



Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan

燃燒的西太平洋

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BFT2.0 Translator: Yiyi and Michelle Kuo

The first graphic novel in Taiwan set against the backdrop of the Taiwan Strait Crisis, this work presents a fictional story rooted in real-world scenarios. The author's military background lends authenticity to the narrative, making it both compelling and highly relevant. *Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan* provides insights from multiple perspectives on Taiwan's current challenges, including facing a formidable adversary and navigating shifting geopolitical dynamics.

Since its release on December 20, 2023, it has topped sales charts for nearly two months, sparking widespread discussions and curiosity among readers. Its appeal extends to a diverse audience, attracting not only manga and military enthusiasts but also a significant number of female readers, all captivated by its engaging content.



Shao-Hsien Liang

Shao-Hsien Liang's *Gate of Heaven* was selected for the Taiwan Pavilion's Featured Books Section at both the 2019 Frankfurt Book Fair and the Guadalajara International Book Fair. This series has a planned total of six volumes, with three volumes already published.

If War Breaks Out Between China and Taiwan: An Interview with the Author

What was the most difficult part of production?

The most challenging aspect was data collection. Although information is readily available online, much of it is riddled with errors or even deliberately misleading content. Additionally, production time was extremely limited, as readers closely followed the latest plot developments, meaning each chapter had to be completed under significant time pressure.

Another difficulty was balancing realism with imagination. Depicting battlefield decisions with complete realism would have made the scenes quite dull. In actual combat, communication is filled with code words and technical jargon. Screens display stacking symbols, changing colors, and fluctuating numbers, leaving operators uncertain if a target was hit or missed without extensive waiting and confirmation. The battlefield essentially becomes mathematical formulas and

abstract symbols on a screen. Not only would this be hard for readers to follow, but it would also be difficult for the author to illustrate effectively.

Is there a message this manga wants to convey to readers?

This question is quite challenging to answer, as the manga delves into many themes. On a surface level, the military aspects provide a form of military science education or logical reasoning, albeit with some exaggerated elements typical of manga.

On a deeper level, the story examines the relationships between groups and individuals, essentially exploring values. For example, Yuan Chang's conversation with Guangzhi at the end of the first chapter may seem like a simple concern about things spiraling out of control. However, it reflects a deeper discussion about the conflict between collective and individual values—the relationship between

the country and the individual.

When leaders aim to cement their historical legacy through grand goals like national rejuvenation or supremacy, and such progress demands sacrifices from the people, is it justified? Is it worth trading broken families and lost lives for the pursuit of a so-called golden age like those of the Han or Tang dynasties? Historical accounts of figures like Emperor Taizong or Emperor Qianlong often highlight their achievements and military victories, but the stories of soldiers who never returned or the common people crushed by taxes are left untold.

This exploration of values also appears in the street interviews in chapter two. Some characters hope for liberation by the motherland, others dream of independence but want it without effort, while some just want to enjoy life without concern. These are not presented as right or wrong but as reflections of diverse personal value systems.

A similar theme is present in the diplomatic dialogue between Li Jinhua and former U.S. military between Li Jinhua and Myer, a former U.S. military general. Their conversation shows that being devoted to things worth protecting is also a profound expression of values.

I heard that many events in the manga later happened in real life. Is that true?

