

Evening conference

16 May 2024

17:00-18:30



ROYAL HIGHER
INSTITUTE
for DEFENCE

Is Taiwan Defendable? A Critical Look at the U.S.-Japan Alliance and What Needs to be Done

Dr Robert D. Eldridge (Visiting Fellow, Tamkang University, Taiwan)

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** organised on **Thursday 16 May 2024** from **17:00 until 18:30** by the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence**.

The Taiwan Strait is one of the most strategic and militarised areas in the world and, in the event of armed conflict, it would become the epicentre of a gigantic clash that would not only dwarf the current major confrontations in other regions, but also affect them greatly. Which makes us wonder: what awaits us on Taiwan's thundering horizon?

While vital interests are at stake, the international order and the Indo-Pacific balance of power have drastically been shifting in recent years, with dramatic consequences. In this context, nearly unchallenged assumptions are increasingly misguided. Mainland China, despite its perceived rise, continues to be dangerously misunderstood and underestimated in its motives, resolution, strategy and capacities. From their bases scattered throughout the ocean, the United States remains convinced that it is the dominating power, but it finds itself in an endangered global posture with dwindling and overstretched forces no longer able to fend off a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. The "lawfare" over Taiwan's identity and sovereignty traps the US in an ambiguous and disabling doctrine of the "one-China policy", yet also of continued strategic support to Taiwan, an essential allied stronghold. Distances, geography and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) assets are additional daunting challenges. Moreover, a war between China and the US could start with Taiwan, but would undoubtedly not end there and inevitably spread further in the region.

Based on decades of utmost relevant experiences across Asia-Pacific in academic and governmental circles, meticulous studies, countless publications and deep insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Taiwan, the US-Japan alliance and US forward-deployed forces, Dr Robert Eldridge will critically examine the facts, measure the range of consequences and evaluate the security of the island and its needs.

This conference will take place **in English** on **Thursday 16 May 2024 at 17:00 in the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**). A simultaneous interpretation in Dutch and French will be provided in the conference room. It will not be possible to follow the conference online. However, subject to the consent of the speaker, a recording of his presentation will be made available afterwards on our website.

We thank you in advance for registering via the following link: www.defence-institute.be. **Registration by Monday 13 May 2024 at the latest is compulsory.**

(Signed)

Filip BORREMANS, MSc Eng

Air Force Major General

Director-General

Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16:30	Welcome
17:00	Conference and Q&A
18:30 – 19:30	Reception