

Pentagon sees risk of war increasing

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The Pentagon this week updated its *National Military Strategy* for the first time in four years, warning that the probability of a major war was growing.

“Today’s global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen in 40 years of service,” US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin Dempsey wrote in his introduction to the strategy document.

While Taiwan is not mentioned, the document references scenarios that could involve the nation.

“In the event of an attack against the US or one of its allies, the US military along with allies and partners will project power across multiple domains to decisively defeat the adversary by compelling it to cease hostilities or render its military incapable of further aggression,” Dempsey wrote.

The US supports China’s rise and encourages Beijing to become a partner for greater international security, the document said.

“However, China’s actions are adding tension to the Asia-Pacific region and its claims to nearly the entire South China Sea are inconsistent with international law,” Dempsey wrote, adding that the international community continues to call on China to settle such issues cooperatively and without coercion.

“China has responded with aggressive land reclamation efforts that will allow it to position military forces astride vital international sea lanes,” Dempsey wrote.

Over all, global disorder has significantly increased, while some of the US’ military advantage has begun to erode, Dempsey wrote.

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“Future conflicts will come more rapidly, last longer and take place on a much more technically challenging battlefield,” the document said.

The document describes how the US would employ its military to protect and advance its interests.

Dempsey said that the US is more likely to face prolonged campaigns than conflicts that are resolved quickly, and that control of escalation is becoming more difficult and more important.

The US continues to invest in a substantial military-to-military relationship with China while urging it to settle disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law, he wrote.

“The US is the world’s strongest nation, enjoying unique advantages in technology, energy, alliances and partnerships, and demographics,” Dempsey wrote.

However, these advantages are being challenged.

“Attacks on our communications and sensing systems could occur with little or no warning, impacting our ability to assess, coordinate, communicate and respond,” he said.

Dempsey said the probability of US involvement in interstate war with a major power is low, but growing.

“Should one occur, the consequences would be immense,” the document said.

The presence of US military forces in key locations around the world underpins the international order and provides opportunities to engage with other countries while positioning forces to respond to crises, the document said.

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“Therefore, we will press forward with the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, placing our most advanced capabilities and greater capacity in that vital theater,” Dempsey said.

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