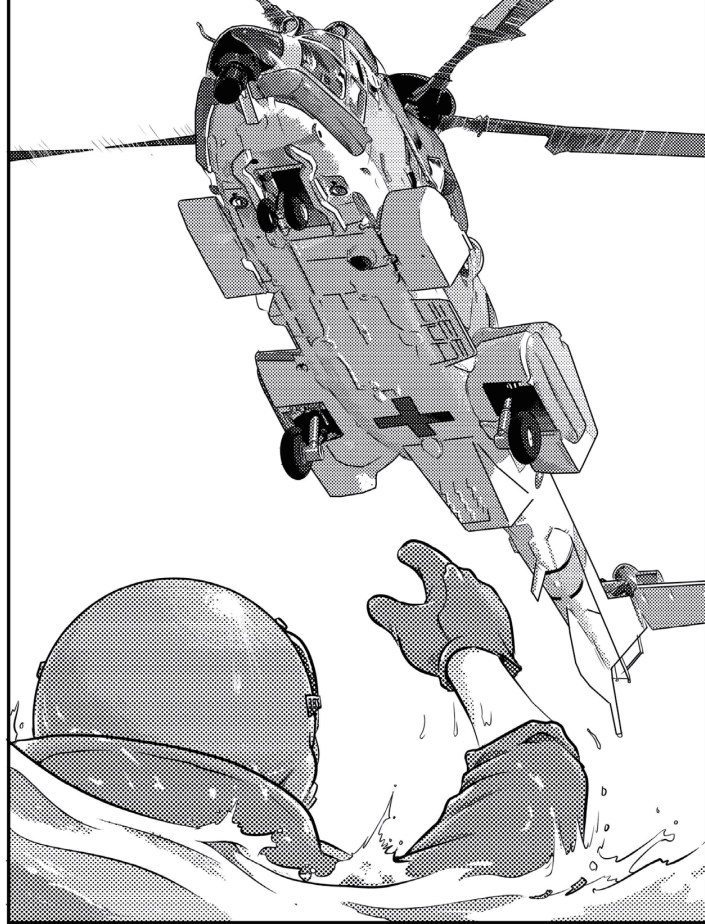
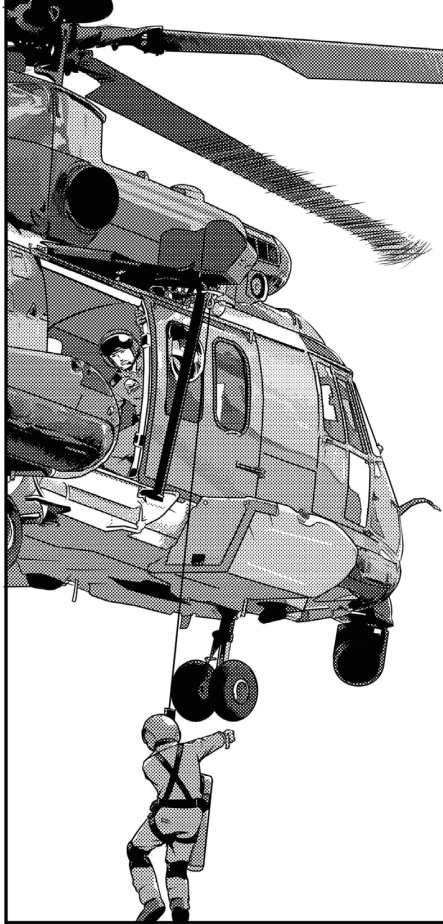
Those were just coincidental predictions

and judgments. War itself is never a good thing. The most moving and compelling war narratives are those that depict both the light and dark sides of human nature during conflict, showcasing war's cruelty and futility.

When attempting to create a quality war story, it's natural to lean toward an anti-war perspective, but this approach comes with its own challenges. Taiwan is in a relatively passive position, often portrayed as being on the receiving end of conflict. Since most readers are raised in Taiwan, promoting anti-war messages could be misconstrued as advocating for surrender or weakness. Combined with differences in ethnic and national identity, any depiction of such sensitive issues, no matter how rational, is bound to displease extremists on both sides.

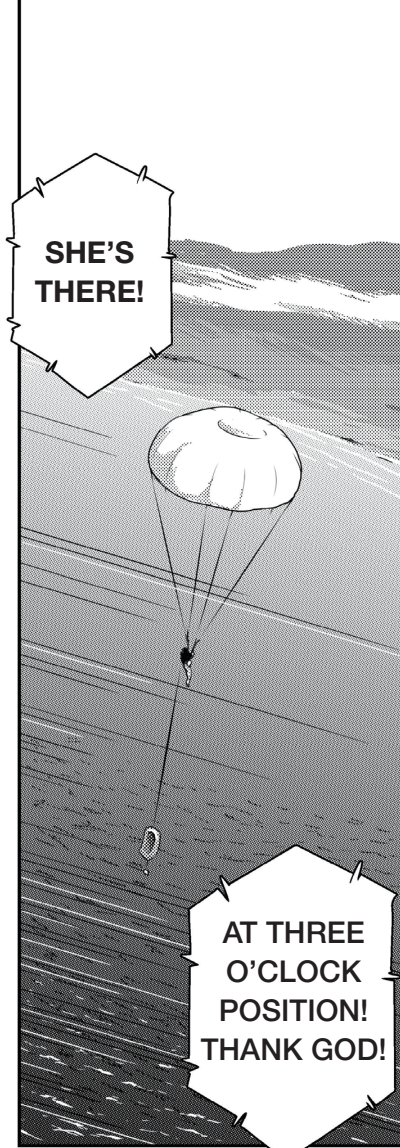
However, this complexity actually enhances creativity. When crafting a story, there's no need to appease these extremes. Instead, imagination can be used to speculate on what might happen if war broke out in a parallel world. Taiwan's relatively free creative environment allows bold predictions and simulations of various scenarios. It's true that some events from the manga have indeed mirrored real-world occurrences, but these are purely coincidental.

This afterword has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.



PILOT
RESCUED!
CONDITION
GOOD!

