CHAPTER 4

Crisis Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait*

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Despite the warming of Chinese-American relations, the Taiwan Strait remains a potential flash point between the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.)[1] and the United States.[2] Although Taiwan is only one aspect of the complex relationship between the United States and China, it remains the most volatile part. The U.S. *National Defense Strategy* for 2008 describes China as an ascendant state with the potential for competing with the United States. It continues to modernize and develop military capabilities, primarily focused on a Taiwan Strait conflict and is developing technologies to disrupt traditional American advantages.[3]

A recent report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies concluded, "Unless China renounces the use of force as a possible avenue for reunification, the possibility of conflict with China over Taiwan will remain a central feature in American contingency planning."[4] Similarly, in 2001, a Chinese official described Taiwan as the most sensitive issue in Sino-American relations.[5]

These somber conclusions reflect the overwhelming view of American and Chinese specialists in Sino-American relations. More broadly, "the challenge presented by a rising China is the principal issue facing American policy."[6] Denny Roy puts this into regional perspective: "Taiwan's security problem is Asia's security problem: cross-Strait conflict would disrupt regional trade and force other Asian states to side with or against the People's Republic of China. Taiwan's security problem is also America's: one likely consequence of such a conflict would be

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unambiguous Chinese opposition to, and corresponding action against, the U.S. military presence in Asia."[7]

The challenge facing the U.S. is to convince both the P.R.C. and Taiwan to refrain from precipitous action toward unification and independence respectively. This will be much less difficult with respect to Taiwan than the P.R.C. Roy explains the situation with regard to the P.R.C. thus: "Taiwan remains the substance of a classic security dilemma between China and the United States: one country sees its own actions as justifiably self-defensive, but these same actions appear aggressive to another country. Beijing views itself as trying to preserve the status quo and Chinese national territory … against the threats of [Taiwanese] separatism and U.S. intervention to prevent unification. In America's view, however, China is a large authoritarian country menacing a small democratic polity and trying to change the status quo by building up a military imbalance in China's favor."[8]

For almost 60 years, the American policy of strategic ambiguity has successfully prevented a major conflict. Domestic developments in both the P.R.C. and Taiwan require all three parties to reevaluate their policies. The continued success of American deterrence has become questionable. The stated American position that resolution of the conflict, whatever the result, must be by peaceful means appears increasingly unlikely and does not adequately address U.S. interest in the region. That the U.S. can delay Chinese actions is almost certain; that it can indefinitely deter China is unlikely.[9]

This study considers the Taiwan situation in terms of deterrence theory and its application across cultures to see under what conditions the P.R.C. might be convinced not to use force to resolve the Taiwan situation to its satisfaction. This study also examines the perceptions and misperception of each of the parties involved; their interests, capabilities and possible intentions; and how the P.R.C. intends to deter U.S. intervention in the Taiwan Strait.

An examination of the options available to each party concludes by suggesting likely courses of action and ways to increase the likelihood of successful U.S. deterrence in the Taiwan Strait. There is no presumption China will soon become a peer competitor to the United States. Chinese decision-making and actions regarding Taiwan will be driven by what the P.R.C. – but not necessarily other nations – views as domestic concerns.

Unlikely to defeat the U.S. in a direct military confrontation in the near term, China seeks to develop "niche weapons" and strategies that would make U.S. intervention too difficult or too costly, especially anti-access and area denial measures. Cliff notes, however, as serious as the threat is, the U.S. can do much to lessen it.[10]

The complexity of the Taiwan Strait situation suggests any future American attempt at crisis deterrence will be exceedingly difficult, and long-term success is unlikely unless at least one party to the conflict makes significant concessions to the others. The tangled relationship involves a combination of deterrence and coercive diplomacy. As the U.S. seeks to deter Chinese military action and Taiwanese provocation, the P.R.C. seeks to deter U.S. intervention and formal Taiwanese independence.

A dangerous aspect of the relationship is the confrontation between an inconsistent U.S. policy regarding Taiwan and the P.R.C., and a P.R.C. that exhibits simultaneous characteristics of paranoia, entitlement, victimization and arrogance arising out of its history. The paranoia leads China to view all actions of potential adversaries as directed primarily against China. Its historical self-image as the paramount state in Asia causes China to view the behavior of regional rivals, the U.S. and Japan, as intended to weaken or marginalize China and deny its rightful place in the international community.[11]

The complexity of China's self-image can be seen in its simultaneous expectation of receiving the prestige and authority of a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with the right to a decisive say on events in Asia, the expectation of the preferential treatment given to developing nations, and opposition to any modification of the U. N. Charter to give Japan a permanent Security Council seat because this would dilute Chinese primacy as the spokesman for Asian interests.

Both the U.S. and the P.R.C. see themselves as occupying the moral high ground in their international dealings.[12] This makes compromise and communication difficult because each presumes it is in the right while the other acts wrongfully and must be brought around to its way of thinking. This moral self-image is deeply ingrained in both Chinese and American culture.

The most desirable outcome would be for China to transform into a pluralistic, democratic society where Taiwan could be accommodated and feel comfortable, but not necessarily required to integrate politically with the Mainland. This is highly unlikely in the short-term, so the U.S. needs to plan now for alternatives. This study explores a range of alternative courses of action with the intent that good crisis management will make a long-term peaceful solution possible.

History of the Conflict

Without a sense of the post-World War II history of the region, nothing else about its potential for crisis makes sense. Historically, Taiwan's relationship to the mainland was tenuous, but Japan claimed the island after defeating China in 1895. After World War II, the island was returned to China, and the Chinese Nationalists fled there after their defeat in the Chinese civil war. Although the Chinese Communists had expressed little interest in Taiwan previously, the island now became a symbol of the incompleteness of the communist victory in the civil war. Plans to invade the island were stymied by U.S. actions at the outbreak of the Korean War.

Thus, since 1950, the Taiwan Strait has been a source of international tension. After the warming of U.S.-P.R.C. relations, China seemed willing to live with the status quo for decades. Taiwan's move to democratic government since 1987, however, renewed earlier tensions. Democracy seemed to imply a move toward *formal* independence and a denial of the one-China policy that both the P.R.C. and the Chinese Nationalists had affirmed since 1949. This led to military confrontation between the P.R.C. and the U.S. in 1995-96 and periods of tension during the summer of 1999 and in early 2000.

Repeated conflict in the Taiwan Strait during the past 60 years has resulted in a variety of mutual perceptions and misperceptions on the part of each of the parties involved. China and Taiwan have images of each other that do not adequately reflect their history and aspirations. The P.R.C. ignores that Taiwan has had a separate history and developmental path for more than a century.

Both the P.R.C. and the U.S. view each other through the lens of their participation in conflicts going back to the Korean War. Some of

these perceptions are well grounded, but others are simply wrong. Both lack of understanding and misunderstanding can spark a new Taiwan Strait crisis as easily as can irreconcilable national interests.

