

## What is Taiwan's 'porcupine strategy' to protect itself if China attack

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Recently, China had launched aggressive military exercises near Taiwan in response to US House Speaker's visit to the island that Beijing claims as part of its territory.



[Ref- First Post]

## The porcupine doctrine

- It is also known as **asymmetrical warfare**.
- It was proposed in **2008**.
- It focuses on **fortifying a weak state's defences** to exploit the enemy's weaknesses rather than taking on its strengths.
- It is **about building defences** that would ensure that Taiwan could be attacked and damaged but not defeated, at least without unacceptably high costs and risks.
- **Objective-** surviving and assimilating an aerial offensive well enough to organise a wall of fire that will prevent the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) from successfully invading.

## When was it adopted?

- It was adopted by Taiwan in 2017.
- The chief of the Taiwanese military forces, referred to it as the "**Overall Defence Concept**" (ODC).
- It opts for **flexible and easily concealed weapons** such as the portable Javelin and Stinger missile system rather than focusing on buying tanks and naval vessels which are difficult to conceal.

## How does it work?

The strategy has **three defensive layers**.

- The outer layer is about **intelligence and reconnaissance** to ensure defence forces are fully

prepared.

- Behind this come plans for **guerrilla warfare at sea** with aerial support from sophisticated aircraft provided by the US.
- The innermost layer relies on the **geography and demography of the island**.
- While the outer surveillance layer would work to prevent a surprise attack, the second one would make it difficult for China to land its troops on the island in the face of a guerrilla campaign at sea using “**agile, missile-armed small ships, supported by helicopters and missile launchers**”.

### Asymmetric systems of defence

- Asymmetric systems are **small, numerous, smart, stealthy, mobile and hard to be detected** and countered and associated with innovative tactics and employments.
- These asymmetric capabilities will be aimed at striking the **operational centre of gravity and key nodes of the enemy**.
- The geographic advantages of the Taiwan Strait shall be tapped to shape favourable conditions to **disrupt the operational tempo of the enemy**, frustrate its attempts and moves of invasion.

### Need for such a strategy

- China enjoys overwhelming **military superiority over Taiwan**.
- Beijing has developed far **more accurate and precise weapon** systems to target Taiwan over the past decade.
- China has been more vocal about its **intention to “reunite” the island with the mainland**, by force or coercion if needed.
- People's Liberation Army (PLA) has already achieved the **capabilities needed to conduct an air and naval blockade**, cyberattacks, and missile strikes against Taiwan.
- They have systematically **planned, trained, and built the forces** to invade the island.

### How easy will it be for China?

- **Missile strikes, cyberattacks, air and naval blockade aside**, undertaking a full-scale invasion across the Taiwan Strait, could present challenges for China.
- The People's Liberation Army have **air and naval resources** to carry out an initial landing of 25,000 or more troops, which could increase if it deploys civilian ships to meet its military objectives.
- Taiwan can turn **its coastline into a death zone** that would prevent China from having a walkover by using small and agile weaponry systems.