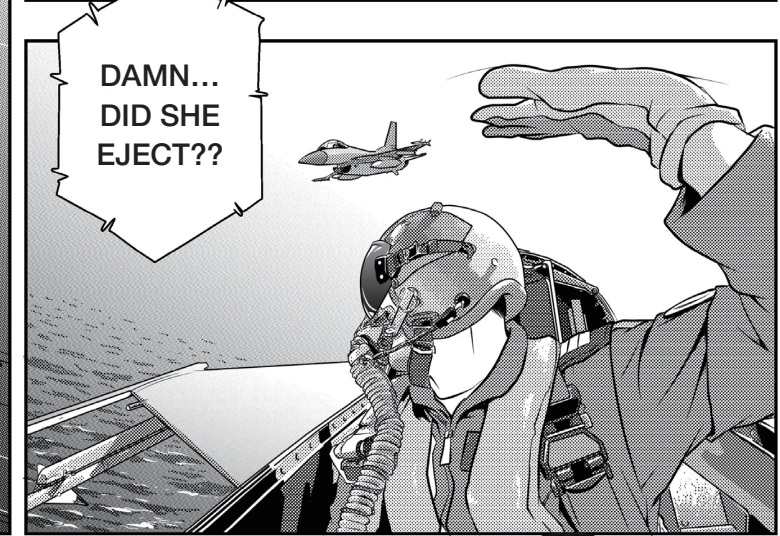
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THERE!



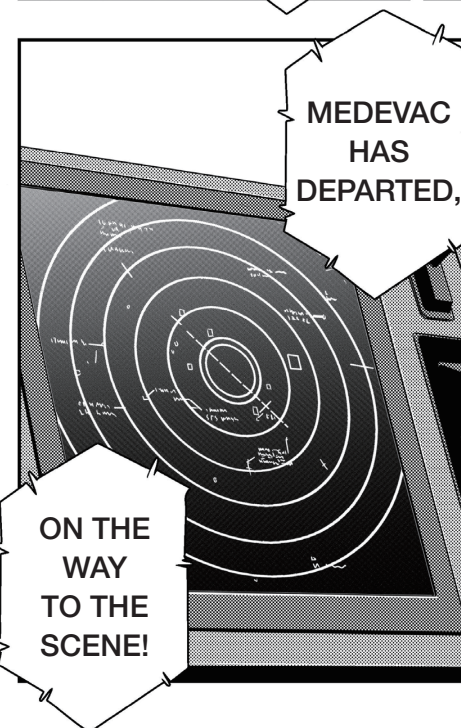
AT THREE
O'CLOCK
POSITION!
THANK GOD!



VALKYRIE...
JIN HUA...
HAS BEEN
SHOT DOWN!



DAMN...
DID SHE
EJECT??