A residue of bitterness remains among Chinese leaders toward the U.S. dating back to the Chinese civil war, when the U.S. sided with the Chinese Nationalists.[13] This distrust prompted P.R.C. intervention in the Korean War. Believing war with the U.S. was inevitable, P.R.C. leaders decided their best hope lay in choosing the time and place for that war.[14]

Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Relations

Wars result most often from real conflicts of national interest. They may also, and too often do, arise from misunderstandings and misperceptions between nations. John Stoessinger considers misperception the most important single precipitating factor in the outbreak of war.[15] Misunderstanding and misperception often exacerbate the clash of national interests. The situation becomes more complicated when adversaries have different cultural backgrounds and different histories, as do China and the U.S.

This does not mean there is no conflict of national interest. For China, the U.S., Taiwan and even Japan, the resolution of Taiwan's international status involves important, even vital, national interests. Probably the most dangerous misunderstanding is the belief, prevalent in both the U.S. and China, that the U.S. has no significant national interest at stake. Therefore, it is imperative that U.S. political leaders define and explain, both to the American public and Chinese decision-makers, its interests, why they are important, and to what extent the U.S. is prepared to defend them.

What could possibly be so important about Taiwan that U.S. leaders should speak and act as forcefully as they have on several occasions? The U.S. has a legal commitment under the Taiwan Relations Act to support Taiwan in defending itself against forcible integration into China; it also has a moral obligation going back more than half a century to provide for Taiwan's defense. This moral obligation has only increased in the two decades since Taiwan has taken the path of democracy.

American failure to keep its word to Taiwan would cause regional allies to doubt U.S. commitment to them.

In Japan's case, this could lead to rearmament and even development of a nuclear capability backed up by a missile-delivery system. This would be in no one's interest, least of all China's. Finally, "a China that is conventionally predominant along the East Asian littoral could pose a direct, difficult, broad and enduring challenge to the U.S. position as guarantor of regional stability and security, a challenge that could extend well beyond Taiwan."[16] Some who do not consider Taiwan's democratic society, the security of Japan, and the credibility of U.S. commitments as vital interests, still view conflict in the Taiwan Strait as a danger to the peace and stability of the region, which does constitute a vital American interest.[17] In any case, what happens in the Taiwan Strait concerns the United States, and it needs to understand and proclaim this interest.

In the Taiwan Strait case, the problem of misperception and misunderstanding includes a difference of cultures and for the U.S. disagreement about what constitutes the relevant Chinese culture. Alistair Iain Johnston has challenged the conventional wisdom about China by suggesting modern Chinese strategic thinking is not simply a repetition of the ancient classics such as Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. Instead, China's strategic culture resembles much more the hard *realpolitik* of western international relations theory albeit with a greater potential for flexibility.[18]

Johnston found the P.R.C. has been much less reluctant to use force in strategic concerns involving territory than have other major powers.[19] This contrasts with the Chinese image (which is promoted by the P.R.C.) of China as a gentle Confucian nation that must be sorely provoked before it will resort to force. Andrew Scobell has taken this a step further in suggesting China has a dualistic strategic culture comprising Confucian-Mencian and Realpolitik elements which he calls a "Cult of Defense."[20] In practice, this means "Chinese elites believe strongly that their country's strategic tradition is pacifist, non-expansionist, and purely defensive but at the same time able to justify virtually any use of force – including offensive and preemptive strikes – as defensive in nature."[21]

Which interpretation is correct makes a difference in how the U.S. should approach the possibility of conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Chinese misperceptions of the world around it are affected by its history of xenophobia, a sense of having been humiliated by the West and Japan, a measure of paranoia, and a sense of moral and cultural superiority (which is not unique to China). No matter which interpretation of Chinese strategic culture is correct, domestic concerns will always influence how it operates in specific situations (especially Taiwan).

Misperceptions come in several varieties. The one that comes most naturally to mind is when the other party incorrectly interprets what *we* have said or done. No less serious, although much more difficult for us to understand, is the misperception where we communicate with the other party in ways it cannot understand or finds unconvincing because we do not see that party as it really is. This happens when we fail to understand the other party's culture and history, when our actions and words appear to conflict, or when our message seems unbelievable. The second kind of misperception frequently leads to the first kind. A third kind of misperception involves how each party sees itself. Few nations see themselves as others see them, yet most are prone to believe everyone else sees them as they see themselves. Each of these forms of misperception has occurred more than once in the century and a half relationship between China and the United States – the 1949 communist revolution in China only made it more acute.

Those unfamiliar with their adversary's culture often presume their adversary looks at the world and at the issues being contested in the same way they do.[22] They tend to project their own cultural values and historical experiences on to their adversary. In a conflict situation, this means each side misjudges the price its adversary is willing to pay, the suffering it is willing to endure, and what constitutes a compelling deterrent or reward to that adversary. They have difficulty seeing how their actions will affect their adversary domestically,[23] regionally and internationally. They also believe their own actions are as transparent to their adversary as to themselves and do not understand why their adversary would look for a hidden agenda. They forget people see what they expect to see and interpret the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. This means they interpret our actions in terms of their expectation, not our

intention. People also are prone to see as intentional what in reality is an accidental, unintended consequence or is just plain muddling through.[24]

Neither the U.S. nor China has considered sufficiently how the other country views it in terms of their relationship over the past 150 years. Each country knows what the other has done to it, but thinks much less about what it has done or what the other thinks it has done to the other country. Each sees itself in terms of its intentions and interests – which it puts in the best light – not the other country's perceptions and experience of it.[25] This does not mean we need to agree with the other country's actions or beliefs, only that it is essential we try to understand the other country on its terms.[26] Then we can predict better how it will interpret and respond to our words and actions and craft our messages in a way more likely to be understood by the Chinese in the way we intend them to be understood.

There are at least four areas of mutual misperception whose correction is necessary for peace in the Taiwan Strait. Although their revision will not remove the conflict of national interests involved, it will enable us to see that conflict more clearly. These areas are the nature of the national interest involved, the level of commitment to that interest, the governmental decision-making process, and the attitudes that drive each nation's international behavior. American China watchers and Chinese America watchers now have a good sense of the other nation in each of these areas, but they appear to have had less success in communicating this to their national leadership. Due to the nature of the regime, the problem is greater on the part of Chinese leaders. Correcting these misperceptions and misunderstandings is difficult because people tend to see what they want to see, especially when they have made an investment in that conclusion.

Chinese leaders appear not to understand how the U.S. government is organized and how it makes policy. They do not appear to understand the balance of power among the branches of government, particularly the limits to presidential authority. They also have a hard time understanding American idealism and a political system so complex even the president cannot ignore special interests.[27] Thus, Chinese leaders do not understand the Taiwan Relations Act directs American policy despite the communiqués signed by American presidents and Chinese leaders.

