed lethality across the live watches reviewed. Each is mapped to the target audiences identified in the preceding analysis, the sourcing tier best positioned to deliver it credibly to those audiences, and the exercise windows in which amplification would have the greatest disruptive effect. **Joint Sword 2024A**, **Strait Thunder 2025A**, and **Justice Mission 2025** anchor the analysis, with supporting data drawn from the remaining three exercise windows where the pattern holds.

Analytical Framework: Lethality Assessment

Each Counter-Narrative Lethality finding in the source live watches carries an assessed lethality level: High, Moderate to High, Moderate, or Low to Moderate. These ratings reflect the degree to which an organic counter-narrative is positioned to degrade the specific CCP narrative it opposes, based on source credibility, amplification reach, audience resonance, and the structural vulnerability it targets in the CCP's messaging architecture. For this analysis, only findings rated Moderate to High or above are treated as operationally actionable. Low to Moderate findings are noted where relevant but are not recommended as primary amplification targets without additional sourcing development.

Source classification follows the same three-tier system established in the target audience analysis: state-owned/official media, CCP-aligned/affiliated media, and independent/regional media. In the counter-narrative context, tier matters differently. The most lethal counter-narratives for Taiwan domestic audiences are those carried by independent regional outlets and credible Taiwanese sources, not by US government or allied state channels, which

CCP messaging has pre-conditioned those audiences to view with skepticism. For international policy audiences, allied government statements and English-language independent media carry the highest credibility weight.

Counter-Narrative Line 1: Taiwan's Democratic Legitimacy and Sovereign Resilience

Lethality Rating: High across **Joint Sword 2024A**, **Joint Sword 2024B**, **Strait Thunder 2025A**, and **Justice Mission 2025** (before and after windows).

The CCP's most consistent and structurally important narrative across every exercise window is the delegitimization of Taiwan's democratic government, framing its leadership as separatist provocateurs whose actions justify military coercion and international isolation. This narrative is the load-bearing wall of Beijing's entire pre-exercise information architecture. If it holds, the exercise appears as a proportionate response to a destabilizing actor. If it fractures, the exercise appears as unprovoked aggression against a democratic government.

The organic counter-narrative against this framing is the most robust in the dataset.

Independent Taiwanese outlets including Taipei Times, Focus Taiwan, and Liberty Times consistently produce high-volume, high-credibility coverage of Taiwan's democratic processes, public opinion data showing strong Taiwanese identity separate from the mainland, and detailed documentation of PRC coercion tactics. In the **Joint Sword 2024A** before window, national surveys showing over 60 percent of Taiwan residents identifying exclusively as Taiwanese were in active circulation. In the **Joint Sword 2024B** before window, Rappler, Kyodo News, and Focus Taiwan covered Lai's National Day speech as a pragmatic democratic statement rather than a separatist provocation, directly undercutting the CCP framing that triggered the exercise

narrative. The **Justice Mission 2025** after window adds US government sourcing: statements by US officials publicly affirming Taiwan's democratic legitimacy and rejecting the separatist framing carry weight with international policy audiences in ways that Taiwan-sourced content alone cannot reach.

The amplification gap identified in the live watches is not a content problem. The content exists and is credible. The gap is volume and timing. CCP state media releases its delegitimization packages in coordinated 24 to 48-hour windows before exercises. The counter-narrative from independent Taiwanese outlets travels organically but more slowly and without the concentrated simultaneity that makes the CCP release effective. Closing that gap requires pre-positioning: identifying the most survey-backed and factually grounded content from Focus Taiwan, Taipei Times, and Rappler in the weeks before an anticipated exercise window and amplifying it through channels that reach Taiwan's moderate domestic audience and international policy circles simultaneously.

Primary delivery tier for Taiwan domestic audiences: independent/regional media (Focus Taiwan, Taipei Times, Liberty Times). Primary delivery tier for international policy audiences: independent/regional media supplemented by allied government statements. CCP-aligned or US government-branded sourcing for Taiwan domestic audiences should be treated as secondary at best, as CCP pre-conditioning has reduced its credibility with the moderate segment most susceptible to Beijing's framing.

