

## ABSTRACT

Over the last four decades, the People's Republic of China has modernized its armed forces and acquired the world's largest and most diverse missile arsenal. In light of Beijing's vague yet increasingly assertive stance in the region, China's A2/AD capabilities have sparked a discussion about their offensive potential and threat to the region's stability. This thesis has conducted a qualitative strategic impact of Chinese anti-access and area-denial capabilities on the offence-defence balance in East Asia. Applying Biddle's revised offence-defence theory, this thesis investigated and compared the Sino-American and Sino-Japanese balances. The analyses found that Chinese A2/AD capabilities do not have a uniform impact on the offence-defence balance in the region. Despite its offensive potential, Chinese A2/AD does not provide an effective, sustainable counter to Japan's deep, reserve-oriented force employment strategy. Even though China fields the world's largest fleet, it does not field enough principal surface ships to exploit a temporary offensive advantage. As such, any Chinese attempt to claim the Senkakus would result in a Chinese naval overstretch and create a mutually contested *no man's land* in the East China Sea. As for the Sino-American balance, Chinese A2/AD creates an offensive-favourable balance since its far-reaching and layered anti-access arsenal could credibly deny forward-based US strike forces operational freedom and threaten supply lines throughout the Pacific. Metaphorically speaking, Chinese A2/AD forms a 'dome' under which the PLA can act offensively with the limited threat of US intervention – most notably in Taiwan.

## **KEYWORDS**

A2/AD, China, United States, Japan, Offence-Defence Balance, East Asia, Strategy

## **TITLE**

What is the Strategic Impact of Chinese Anti-Access and Area-Denial Capabilities on the Offence-Defence Balance in East Asia? A Comparative Case Study of the United States and Japan

## **NÁZEV PRÁCE**

Jaký je strategický dopad čínských A2/AD schopností na ofensivní/defensivní potenciál ve východní Asii? Komparativní případová studie USA a Japonska