One Chinese analyst complained, "Many Chinese analysts don't understand the domestic political and bureaucratic motivations" underlying U.S. policy. They see a coherent, hostile, anti-China strategy, not a series of ad hoc decisions made in response to competing interests.[28] They may also misinterpret the open debate in the U.S. media as expressions of U.S. government policy, particularly the hostile portion. This could lead China into precipitous action in response to what it sees as hostile U.S. intent. Additionally, Chinese leaders appear not to fully appreciate the influence of public opinion on American foreign policy.[29] Swaine notes that China has repeatedly been unable to correctly predict U.S. responses to its military initiatives.[30]

Possibly the most dangerous Chinese misperception is the oft-stated belief the United States lacks the political will to fight. This derives from the U.S. interventions in Somalia and Haiti during the 1990s. China's perception is eerily reminiscent of Japanese leaders in 1941, who believed a devastating surprise attack against U.S. forces would destroy the American will to fight without regard to American capacity to ultimately defeat Japan. This is, however, a flawed reading of American history and ignores those wars where the U.S. was prepared to sustain heavy casualties.

Richard Halloran comments on this misperception. "A careful reading of U.S. history in the 20th century… shows that Americans will fight for causes they understand to be vital to their principles or national interest."[31] Richard Sobol agrees the American public will make sacrifices when its leaders explain the cost and benefit of a policy to them.[32] Should China act on the basis of this misperception, it risks unleashing what some have called the American "crusade mentality." China likewise views Taiwan as a "soft" society where people would sooner flee overseas than fight to defend their island.[33]

This means China views the American will to fight as our weakest link. So it will threaten casualties in an effort to break that will early in any confrontation. One scenario would have China sink a U.S. aircraft carrier. The most powerful threat would be one that placed the continental U.S. at risk.

One serious American misunderstanding of China involves the matter of "face." The U.S. does not appreciate the impact of its behavior on China's sense of public honor. Given the disparity between the two

nations' military powers, this can be serious. In 1996, the U.S. was slow to appreciate that the Chinese missile tests and war games required some reaction from the United States. When that reaction finally came, it signaled clearly and overpoweringly the U.S. was still supreme in Asian waters. One well-publicized deployment of a carrier battle group and a firm public diplomatic warning would have sufficed. Two carrier battle groups was overkill and a public humiliation administered to the P.R.C. leadership. Chinese military leaders have vowed this will never happen again.

Another problem lies in the different ways the U.S. and China perceive their own and the other's actions. For example, the U.S. tends to separate the military and political in such a way it often ignores the political implications of its military actions. China, however, sees political implications behind every military decision (even when none is intended).[34] In part, this may result from the different relationship that exists between civilians and the military in American and Chinese society, but there is also a cultural element. Where the U.S. mandates a clear separation and subordination of the military to the civilian, China has emphasized a close inter-relationship between the two.[35]

Chinese have described the most dangerous American misperception as our failure to understand the seriousness of their intent to regain Taiwan. This leads the United States to interpret Chinese warnings as "mere rhetoric," to conclude China is bluffing, and to underestimate the price China is willing to pay to achieve its aim. It also leads American policymakers to conclude if China has no reasonable hope of victory, it would not use force against Taiwan because "people don't start wars they expect to lose." Chinese leaders respond that, quite to the contrary, Taiwan is such a serious matter of regime legitimacy that any government would sooner fight a war it knows it would lose than allow Taiwan to go its own way unchallenged.[36]

Chinese have stated repeatedly no cost is too great if the issue is political control of Taiwan. In 2001, a People's Liberation Army (PLA) colonel told a group of visiting American academics China is willing to suffer a 20-year or 30-year setback to its economy in order to gain control of Taiwan.[37] The flip side of this American misperception is China's failure to recognize the U.S. may have interests related to the status of Taiwan it considers no less important than China's.[38]

Another crucial difference seems to lie in how the U.S. and China understand victory. For the U.S., victory is measured in military terms. For China, the political and psychological (and moral) are at least as important. The U.S. should have learned this from the Vietnam War.

China, with its fundamentally *realpolitik* approach to international relations, does not understand American foreign policy is an often inconsistent blend of realism, idealism, naiveté and ad hoc solutions. Instead, it sees American behavior as carefully thought out, devious and always directed toward some strategic interest.[39] Thus, it was incomprehensible to the Chinese the U.S. could have bombed their embassy in Belgrade by accident. Likewise, U.S. humanitarian intervention must have an ulterior motive. China described NATO intervention in Kosovo as a warm up for intervention in China's domestic affairs.[40]

The second aspect of China's *realpolitik* approach is its belief the costs to the U.S. of challenging China over Taiwan so outweigh any possible gain as to make such a challenge unlikely.[41] Nonetheless, Chinese America-watchers believe the U.S. will intervene in any military confrontation the P.R.C. initiates against Taiwan, although China seeks to influence American behavior so as to avoid a confrontation.[42]

China's fixation on Japan is the one great exception to its realist approach, but given the recent history between the two countries, it is understandable and not unique to China. Nonetheless, China has an exaggerated picture of Japanese interest and involvement in the Taiwan area and invariably interprets Japanese actions alone and in conjunction with the United States as threats to Chinese interests and sovereignty. At the same time, it is unable to understand how Japan can interpret threatening Chinese behavior negatively. This reflects a pattern where China's focus on bilateral relations prevents it from seeing how its actions appear to other nations. The 1996 missile firings near Taiwan's ports are an example of this. China was shocked that countries around the world reacted unfavorably to China's coercive diplomacy. It had expected they would ignore its effort to punish Taiwan.[43]

Closely associated with this is what Johnston calls Chinese leaders' failure to understand the security dilemma: "where a defensive action taken by one status quo actor is interpreted as threatening by another; the second actor then takes what it believes are defensive

counteractions that, in turn, are interpreted by the first actor [as threatening]."[44]

The Chinese, in particular, seem not to understand the unintended impact of their military actions on others and are prone to misinterpret their responses.[45] This was clear in 1997, when Chinese leaders described Japan's willingness to establish new security guidelines with the United States (apparently in response to China's actions against Taiwan) as part of a new U.S.-Japan conspiracy to prevent Chinese control of Taiwan.

A final misperception is China's failure to understand the history and perceptions of those living on Taiwan. P.R.C. leaders appear predisposed to view apparently innocuous actions and statements by Taiwan's leaders as covert moves toward independence. The result has been a Chinese loss of patience, setting of time and behavioral limits, and coercive actions.

Since the late 1980s, native-born Taiwanese have increasingly taken political control from the Mainlanders who arrived after World War II. Taiwanese public opinion now limits the options of the island's leaders, but China does not appear to understand or appreciate this (just as it discounts American public opinion). Taiwanese public opinion is overwhelmingly opposed to union with Mainland China. [46]

The 1996-1996 Crisis

The 1995-96 Crisis in the Strait shows how cumulative misperceptions and miscommunication can create and then exacerbate a crisis. The crisis is important because it led the P.R.C. to a reassessment of its military structure and doctrine to which the U.S. and Taiwan have not yet fully responded. The proximate cause of the crisis was Taiwan President Lee's visit to Cornell University, where he delivered a speech lauding the achievements of a democratic Taiwan.

China responded by staging missile tests in the sea off Taiwan's two main ports during July and August 1995. This was to show China's displeasure with U.S. actions and teach Taiwan a lesson, said Chinese spokespersons. The U.S. and other major states showed little response although the test areas endangered commercial shipping.

