China tests new amphibious landing tactics in exercises near Taiwan

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The tracked vehicles are designed to transport troops and provide fire support during amphibious operations.

Civilian vessels join weeks of exercises testing new options for a potential Taiwan invasion.

China tests new landing methods

Satellite images have revealed that China has been conducting amphibious landing drills for weeks, testing new methods in the process. The exercises were first spotted on 1 November and are reportedly taking place in Dacheng Bay in the south-eastern province of Fijian, which lies opposite the Taiwanese coast. In addition to Chinese navy ships and landing craft, eight civilian vessels were also involved. The exercises included practising the construction of a floating bridge to facilitate the landing of heavy

equipment. The training is aimed at the First Island Chain and, in particular, Taiwan, which China regards as part of its own territory. It would provide the Chinese armed forces with additional landing options in the event of an invasion.

Military signalling ahead of Taiwan's elections

These exercises form part of the ongoing Chinese drills, which are increasingly focused on preparing for a potential invasion of Taiwan and countering the involvement of American forces. The participation of civilian vessels is also becoming more frequent, demonstrating that China is integrating its extensive commercial shipping industry into military operations. This offers flexible logistical solutions and could help overcome limitations in its amphibious transport capabilities. The timing of these exercises, taking place ahead of and possibly during the Taiwanese mayoral and county chief elections, is particularly significant. The frontrunner for the office of mayor in Taipei is wanted by the Chinese police on charges of separatism. Attempts to exert political influence on Taiwan's domestic affairs are nothing new. However, the increasingly explicit nature of China's military signalling raises questions about how far Beijing is prepared to go in translating the lessons learned from these exercises into operational capabilities.