Counter-Narrative Line 2: Exposure of United Front Operations and Cognitive Warfare Tactics

Lethality Rating: High in **Blockade Exercise** before window and **Strait Thunder 2025A** before window. Moderate to High in **Justice Mission 2025** after window.

The CCP's youth and identity-targeting operations documented in Section 1 depend on a degree of operational opacity to function. Cultural exchange framing, celebrity endorsements, and social media-native pan-Chinese identity campaigns are most effective when their coordinated, top-down origin is not visible to the audience receiving them. Transparency is the weapon against this category of influence operation. When the sourcing, funding, and coordination behind a cultural unity narrative is exposed, the narrative loses its organic credibility and its audience loses its susceptibility.

The **Blockade Exercise** before window contains the most operationally specific counter-narrative content on this line. Taiwanese investigative content creators including YouTuber Pa Chiung and DPP Legislator Puma Shen produced detailed public exposures of United Front recruitment of Taiwanese influencers, musicians, and athletes, with specific documentation of financial inducements and coordinated messaging instructions. Kuma Academy's civil defense awareness programming directly addresses psychological and information warfare tactics with a Taiwanese youth audience. The **Strait Thunder 2025A** before window documents the Taiwan Affairs Office's launch of an online reporting platform for separatist activity, an action that itself generated a counter-narrative: Taipei Times and Liberty Times covered the platform's launch as an escalatory surveillance tool, which exposed the operation rather than normalizing it. The **Justice Mission 2025** after window adds Taiwan's National Security Bureau disclosures on CCP fake account networks, bot operations, and AI-generated content targeting Taiwan's social cohesion, providing authoritative sourcing for transparency narratives.

The amplification recommendation here differs from Counter-Narrative Line 1 in its channel requirements. Transparency content targeting Taiwan's youth demographic must travel through platforms and voices that demographic already trusts: social media-native Taiwanese creators, civil society organizations like Kuma Academy, and cross-party legislative voices. State media from any country, including Taiwan's own official channels, carries reduced credibility with this segment. **The most lethal delivery mechanism is peer-level: Taiwanese influencers and activists exposing CCP operations in the same digital spaces where those operations are running.** Identifying, amplifying, and where appropriate resourcing those voices is the operational recommendation.

Primary delivery tier: independent/regional media and civil society (Taiwanese investigative media, Kuma Academy, social media-native creators). Timing window: the two weeks before anticipated exercise activity, specifically timed to precede the coordinated CCP cultural unity release cycle documented in the Section 1 analysis.

Counter-Narrative Line 3: PLA Operational Limitations and the Costs of Forced Reunification

Lethality Rating: High in **Justice Mission 2025** after window. Moderate to High in **Strait Live-Fire Drill** after window. Moderate in **Joint Sword 2024B** after window.

The CCP's messaging to Taiwan's military-age male demographic and to the broader Taiwan domestic moderate audience consistently deploys futility framing: the PLA is dominant, resistance is self-destructive, and the outcome of any conflict is predetermined. This framing is operationally significant because it targets the population whose morale and political will would

be most consequential in a conflict scenario. Undermining the fatalism that framing is designed to produce is one of the highest-value counter-narrative targets in the dataset.

The **Justice Mission 2025** after window contains the most analytically detailed counter-narrative content on this line. Taiwanese security analysts and Western defense experts documented in that window produced credible assessments of PLA operational gaps: limitations in joint force integration, gaps in real combat experience, the complexity of amphibious operations against a defended island, and Taiwan's asymmetric porcupine defense posture. The live watch explicitly notes that US military action in Venezuela during this window provided an independent data point on US operational will and capability, which Taiwanese analysts used to construct a counter to CCP inevitability messaging. The **Strait Live-Fire Drill** after window adds expert caution from US and regional defense analysts about measured deterrence and PLA naval expansion timelines, framed in ways that reduce panic without reducing alertness. The **Joint Sword 2024B** after window surfaces multilateral deterrence content: US and Canadian freedom of navigation transits through the Taiwan Strait, Australian and Japanese public diplomatic affirmations, and coordinated allied defense capability signals that collectively undercut the isolated Taiwan narrative the CCP projects.