Both Taiwan and the U.S. ignored China's sensitivity about its sovereignty claims over Taiwan. China viewed Lee's trip as an attempt to gain international standing for an independent Taiwan. China's anger at American "duplicity" resulted from its inability to understand how the U.S. government works, especially the relationship between the executive and legislature. U.S. failure to respond vigorously to China's missile diplomacy led Beijing to believe the U.S. wouldn't get involved. This would come back to haunt both countries six months later.

In December 1995, China decided to use coercion to influence the outcome of Taiwan's presidential and legislative elections. This included military exercises and more missile tests. The tests were close enough to Taiwan's major ports to affect ship traffic and cause panic in Taipei's financial markets. This time, the U.S. dispatched two carrier battle groups to the scene. The Chinese were publicly outraged at what they saw as an American overreaction. China threatened war in order to avoid the need to go to war and expected the U.S. would understand. China was also publicly humiliated because it was obvious to all it could do nothing about the presence of the carriers.

On Taiwan, candidates favoring independence expressed their views without considering how China would respond. China considered coercion to be a matter solely between itself and Taiwan, somewhat like the relationship between the U.S. Government and Rhode Island. It misread the Clinton administration's previous inaction as signaling a lack of interest. China believed the U.S. would understand the missile tests and invasion exercises posed no immediate threat to Taiwan. It also believed Japan and other regional states would not interpret China's actions as potentially threatening even though many of them also had territorial disputes with the P.R.C. The United States waited too long after China announced its exercises to respond. Following the weak response to the first set of exercises, this delay signaled American indifference to Beijing.

When the U.S. did respond, it overreacted. The American response highlighted China's relative military weakness in contrast to American ability to operate in the area virtually unimpeded. China probably learned from this crisis the U.S. will respond forcefully should China attempt to use overt military force against Taiwan, but if China opts for a less confrontational approach, the U.S. will be unsure how and when to react.

While the crisis is over, the consequences are not. A series of basic misperceptions, and the actions and communications based on them, led to a crisis that could have resulted in war. Clearing away misperceptions and miscommunications is no guarantee the crisis would not have occurred, but it makes the possibility of crisis less likely and less serious.

As Scobell warns, P.R.C. behavior during the crisis offers four reasons for concern. It reminds us China is serious about using force to gain control of Taiwan if necessary. It warns China finds the possibility of a first strike against Taiwan attractive. It shows China's preference for using missiles against Taiwan, emphasizing China's deployment of these weapons and Taiwan's impotence against them. It also demonstrated a "dangerous lack of clear communications" between the U.S. and China. Although each thought the signals it sent were clear, the other side misinterpreted them.[47]

Interests

Each of the parties involved – China, Taiwan, the United States, even Japan – has important national interests at stake in the Taiwan Strait conflict. The situation is complicated because not every party recognizes the intensity or validity of the others' interests. China has expressed its interests in terms of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and the respect due a major state. A 2000 White Paper listed a number of basic interests including: desire for settlement of the Taiwan issue and reunification of China, affirmation Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, resolution of the Taiwan issue is an internal Chinese affair, desire for peaceful reunification, use of force is a last resort, no one must attempt to change Taiwan's status by referendum, and the U.S. must deal with China and Taiwan on the basis of the Three Communiqués of 1972, 1979 and 1982.[48] China's unstated interests are no less important. Chinese leaders fear if Taiwan becomes independent, this will encourage separatists in Tibet, Xinjiang and Mongolia. Taiwan also threatens the Chinese Communist regime because it offers a successful political alternative to the Mainland in a Chinese cultural setting.

To achieve what it views as its proper role as the paramount state in Asia, China needs to remove American power and presence from the region. It sees regaining Taiwan as essential to achieving this. China

believes the U.S. is a state in long-term decline.[49] When China talks about a multi-polar world, it appears to see itself as the preeminent (Asian) state in that world. The P.R.C. is more like the "Middle Kingdom" of Chinese history than a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist state. So, having discarded their Marxist ideology, China's communist leaders are increasingly dependent on the theme of national unification to legitimize their rule, as reflected in their playing the nationalism card in times of crisis.

Taiwan has no incentive to unite with the Mainland. It would prefer to remain free to continue its development as a democratic society and economically successful state. Anything China might interpret as a move toward independence would jeopardize everything Taiwan has gained because of the likelihood of war, but union would inhibit Taiwan's economic development and political freedom.

Taiwan desires international recognition and membership in international organizations commensurate with its democracy and economic power, but China opposes both and has been able to enforce this opposition through diplomatic and economic coercion.[50] Taiwan faces a conflict between promoting its status and survival. Taiwan has the greatest stake in maintaining the status quo, but its slow drift away from China presents the greatest threat to status quo – and the P.R.C. appears to understand this better than anyone else.[51]

The United States, consistent with its policy of strategic ambiguity, has been vague about its interests in the P.R.C.-Taiwan situation. The 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) said an American goal in the region is encouraging "continued reduction in tension between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan." Also, the U.S. "will encourage China to make choices that contribute to peace, security, and prosperity as its influence rises."[52] The previous NSS was similarly ambiguous but did define several kinds of U.S. interests. Although few would describe Taiwan itself as a vital national interest, it can be linked to vital interests. Taiwan's existence as a democratic society is the result of American encouragement, so U.S. acquiescence in any solution to the Taiwan Strait situation that ignores or rejects the views of Taiwan's population would be inconsistent with the stated American goal of supporting democracy around the world.

P.R.C. leaders appear convinced the U.S. is committed to Taiwan's security such that a P.R.C. attack on Taiwan would result in American

military intervention. Taiwan's leaders seem less confident.[53] American failure to act would cause allies in the region who have treaty commitments with the U.S. to reconsider those treaties.

Soon after passage of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), Sen. Jacob Javits explained his understanding of the TRA's impact on American commitments to Taiwan: "I was particularly concerned with other dangers which in fact seemed more realistic than an outright invasion from across the Strait. The language finally adopted … referred to U.S. concern for activities which jeopardized not only the security, but also 'the social and economic system, of the people on Taiwan.'"[54] Similarly, Ralph Clough describes Taiwan as an important economic partner that "has been linked to the United States for many years by a diverse and growing web of interrelationships."[55] Despite this history, it is important to remember U.S. and Taiwanese interests are not identical.[56]

The United States has at least three basic interests in how the Taiwan Strait situation is resolved. The United States has been a Pacific power for more than a century. For it to allow another state to dominate the East Asia-Pacific region contradicts not only current U.S. policy, but also American grand strategy since the late 1800s.[57] The United States has security commitments to several key East Asian and Pacific states. It also has a legal, and many would argue moral, obligation under the TRA to assist Taiwan in defending itself against forcible assimilation by the P.R.C. Regional states view the U.S.-Taiwan relationship as a significant commitment; the consequences of U.S. failure to support Taiwan would be more far reaching than the defeat of South Vietnam in 1975,[58] causing American allies in the region to rethink their relationship with the U.S.