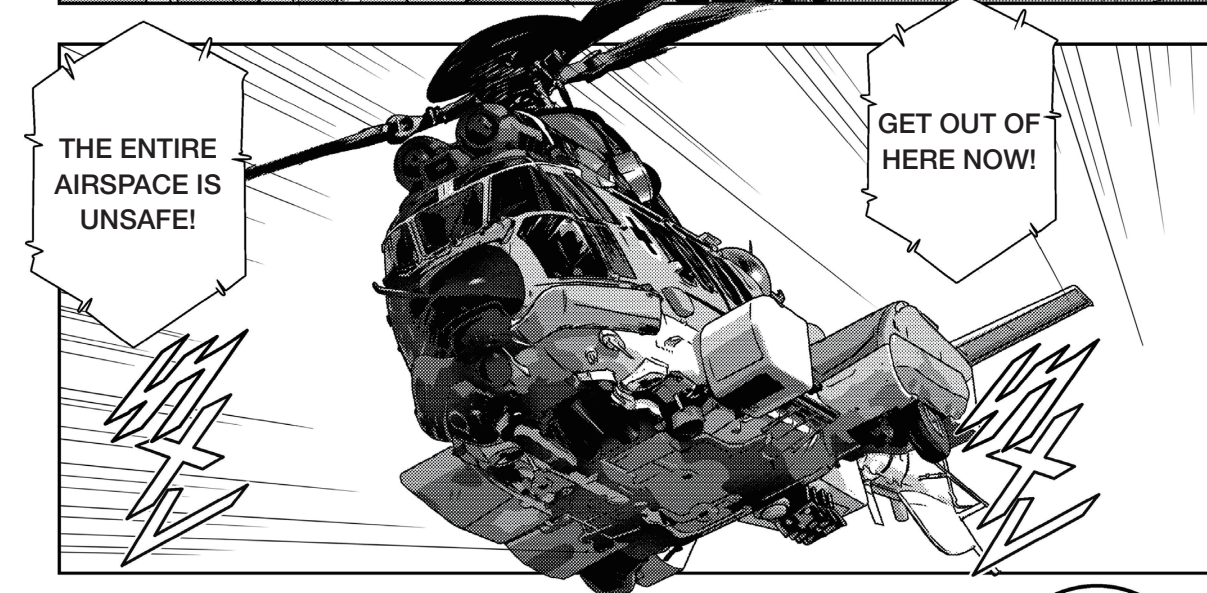
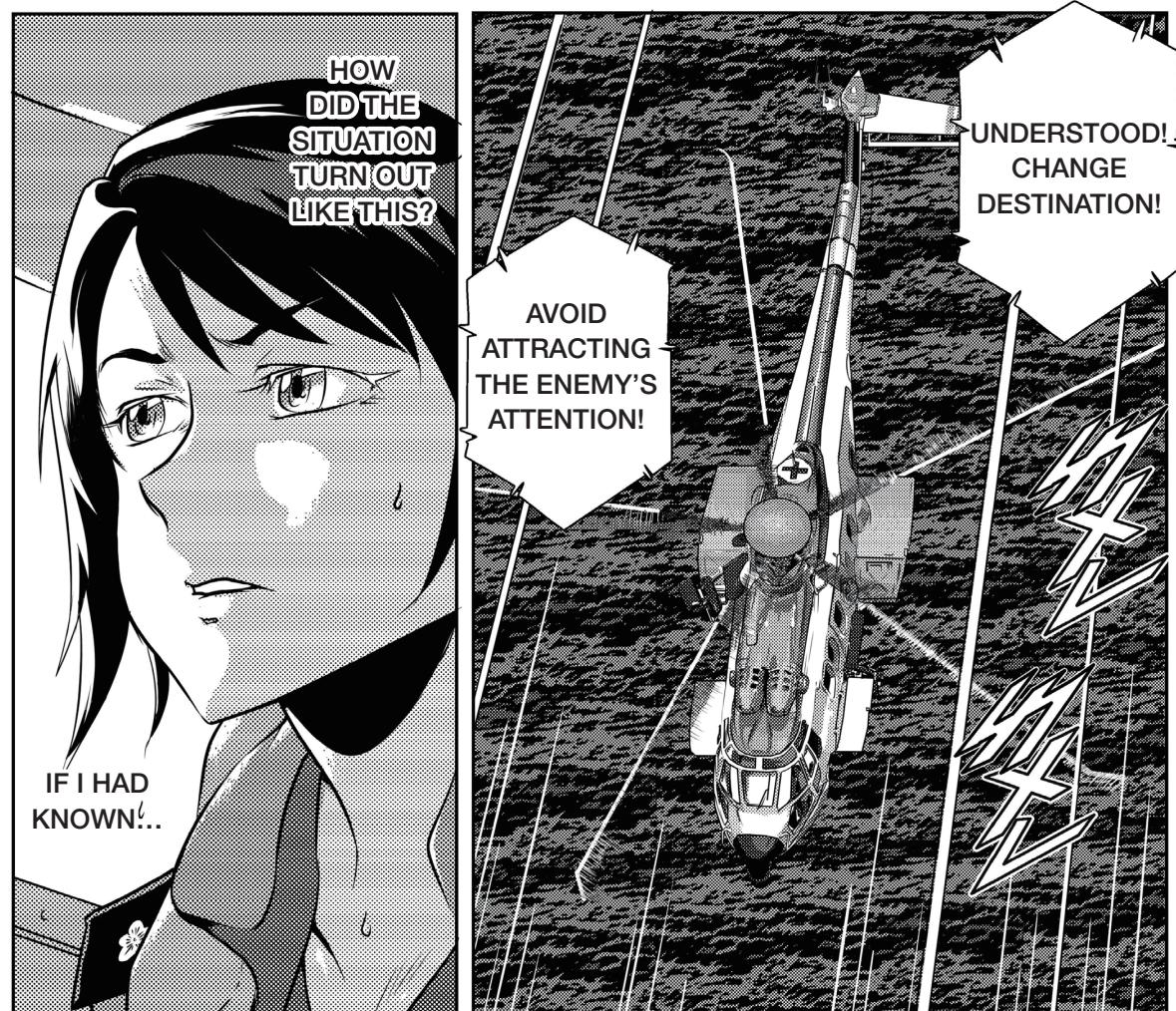


MEDEVAC
HAS
DEPARTED,

ON THE
WAY
TO THE
SCENE!



F16 OF JIA
SHAN HAS
BEEN SHOT
DOWN!



... THE SITUATION
WOULDN'T HAVE
ESCALATED TO THIS
DEGREE.

IF I COULD HAVE
STOPPED IT BACK
THEN...

ACT-1 THE THUCYDIDES TRAP