This counter-narrative line requires careful targeting. For Taiwan's military-age male demographic, the most effective delivery is through defense-credible independent media and Taiwanese Ministry of National Defense public communications, which the Strait Live-Fire Drill live watch specifically identifies as the primary organic amplifier for this audience. For the Taiwan moderate adult segment, the same content needs softer framing: the emphasis is on stability and deterrence rather than on military capability comparisons. For international policy audiences, Western defense analysts and think tank assessments carry the highest credibility

weight and are already present in the information environment. The amplification gap here is reach into Taiwanese domestic media rather than content generation.

Primary delivery tier: independent/regional media (Taiwanese defense reporting, Western think tank assessments). Secondary tier for international audiences: allied government public statements. Timing window: the post-exercise period, when CCP messaging shifts from pre-exercise conditioning to post-exercise consolidation of inevitability framing.

Counter-Narrative Line 4: International Legal Contestation of One-China Sovereignty Claims

Lethality Rating: High in **Joint Sword 2024A** after window and **Joint Sword 2024B** after window. Moderate to High in **Justice Mission 2025** before window.

The CCP's legal and historical framing of Taiwan as an inalienable part of China under UN Resolution 2758, the Cairo Declaration, and Potsdam Proclamation is the foundational justification for everything that follows: the military exercises, the diplomatic isolation campaign, and the economic coercion. If that legal foundation is credibly contested in international discourse, the entire justification architecture becomes less stable. The live watches document that this contestation already exists and is more robust than Beijing's messaging acknowledges.

The **Joint Sword 2024A** and **Joint Sword 2024B** after windows both document active European Parliament engagement on this line, including a resolution explicitly rejecting China's interpretation of Resolution 2758 and clarifying that Taiwan is not mentioned in the resolution itself. This is high-value counter-narrative content because it comes from an authoritative multilateral body that Beijing cannot dismiss as a US proxy. The **Justice Mission 2025** before

window documents the persistence of legal ambiguities surrounding the Treaty of San Francisco, Taiwanese political narratives asserting unresolved sovereignty disputes, and Japanese right-wing revisionism on the Diaoyu Islands question. Maintaining and expanding awareness of these multilayered legal fault lines prevents uncontested CCP sovereignty claims from consolidating in international discourse. The **Blockade Exercise** before window adds US Congressional sourcing, including statements by House Speaker Mike Johnson and bipartisan Congressional calls for Taiwan solidarity, which provide democratic legitimacy backing distinct from executive branch Taiwan Relations Act framing.

The primary audience for this counter-narrative line is the international policy professional segment identified in Section 1. These audiences are the intended receivers of CCP's own legal and historical framing, and they are also the audiences most capable of translating counter-narrative content into policy positions that constrain Beijing's diplomatic isolation strategy. Secondary audiences are Taiwan's domestic moderate and youth segments, for whom evidence of international legal support functions as an inoculation against the inevitability framing the CCP delivers through economic anxiety channels.

Primary delivery tier: allied government statements and multilateral body outputs (European Parliament resolutions, US Congressional statements, think tank legal analysis).

Independent/regional media carries this content to broader audiences. CCP-aligned outlets are not appropriate channels for this line regardless of apparent editorial independence, as the legal contestation content directly conflicts with their editorial orientation.

Counter-Narrative Line 5: Economic Interdependence, Taiwan's Strategic Industrial Value, and the Costs of Coercion

Lethality Rating: Moderate to High across **Strait Thunder 2025A** (before and after), **Blockade Exercise** (before and after), and **Strait Live-Fire Drill** after window.

The CCP's economic coercion narrative targeting Taiwan's business-oriented moderate adults frames economic integration with the mainland as the pragmatic alternative to the DPP's destabilizing policies. It positions Beijing as a stable economic partner and the United States as a source of risky, transactional pressure that hollows out Taiwan's industrial base. The counter-narrative against this framing is not primarily political. It is economic and factual, and the live watches identify multiple credible independent sources already making the case.