It is unclear that the U.S. should find acceptable even a peaceful assimilation of Taiwan to the P.R.C. This would provide China with the technology the U.S. has given Taiwan, and that Taiwan has developed itself. It would also project P.R.C. military power eastward into the Pacific with naval and air bases on Taiwan controlling the sea lanes vital to the Japanese and South Korean economies. The U.S. also has a longstanding "soft" interest in encouraging and supporting democracy, and ignoring American idealism is not realistic.[59] Taiwan is an example of democratic transformation as the P.R.C. is not. Abandonment of Taiwan would contradict values enshrined in America's founding documents. So while the U.S. has stated an interest in the peaceful settlement of the conflict

between Taiwan and the P.R.C., this not necessarily reconcilable with other U.S. interests.

Japan also has interests in the situation. It wants to retain its relationship with the U.S. without antagonizing China. Any basing or logistical support for U.S. assistance to Taiwan could result in military retaliation and certainly in economic retaliation. Refusal to assist the U.S., however, could be the end of the mutual security relationship. Japan also has an interest in China not becoming so powerful that it could threaten Japanese security. This includes P.R.C. control of the sea lanes east of Taiwan that are vital to the Japanese economy. Balancing these interests will require Japan to walk a fine line. This is especially the case because Japan has a strong pacifist element, and the countries of East and Southeast Asia have unpleasant memories of the Japanese occupation during World War II.

There is a clear conflict among the interests of the parties involved. The danger is the parties do not fully recognize or acknowledge the interests of the others. China does not believe U.S. interests relating to Taiwan justify going to war. The U.S. is skeptical about China's territorial claim, may not fully appreciate its regime-survival concern, and probably has concerns about how resolution of the Taiwan situation would affect China's standing as a rising power.

Capabilities

Most studies of the situation compare the relative military capabilities of the P.R.C. and Taiwan (and sometimes the U.S.). This is necessary because intentions and capabilities are related, but by itself it can be misleading. Capabilities and intentions influence each other, but neither determines the other. Different viewers evaluate capabilities differently, so what we see as capabilities do not necessarily limit our adversary's intentions. In the Taiwan Strait case, this comparison is usually of a conventional military confrontation. But, as the U.S. learned in Vietnam, military capability is only one consideration for engaging in or winning a war. Also, military confrontations need not be purely conventional.

The P.R.C. says assimilation of Taiwan would signal the end of China's civil war. China would prefer to resolve the situation peacefully, but, failing that, is willing to resort to force to gain its end. Chinese leaders have said repeatedly they would fight rather than allow China to be permanently divided. That they might not win does not preclude their use of force.[60] For domestic reasons, China appears willing to use force even when defeat is certain. Many western analysts find this incomprehensible, but they shouldn't. They conclude such a course of action is irrational, so China wouldn't follow it. But, in doing this, they impose their sense of rationality and values on the Chinese, who may have their own reasons for reaching a different conclusion.

There are historical precedents for this "irrational" course of action. In 1941, Japan initiated a war against the U.S. it doubted it could win because every other option seemed worse than war. Japan's leaders had concluded the nation's survival was at stake.[61] In 1973, the Arab states attacked Israel although they knew Israel was militarily more powerful than they were. Achieving surprise, they almost won, but they understood a military defeat could still be a political victory. China's perspective appears little different.

The difficulty in planning for a Taiwan Strait crisis arises from disagreement about China's capabilities, intentions, goals and strategy. This includes the P.R.C.'s regional and international goals and where Taiwan fits into them, whether the P.R.C. and the U.S. are on an inevitable collision course in East Asia, whether the P.R.C. will be subtle or heavy-handed in its dealings with Taiwan, how much the P.R.C. is willing to pay to gain control of Taiwan and where nuclear weapons fit into the P.R.C.'s strategy.

Comparisons of the military capability of the P.R.C. and Taiwan usually begin with the major weapons systems each side has or plans to purchase. They also analyze the parties' strategic doctrine and public statements. Occasionally, they probe behind the numbers to ask if the military has integrated the weapons systems in its arsenal; if there are sufficient trained personnel to maintain, operate and support the systems; which systems can be employed in the Taiwan area; and what other threats or responsibilities the military must be prepared to handle.[62] Questions about joint operations and command and control reflect unfavorably upon both the P.R.C. and Taiwan. The 2000 Department of Defense report on

Taiwan and the P.R.C. listed significant U.S. intelligence gaps regarding logistics, maintenance and training of both militaries.[63] Michael Pillsbury adds command and control,[64] doctrine, special operations and mine warfare to the list.[65] More important than how these militaries function in peacetime is their ability to increase their tempo in a combat environment and maintain it for the duration of a war.

As capability affects intentions, so intentions influence capability. Analysts who look at the structure of the P.R.C. military, Taiwan's geography and Taiwanese airpower generally conclude an invasion of Taiwan would be unsuccessful. P.R.C. leaders have likely reached the same conclusion and decided to configure their military accordingly.[66] Thus, China has chosen to concentrate on weapons that will enable it to intimidate Taiwan and deter U.S. intervention. This is a situation where intentions help determine capability. Some Chinese strategists believe a multifaceted surprise attack could so demoralize Taiwan's population that an invasion would be unnecessary.

The different cultures involved in the Taiwan Strait conflict make more difficult an accurate assessment of military capabilities because of differing attitudes toward public disclosure. American capabilities, apart from classified details of weapons systems, are widely available in open-source materials. The U.S. seeks to deter opponents by letting them know how powerful it is.[67] In contrast, the P.R.C. attempts to deter potential adversaries by denying them knowledge of its military organization, doctrine, plans and capabilities.

This lack of transparency is a part of Chinese strategic culture. As Jason Ellis observes, "Significant information gaps have intensified the effects of Chinese deception, internal debate and lack of transparency, which have further hampered the U.S. ability to discern the nature, purpose and likely extent of Chinese plans in this area and to craft an appropriate policy response."[68] The U.S. has stated officially P.R.C. lack of transparency is destabilizing and increases the likelihood of misperception and miscalculation.[69]

It is one thing to have modern weapons. It's another matter to be able to maintain these weapons and use them to their full potential. It is even more difficult to employ them in a combined arms scenario where communications and coordination are essential. It is doubtful the P.R.C. has sufficient training or experience to mount major combined arms

operations.[70] The Secretary of Defense's 2009 report on China said, "The content of Integrated Joint Operations has yet to be formally defined, remains largely an aspiration, and will likely continue to be so until at least 2010…. China's military leaders recognize and acknowledge that one of the primary obstacles to Integrated Joint Operations is that many PLA commanders have little or no training for, or experience operating in, a joint environment." [71]

An additional difficulty regarding the P.R.C. is although the U.S. knows where it is focusing its weapons development and acquisition, it is unclear how well the P.R.C. can integrate its various systems into a coherent war-fighting force, implement its doctrine for joint operations, and sustain its forces in a combat environment. American analysts have a better idea of Taiwan's general capabilities because P.R.C. pressure has made the U.S. into Taiwan's only major source of arms. But Chinese pressure also means the U.S. no longer has the relationship with Taiwan to enable it to evaluate Taiwan's military readiness, maintenance, command and control, and weapons survivability. The quality and quantity of Taiwan's domestic arms production are likewise unclear.[72]

The consensus is the conventional military balance is shifting in the P.R.C.'s favor, but is at the same time becoming more complex. Assessing China's efforts toward employing asymmetrical warfare against Taiwan, Stokes says, "Emphasis on preemptive, long-range precision strikes, information dominance, command and control warfare, and integrated air defense could enable the PLA to defang Taiwan's ability to conduct military operations."[73] Kaplan adds the P.R.C. is developing niche capabilities in submarines, missiles and space technology "that will allow them to potentially embarrass us at sea … or to lock us out of the Taiwan Strait."[74] This could also seriously degrade U.S. capability for military action in the region, especially the mobilization and deployment necessary to support Taiwan against attack.