The **Strait Thunder 2025A** before and after windows document the most developed version of this counter-narrative. Independent economic analysts, BusinessWorld coverage, and Taiwanese industry reporting directly contested CCP economic resilience claims by documenting market reactions, supply chain disruptions, and the tangible costs of US-China trade confrontation on regional economies. The **Strait Thunder 2025A** after window specifically notes Taiwan's stock market volatility as a data point that contradicts CCP narratives of controlled economic stability. The **Blockade Exercise** after window surfaces coverage of TSMC's US investment as a strategic diversification that increases Taiwan's global leverage rather than hollowing it out, directly countering the USMC narrative the CCP deployed in the **Strait Live-Fire Drill** window. The **Blockade Exercise** before window adds Prospects Foundation and think tank analysis of Taiwan's semiconductor leadership and the strategic risks posed by economic coercion, providing the factual infrastructure for economic resilience messaging.

The Taiwan business moderate segment identified in Section 1 is the primary audience for this counter-narrative line. This segment is the most economically anxious and therefore the most susceptible to CCP economic fear messaging. But it is also the most data-responsive: concrete economic analysis, industry-specific coverage, and credible assessments of supply chain risk carry more weight with this demographic than political or identity-based appeals. The amplification recommendation is to increase volume and reach of independent economic analysis and Taiwanese industry reporting through business media channels and CCP-aligned outlets that this segment already consumes, using the credibility of those platforms while the content itself works against CCP framing.

Primary delivery tier: independent/regional business and economic media (Asia Times, BusinessWorld, Taiwanese business publications, Prospects Foundation). Note that South China Morning Post, classified as CCP-aligned/affiliated in Section 1, is the highest-volume single amplifier for this audience segment across multiple exercise windows. Its editorial orientation makes it a complicated but potentially high-value channel: content that reaches this audience through SCMP carries credibility that US government-branded or explicitly pro-Taiwan sources do not, and economic analysis that passes SCMP's editorial threshold can reach the Taiwan moderate business audience with less friction than almost any other available channel.

Cross-Cutting Amplification Principles

Three operational principles emerge from reviewing the counter-narrative lethality data across all 12 live watches. First, **timing determines lethality more than content quality**. The CCP's pre-exercise coordinated release window of 24 to 48 hours is the interval during which its narrative architecture is most vulnerable to disruption. Content already in circulation and reaching target audiences before that window opens reduces the CCP's ability to define the

information environment. The narrative indicators from the early warning analysis are not only detection signals. They are amplification triggers. When the dual-track signal activates, political blame narrative and military operational narrative accelerate together, that is the moment to begin pre-positioning counter-narrative content. In the **Joint Sword 2024A** case, that window opened approximately two days before the exercise announcement. In **Strait Thunder 2025A**, approximately one week. Those are the operational templates.

Second, **source credibility is audience-specific and must be matched deliberately.**

Independent Taiwanese media is the highest-credibility source for Taiwan's domestic moderate and youth audiences. Multilateral and allied government sources carry the most weight for international policy audiences. Western defense analysis is credible to Taiwan's military-age male demographic and to Japan's security establishment. US government-branded content is a secondary channel for all of these audiences due to CCP pre-conditioning. Wherever possible, counter-narrative amplification should travel through independent and regional channels rather than official US information infrastructure.

Third, **Justice Mission 2025 demonstrates that multi-audience simultaneous targeting requires multi-channel simultaneous counter-targeting.** Because **Justice Mission 2025** ran concurrent campaigns against Japan's security establishment, US policymakers, and Taiwan's domestic moderate population, a single counter-narrative line is insufficient. The response architecture needs to mirror the attack architecture: distinct content through distinct channels to distinct audiences, released within a compressed window to deny the CCP the sequential narrative consolidation its three-front operation depends on.

Counter-Narrative Amplification Summary

Counter-Narrative Line	Lethality Rating	Primary Target Audience (from Section 1)	Recommended Source Tier	Optimal Timing Window
Taiwan's democratic legitimacy and sovereign resilience	High	Taiwan moderate adults; international policy professionals	Independent/regional (Focus Taiwan, Taipei Times, Rappler)	2 to 7 days before anticipated exercise announcement
Exposure of United Front and cognitive warfare tactics	High	Taiwan youth 18 to 35; Taiwan moderate adults	Independent civil society (Kuma Academy, Taiwanese investigative creators)	2 weeks before exercise; sustained through exercise window
PLA operational limitations and costs of forced reunification	High to Moderate	Taiwan military-age males; Taiwan moderate adults	Independent/regional defense media; allied government statements	Post-exercise window; within 72 hours of exercise conclusion
International legal contestation of One-China sovereignty claims	High to Moderate	International policy professionals; Japan security audience	Allied government and multilateral body outputs (EU Parliament, US Congress)	Pre-exercise and concurrent with exercise window
Economic interdependence, Taiwan's industrial value, costs of coercion	Moderate to High	Taiwan business moderates 35 to 55; Chinese diaspora abroad	Independent economic media (Asia Times, BusinessWorld, SCMP as secondary)	Persistent; amplify on tariff or arms sale trigger events

Analytical Ceiling and Limitations

The counter-narrative recommendations in this section are bound by the same content-analysis ceiling that applies to the target audience analysis. EdgeTheory software identifies counter-narrative content and assesses its lethality based on source characteristics, reach estimates, and the structural vulnerability it targets in CCP messaging architecture. It does not measure actual audience reception, behavioral change, or the degree to which amplification of a given narrative would translate into measurable degradation of CCP influence operations. Lethality ratings are assessments of potential, not confirmed outcomes. The recommendation to amplify specific content through specific channels is grounded in the best available inference from content-side data. Confirming that a counter-narrative actually reached and influenced the

intended audience would require platform-level engagement data and behavioral measurement tools beyond the scope of this study.

Additionally, the counter-narrative content identified here reflects what was organically present in the information environment during the exercise windows analyzed. The absence of a robust counter-narrative in a given area, most notably the **Strait Live-Fire Drill** before window where independent counter-narrative volume was assessed as thin across nearly every finding, is itself an analytical signal. It indicates that certain narrative spaces are currently uncontested, which represents both a vulnerability and an opportunity for deliberate content development in future exercise cycles.

Recommendations for Future Exercise Cycles

Four recommendations follow from the lethality analysis. First, establish persistent monitoring of the five counter-narrative lines identified here during baseline periods, not only during exercise windows. Counter-narrative content needs to be in circulation and building audience familiarity before the pre-exercise surge begins. Content encountered for the first time during a high-intensity CCP release window faces a much steeper credibility hill than content audiences have been exposed to over weeks or months. **Although post-exercise messaging can counter some CCP narratives, leveraging EdgeTheory's narrative sparklines to identify surges can provide both the indication and content of pro-China narratives that should be countered within 24 hours.**

Second, treat the dual-track signal as an amplification trigger, not only a detection indicator. When the political blame narrative and military operational narrative begin accelerating simultaneously, pre-positioned counter-narrative content should begin moving through the

channels recommended above. The **Joint Sword 2024A** two-day and **Strait Thunder 2025A** one-week pre-announcement windows are the operational templates for that timing.

Third, invest in the independent Taiwanese civil society and media infrastructure that produces the most lethal counter-narrative content. Pa Chiung, Kuma Academy, Focus Taiwan, and Liberty Times are not US-controlled assets. They are organic voices that already produce credible, audience-matched content targeting the same populations the CCP targets.

Supporting and amplifying those voices through channels that do not expose them to CCP retaliation as US proxies is the most operationally sustainable counter-narrative investment identified in this study.

Fourth, develop a specific counter-narrative response plan for a **Justice Mission 2025**-scale three-front simultaneous targeting event. Single-line counter-narrative amplification is insufficient when the CCP runs concurrent campaigns against three distinct audiences. A pre-developed multi-channel response architecture, with distinct content designated for each audience segment and timed for simultaneous release, is the appropriate operational analog to the CCP's own coordinated release model.

Conclusion

What This Study Found

This study began with a detection problem. PRC narrative activity surrounding Taiwan is continuous, dense, and difficult to distinguish from organic media coverage without a structured framework for identifying coordination. The early warning and hypothesis testing analysis solved the first part of that problem: it demonstrated that PRC narrative behavior is not background noise. It escalates before PLA exercises in measurable ways, follows identifiable patterns

across multiple exercises, and is coordinated across outlets in ways that distinguish it from organic coverage. The dual-track signal, the simultaneous acceleration of political blame narratives and military operational narratives in the pre-exercise window, emerged as the most analytically defensible early warning indicator in the dataset. It appeared before every high-intensity exercise reviewed and was absent from both baseline windows.