China is also developing a cyber warfare capability to attack Taiwanese, Japanese, and American command and control centers, financial markets and other key electronic facilities so essential to the functioning of modern society.[75] The P.R.C. has repeatedly tested its cyber war capability against U.S. government and civilian computer networks.[76] Yet, as Mulvenon has pointed out, while we know the extent and direction of China's interest in cyber war because they are discussed in open-source

literature, we do not know Chinese capabilities in the field because that information is highly classified.[77]

Richard Clarke warns although P.R.C. offensive cyber war capabilities may be less than those of the U.S., China has superior defensive capabilities (including the ability to quickly disconnect the entire country from the Internet). Clarke describes the U.S. cyber war defense as minimal, enabling an enemy to take down both the military and civilian infrastructure in a first strike.[78] Mulvenon, however, suggests the P.R.C. tends to overestimate the U.S. military's reliance on computers.[79]

China lacks sufficient sealift capacity to successfully invade Taiwan, although it probably can achieve air superiority over the Taiwan Strait. [80] The west coast of Taiwan is notoriously unsuited to amphibious operations – and the east coast is worse.[81] The P.R.C. has shown no intention of improving its amphibious capability, but has focused on anti-access weapons whose greatest utility would be in deterring U.S. intervention. It is improving the quality and accuracy of its ballistic and cruise missiles, expanding and modernizing its submarine fleet,[82] developing its cyber war capability, and developing other asymmetrical capabilities to degrade Taiwan's defenses and hinder U.S. intervention.

China's large inventory of short- and medium- range ballistic missiles can quickly reach neighboring states and its ICBMs can reach the continental United States. With the mobile solid fuel and submarine-launched ICBMs being deployed, the P.R.C. has a limited second strike capability. Chinese officers have threatened to use nuclear weapons against American cities if the U.S. intervenes to defend Taiwan. It remains unclear whether this was more than bravado.

Chinese ballistic missiles are being configured to enable terminal precision guidance so they can damage Taiwan's major airfields, ports, and key infrastructure, degrading Taiwan's ability to launch fighter aircraft and coordinate air defense, and possibly putting U.S. carriers at risk. The P.R.C. is also developing cruise missiles with an over-the-horizon capability that to fly under current and projected missile defense systems. The P.R.C. has also purchased advanced anti-ship cruise missiles and torpedoes from Russia.

The U.S. technological warfare in the Persian Gulf and Kosovo shocked and impressed China. It decided it needed to develop at least some of these capabilities itself. Pillsbury says some Chinese strategists

want the P.R.C. to leapfrog American technology by investing in exotic weapons systems, developing new doctrines and deploying new organizations.[83] The same technological prowess the Chinese want for themselves they also believe they can turn against the United States. Because the U.S. military has built information technology into every aspect of war-fighting, disrupting that technology would have devastating consequences on American ability to use its military. Chinese military leaders believe if they disable these high-tech systems, they can keep the U.S. out of the fight or defeat it when it engages.[84]

Interestingly, China considers the U.S. vulnerable because of its dependence on technology yet believes it can exploit technology to deter or defeat the U.S. in a regional conflict without exposing itself to the same vulnerability. China seems to understand technology instrumentally without necessarily understanding the organizational elements required and believes technology can quickly and inexpensively transform China's offensive military capability to enable a weaker nation to defeat a stronger one. These ideas go by the names Assassin's Mace and "Inferior Defeats the Superior" in the Chinese military literature.[85]

Chinese military authors have written extensively on the potential of Information Warfare (IW) to enable China to bypass several generations of technology to defeat a more powerful and advanced adversary. They believe many aspects of IW can be found in embryonic form in the Chinese military classics. Drawing on these for inspiration, China is likely to develop innovative IW strategies that will look nothing like American IW programs.[86] To the extent they are different and the U.S. fails to recognize the differences, they will be difficult for U.S. forces to counter.

The United States has the most powerful military in the world. This is not the same, however, as being able to concentrate that power in support of Taiwan. U.S. forces are deployed around the world, limiting their ability to focus on any one place, whereas, as a regional power, China can focus on its immediate vicinity. In the future, the U.S. is likely to need more than carrier battle groups. American ability and willingness to support Taiwan militarily will depend on the magnitude of the crisis; whether other international situations require a U.S. presence; the willingness of allies, especially Japan, to allow the U.S. to use bases on

their territory and even to provide some direct assistance; American public support;[87] and the nature of Chinese deterrence.

The most important factor for America's regional allies will be how China threatens to respond. Robert Kaplan, who doubts a war will ever be fought in the Taiwan Strait, warns that even the perception the U.S. couldn't win such a war would change the entire balance of power in Asia.[88]

American support to Taiwan can range from political and diplomatic intervention, through provision of replacement and supplementary weapons systems and intelligence, to direct military involvement with naval and air forces. Deployment of American ground forces is unlikely. The U.S. stations one carrier battle group in the region and has land-based aircraft in Japan. Anti-submarine warfare and minesweeping might require Japanese assistance if the political climate permits.

Taiwan would have difficulty defending itself against a coordinated attack by P.R.C. conventional air and naval forces, especially if softened up by a missile barrage. Taiwan cannot defend itself against ballistic or cruise missile attack and likely would face difficulty in responding to a concerted special operations or cyber attack. Taiwan's anti-submarine warfare capability is limited. Its submarines are obsolete. Thus, Taiwan has virtually no self-defense capability against a first strike of the sort China has been talking about.[89] It could defeat many of the individual parts, apart from ballistic missiles, but a coordinated, multifaceted surprise attack would overwhelm it. Stokes notes that, absent a viable defense against Chinese ballistic missiles, Taiwan may consider such counterforce operations as preemptive strikes on missile sites.[90]

Taiwan needs to refocus away from ground forces toward air and naval forces. The battle will be at least half lost if the PLA secures a beachhead on Taiwan. Historically, the army has been the most powerful of Taiwan's armed forces. It is skeptical the air force and navy can prevent an invasion, so it wants weapons able to defeat the PLA on the beach. Thus, until recently, anti-submarine ships and helicopters have not been high on Taiwan's list of desired purchases, and no one has been willing to sell it modern submarines. Taiwan also needs to upgrade its air force to include fourth-generation fighters if it is to maintain air superiority.[91] China has effectively used the threat of economic retaliation to deter

countries other than the U.S. from selling weapons to Taiwan, but remains frustrated by its inability to make the U.S. stop selling weapons to Taiwan.[92]

As important as acquiring new weapons are integrating current systems, improved pilot and crew training, hardened airfield facilities, improved air defense command and control, and better interoperability with U.S. forces.[93] These are less glamorous than some of the new weapons systems Taiwan would like, but they are more essential to a successful defense of the island.