The target audience and offensive narrative operations analysis answered the question that detection alone leaves open: to what end. The target audience findings revealed that PRC narrative coordination before PLA exercises is not indiscriminate. It is segmented, precision-targeted, and operationalized through deliberate outlet selection that varies by audience. Beijing routes domestic cohesion messaging through state-owned official media, economic anxiety content to Taiwan's moderate adults through CCP-affiliated outlets that carry more apparent independence, and youth identity campaigns through social media-native vectors and cultural proxies. The shift from independent regional outlets to state-owned official media at the top of the amplification stack does not occur during baseline periods. It activates before high-intensity exercises and functions as a structural coordination signal.

Justice Mission 2025 is the most significant single case in the dataset precisely because it demonstrated what large-scale coordinated targeting looks like at full operational tempo: three simultaneous audience campaigns running through distinct outlet clusters, targeting Japan's security establishment, US policymakers, and Taiwan's domestic moderate population concurrently. That simultaneity required advance coordination across state media, affiliated outlets, and diplomatic channels. Its absence from every other exercise in the dataset makes it a qualitative signature of scale and political intent.

What This Study Makes Possible

The shift from detection to disruption is the operational contribution of the offensive narrative operations analysis. Once the targeting architecture is visible, the information environment can be contested rather than only observed. The five counter-narrative lines identified are not manufactured responses. They are organic content already present in the Pacific information environment, assessed for lethality against the specific CCP narratives they oppose, and mapped to the audiences and channels through which they travel most effectively. The analytical work has been done. What remains is timing, routing, and will.

The pre-exercise narrative surge is not only an early warning indicator. It is an amplification trigger. When the dual-track signal activates, there is a window, measured in days rather than hours in most cases, during which counter-narrative content pre-positioned through independent Taiwanese media, regional outlets, and credible civil society voices can reach target audiences before the CCP's coordinated release package does. Occupying that space first does not require fabricating narratives or manufacturing sources. It requires identifying what already exists, moving it through the right channels, and doing so before Beijing does.

The First Shot

The central finding of this study, taken across all of its analytical lines, is that the first shot fired in a PRC coercive operation targeting Taiwan is not fired with a weapon. It is fired with a word. The narrative infrastructure that precedes every PLA exercise in this dataset is not commentary on military activity. It is preparation for it: softening target populations, constructing legal and moral justifications, isolating Taiwan diplomatically, and conditioning international audiences to receive escalation as a proportionate response rather than an act of aggression. That

infrastructure activates on a measurable timeline. It follows a detectable pattern. And it is directed at identifiable audiences through identifiable channels.

That means it can be anticipated. It means the audiences it targets can be reached first. And it means that when Beijing begins moving its narrative apparatus into pre-exercise position, the response does not have to be reactive. The framework built across this study gives analysts and operators something more than situational awareness of what the adversary is doing. It gives them something to say back.

The Case for Acting Now

In the weeks before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the narrative environment was moving. State-aligned media amplified sovereignty claims. Domestic audiences were being prepared for the cost of war. International actors were being pre-conditioned to receive the invasion as a defensive necessity. That activity was observable in hindsight. It was not being systematically tracked in real time, not mapped to specific audiences, not assessed for coordination patterns, and not being contested through organized counter-narrative operations before the kinetic phase began. By the time the first tank crossed the border, the information environment had already been shaped. The window for proactive disruption had closed.

The same narrative mechanics documented in this study were present in that environment. The same coordination patterns. The same audience segmentation logic. The same pre-operational information architecture designed to prepare populations for an act of violence before the violence occurs. The difference is that in the Taiwan case, those mechanics are now visible. The framework exists. The data is being collected. The counter-narrative content is already in the

information environment waiting to be amplified. What the Russia-Ukraine case could not offer, and what this study can, is the possibility of being early.