Because it cannot defend against Chinese ballistic missiles, Taiwan risks losing the air superiority over the Strait necessary to defeat any P.R.C. invasion attempt.[94] This assumes China attains sufficient precision with its missiles that it can render runways at least temporarily inoperable, slowing the Taiwan air force's sortie rate, decreasing the number of defensive aircraft that can be in the air at any one time and destroying AWACS aircraft on the ground.[95]

With its modern, technological economy and educated population, Taiwan's capacity for offensive cyber warfare probably exceeds the P.R.C.'s. But Taiwan's defenses against a computer network attack are inadequate. As a technologically advanced and open society, Taiwan is more vulnerable to cyber warfare than the P.R.C. Taiwan is also concerned by the P.R.C.'s declared interest in developing an electromagnetic pulse weapon. Detonated high over Taiwan, such a weapon could destroy all unshielded electronics on the island without causing any direct casualties.

Taiwan has the know-how to develop nuclear weapons and delivery systems. It halted its nuclear program more than 30 years ago because of U.S. pressure. China has threatened Taiwan's development of nuclear weapons now would constitute grounds for war. Stokes notes, however, should Taiwan doubt U.S. support, it might try to develop nuclear weapons and delivery systems.[96]

Intensions

The only party to make its intentions clear is the P.R.C. It wants to integrate Taiwan with the Mainland, and is willing to use force to achieve

this goal. In various public pronouncements, the P.R.C. has stated conditions that would cause it to use force against Taiwan and nations aiding Taiwan and has drawn a firm line on acceptable international and domestic behavior by Taiwan, the intent of which is to isolate Taiwan internationally. Taiwan has refused to accept P.R.C. conditions for negotiations because it believes they would predetermine the outcome,[97] but it has carefully avoided statements hinting at *formal* independence.

The U.S. has sought to leave unclear to both Taiwan and the P.R.C. its willingness to intervene in cross-Strait conflict, saying only that it expected a mutually agreeable, peaceful resolution of differences between Taiwan and the P.R.C. In part, this strategy results from U.S. uncertainty about what it would do in various contingencies.

Japan is the fourth actor which must be considered. Despite P.R.C. complaints, it is unclear how supportive Japan would be of U.S. military assistance to Taiwan. The preference of all four parties involved appears to be a continuation of the status quo, but this may not be a viable option.

China believes Taiwanese separatism encourages separatists on the Mainland. For the current generation of Chinese leaders, who lack the revolutionary legitimacy of Mao and Deng, the final unification of China that began with Hong Kong and Macao must include Taiwan (this legitimacy concern is also likely to make them less willing to compromise if a crisis does arise). The P.R.C. considers political control of Taiwan a vital national interest. It is not clear that the U.S. recognizes the emotional and nationalist depth of Beijing's interest or the widespread support of the Chinese public for unification.

Because China considers Taiwan a "renegade province," it does not consider its dealings with Taiwan to be a matter of concern to other nations. This includes weapons sales, visits by government officials, and Taiwan's participation in international organizations and defense arrangements. The P.R.C. reserves the right to treat Taiwan as it does Mainland provinces. But to many Americans, what China considers quelling domestic disturbance or concluding a civil war appears as aggression and evidence of P.R.C. belligerence. As a firm supporter of the Westphalian view of national sovereignty, the P.R.C. has consistently opposed international interventions in what it considers domestic matters of other countries. The primary reason for this is China fears a similar

argument could be used to justify intervention in what China considers its domestic concerns.

Traditionally, China has seen itself as a nation that prefers to settle disputes peacefully. This is called the Confucian-Mencian strategic culture. Johnston has challenged this self-image. He says China's dispute behavior in some cases has been "higher risk, more militarized, and less connected to specific limited political demands than was once believed." He suggests China will be "more likely to resort to force – and relatively high levels of force – when disputes involve territory and occur in periods when the perceived gap between desired and ascribed status is growing or large."[98]

Many Chinese believe Americans see a rising China as a threat to the United States that must be countered with political, economic and military measures.[99] This affects their perception of U.S. actions with regard to Taiwan and other regional states and potential deployment of any missile defense system. China considers including Taiwan in any missile defense a political statement and sees the existence of any missile defense as intended to intimidate what it considers legitimate Chinese action in the region and deny it a credible nuclear deterrent.

Taiwan's ability to defend itself against P.R.C. attack is becoming increasingly problematic.[100] It can probably repel an invasion if it maintains air superiority over the Taiwan and the Strait. Its ability to control the sea east of Taiwan is doubtful because it lacks blue water navy, and it lacks the resources to defend against P.R.C. submarines or sweep mines from its ports and their sea approaches. If the P.R.C. gained air superiority over the Strait, it likely could coerce Taiwan into submission.

Taiwan has become a lively, even raucous, democracy. The governing party has changed peacefully twice in the past decade. The downside of this interparty conflict has stymied military modernization.[101] Rapid economic growth has improved the Taiwanese standard of living far beyond that of the average Mainlander.

As the relationship between the P.R.C. and Taiwan has improved, visiting across the Strait has begun. This has decreased Taiwanese interest in incorporation into the P.R.C. Taiwanese are willing to construct factories, do business, and even live on the Mainland, but most don't want to become part of it. Extensive economic investment on the Mainland has given Taiwanese businessmen an interest in peaceful and expanding cross-

Strait relationships, and their political clout has impacted the government's ability to set policy. The P.R.C. believes increasing economic integration with Taiwan has given it both a carrot and a stick to achieve unification, but Roy suggests the situation is more complicated than the P.R.C. believes.[102]

Crisis Deterrence and Coercive Diplomacy

Deterrence theory is part of western international relations theory, developed primarily in a Cold War setting. Thus, there is some question about applying it cross-culturally and in non-western settings. Apart from the Taiwan Strait, the United States has had limited success in deterring Asian adversaries. We hope with a proper understanding of ourselves and our adversary and openness to solving our disagreements we can achieve either a peaceful resolution or successful deterrence, but this is not always the case.[103]

Deterrence theory presumes our adversary is rational, reasonable and generally predictable. It also presumes each side knows its own and the other side's interests. Only when we know our interests can we know what we are trying to deter, and only when we know the other side's interests can we know what deterrence is likely to cost. The problem is adversaries frequently misunderstand one another and act in ways the other considers irrational, making it hard for us to know our adversary.

What we often miss in all this is our standard of rationality does not necessarily apply to our adversary's situation, especially in the interplay between domestic and international concerns.[104] The adversary we call irrational might only be "crazy like a fox." When the adversary has a different culture and history, the gap only increases unless each party makes a determined effort to understand the other.