The goal of this work is not to predict when the PLA will act. It is to ensure that if and when that moment approaches, the United States and its partners are not watching the narrative environment move and doing nothing about it. The information war surrounding Taiwan is already underway. It has been underway through every exercise in this dataset. Beijing is not waiting for a kinetic operation to begin before contesting the cognitive domain. Neither should we. The opportunity to be proactive in this fight, to contest the information space before it becomes a battlefield preparation tool, is available right now. This study is the case for taking it.

Acronym List

ACFT	Aircraft
AO	Area of Operations
CCG	China Coast Guard
ECS	East China Sea
ETC	Eastern Theater Command
Ex	Exercise
NTC	Northern Theater Command
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PLARF	People's Liberation Army Rocket Force
SCS	South China Sea
STC	Southern Theater Command
TC	Theater Command
VSL	Vessels

References

Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). (2026). That isn't signaling: China's military is seriously rehearsing around Taiwan. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/that-isnt-signaling-chinas-military-is-seriously-rehearsing-around-taiwan/>

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). (2025). Lights Out?: Wargaming a Chinese blockade of Taiwan.

https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2025-07/250730_Cancian_Taiwan_Blockade.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. (2025). Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2025. Office of the Secretary of Defense.

<https://media.defense.gov/2025/Dec/23/2003849070/-1/-1/1/ANNUAL-REPORT-TO-CONGRESS-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA-2025.PDF>

Wicker, R. (2024). Peace Through Strength. U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee.

Africa Daily. <https://africdaily.com>.

Asia News Network. <https://asianews.network>.

Asia Times. <https://asiatimes.com>.
Beijing Bulletin. <https://beijingbulletin.com>.
Beijing Review. <https://www.bjreview.com>.
Borneo Bulletin. <https://www.borneobulletin.com.bn>.
Business Mirror. <https://businessmirror.com.ph>.
BusinessWorld. <https://www.bworldonline.com>.
CCTV (China Central Television). <https://www.cctv.com>.
CGTN (China Global Television Network). <https://www.cgtn.com>.
China Daily. <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn>.
China News Service / Ecnscn. <https://www.ecnscn>.
China Review News (CRNTT Hong Kong). <https://www.crntt.com>.
ChinaFocusNTD. <https://www.ntd.com>.
Dawn. <https://www.dawn.com>.
Eagle News. <https://eaglenews.ph>.
Focus Taiwan (Central News Agency). <https://focustaiwan.tw>.
Global Times. <https://www.globaltimes.cn>.
Guangming Daily. <https://www.gmw.cn>.
Huanqiu. <https://www.huanqiu.com>.
iFeng (Phoenix New Media). <https://www.ifeng.com>.
Inquirer (Philippine Daily Inquirer). <https://www.inquirer.net>.
Japan Today. <https://japantoday.com>.
Kathmandu Post. <https://kathmandupost.com>.
Kyodo News. <https://english.kyodonews.net>.
Mainichi Shimbun. <https://mainichi.jp>.
Malaya Business Insight. <https://malaya.com.ph>.
Manila Standard. <https://manilastandard.net>.
Nanyang Siang Pau. <https://www.enanyang.my>.
New Tang Dynasty Television (NTD). <https://www.ntd.com>.
NST Online (New Straits Times). <https://www.nst.com.my>.
Punto. <https://punto.com.ph>.
Radio Taiwan International (RTI). <https://www.rti.org.tw>.

Rappler. <https://www.rappler.com>.

Sohu News. <https://www.sohu.com>.

South China Morning Post. <https://www.scmp.com>.

Taipei Times. <https://www.taipeitimes.com>.

The Age. <https://www.theage.com.au>.

The Liberty Times. <https://www.ltn.com.tw>.

The Manila Times. <https://www.manilatimes.net>.

The Philippine Star. <https://www.philstar.com>.

The Star Online. <https://www.thestar.com.my>.

Visayan Daily Star. <https://visayandailystar.com>.

VOA Cantonese (Voice of America). <https://www.voacantonese.com>.

VOA Chinese (Voice of America). <https://www.voachinese.com>.

Xinhua News Agency. <https://www.xinhuanet.com>.

Yicai Global. <https://www.yicaiglobal.com>.