According to classic deterrence theory, successful deterrence requires threatening to exact a cost greater than any potential gain the adversary might achieve or removing a benefit the adversary currently enjoys.[105] It can also mean reducing the expected benefit the adversary hopes to gain,[106] a course of action too rarely considered. Thus, successful deterrence requires understanding how the adversary measures the value of gains and losses. It also means convincing that adversary the deterrent

threat is credible. Thus, the threat should be relevant to the subject of the dispute and proportional to the value of the gain sought.[107] The deterrent threat must be understandable, believable and certain to the adversary.[108]

In 1950, China's threat to intervene militarily in Korea was unconvincing to the U.S. because the messenger was a known P.R.C. sympathizer, the U.S. believed China incapable of intervention to the extent required for success, and Chinese intervention in the face of overwhelming U.S. power appeared irrational.[109] From a Chinese perspective, all three perceptions were wrong. Yet, in making its threat, China failed to consider the difference between American and Chinese perspectives. The result was a deterrence failure and three more years of war.

American efforts to deter Chinese intervention were equally unsuccessful. Neither side understood what motivated the other, but thought it did. For the P.R.C., intervention was a regime survival issue of paramount importance. Chinese leaders thought that the U.N forces' attempt to occupy North Korea was directed at China.[110]

The problem is not merely that the U.S. and China have different cultures, but the leaders of both nations have acted as if they do not. Moreover, deterrents may not have the same meaning in Washington and Beijing.[111] Effective deterrence requires understanding our adversary's thought processes and preferred way of behaving. This information is both difficult to obtain and, once obtained, to interpret and apply to specific situations.

Not every adversary can be deterred. Sometimes the value to be gained or maintained is greater than any threat we can credibly make. This would be true in the case of national and possibly regime survival. It would also be true if the adversary believes it can evade the conditions of the threat, considers any condition better than the status quo, or cannot evaluate the threat for cultural, domestic or psychological reasons.[112] Potential aggressors do not always recognize credible deterrent threats. This is a real danger with regard to Taiwan. The U.S. has not articulated its tangible interests as clearly as the P.R.C. and its intangible interests do not impress China as commensurate with its own.

Further, the formal U.S. position regarding resolution of the issue conveys no strategic American interest in the continued existence of a Taiwan separate from Mainland China – it merely says the U.S. expects

both sides to settle the conflict peacefully. Rightly or wrongly, this signals a low level of interest in the situation. Successful deterrence, however, requires a credible (to the intended audience) reason why the deterring power opposes the intended action.

Even when threats are clearly and deliberately communicated, the opponent may engage in wishful thinking, distort information about the deterrer, or ignore or twist the evidence it has in order to make the evidence fit its desires. The opponent may be too occupied with domestic concerns to pay sufficient attention to the international environment.[113] In the post-Cold War environment, potential conflicts are likely to involve intrinsic interests for the regional state and non-intrinsic interests for the U.S. This means the U.S. commitment will appear less credible.[114]

The most effective deterrent appears to be convincing potential aggressors they will not be able to achieve a quick victory or maintain control of the situation.[115] China has said that if using force becomes necessary, it intends to defeat Taiwan before the United States can intervene. The most effective deterrent threats are issued before one's adversary has committed psychologically and physically to act. Even tentative decisions are difficult to reverse.[116] For many Asians, involuntarily halting an action would involve loss of face.

Getting our adversary's attention can be difficult. States tend to focus on their own domestic political pressures and their strategic and domestic interests rather than on the interests and capabilities of those trying to deter them. The U.S. historically has sought to deter P.R.C. action against Taiwan by deploying carrier battle groups to the area as a show of commitment. Rhoades suggests this ploy is usually unproductive despite American belief to the contrary.[117]

No matter how well thought out and appropriate to the situation, deterrence is always in the eye of the beholder, the adversary we are attempting to deter.[118] This means it is not our perception of the issues involved, relative strength, or potential gain or loss that matters, but our adversary's. At least as important as interests and capability is our adversary's perception of relative will: will we actually carry out the threat? When it comes to Taiwan, China believes it may be able to deter the U.S. from intervening militarily in support of Taiwan.

Conventional deterrence theory usually operates with a "one size fits all" model. Most theorists developed their ideas during the Cold War

confrontation with the Soviet Union. Today, they tend to act as if the theory is universal in application. We cannot apply Soviet deterrence theory to China without major modifications. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union found successful deterrence of China required threatening much higher levels of violence than required against each other. It is unclear the United States can morally and credibly threaten China with the use of force sufficient to deter action against Taiwan in every case. [119] And the U.S. is unlikely to risk a Chinese nuclear response directed against the continental United States to any action it might take in the case of deterrence failure. Or, as the Chinese general put it, would we sacrifice Los Angeles for Taiwan? Would U.S. leaders be willing to risk finding out if that would be the true cost?

Shulsky notes, "The historical record indicates that China's adversaries often misunderstand its motives and willingness to use force, which affects their ability to deter the Chinese use of force." He says China has been willing to use force because it can use the resulting tension to its own advantage. As long as China can control the tension level and escalation process, it believes the tension helps China and hurts its adversary.[120]

Possibly the greatest obstacle to successful crisis deterrence in the Taiwan Strait is neither the U.S. nor the P.R.C. sufficiently recognizes the other side believes it has important national interests at stake. In part, this is because the basic P.R.C. and U.S. interests involved are qualitatively different. China's interests are more obvious: national sovereignty, territorial integrity and regime legitimacy. It is also a matter of national pride.

For the U.S., credibility of commitments and support for democratic governments are more central than traditional security interests, although these are not absent. The credibility of U.S. commitments to Asian allies may be more important than China realizes. U.S. leaders have neither clearly nor convincingly articulated American interest in the situation and doubt China is as committed as it claims to be.

If the U.S. attempts to predict P.R.C. actions using conventional deterrence theory without considering China's national self-image, it will seriously underestimate the cost China is willing to pay to gain Taiwan.[121] In part, this is because China in the past used bombastic rhetoric that

significantly exceeded its capabilities and adversaries could too easily dismiss. This is no longer the case.

An additional problem for the United States is Chinese strategic thought emphasizes achieving surprise and inflicting psychological shock on its adversary. This is especially important when facing a more powerful adversary such as the United States.[122] Should China conclude resort to force is its only option; a surprise attack would be very difficult to deter. China has suggested such an attack would include not only Taiwan, but also Japan and American bases in East Asia and the Pacific. It probably would combine asymmetric and conventional attacks. Shlapak suggests making clear the escalatory consequences to the P.R.C. of attacking U.S. bases in the region could enhance deterrence.[123]

Closely linked with crisis deterrence is coercive diplomacy. Because it seeks to make a state undo a successful action instead of trying to convince that state not to attempt an action that may or may not be successful, coercive diplomacy is more difficult than deterrence. Since the early 1990s, however, the P.R.C. has used coercion successfully to rein in Taiwan's attempts to acquire international space through informal diplomacy. The P.R.C. also has successfully coerced the U.S. to modify its Taiwan policy and its general policy toward China, including human rights, trade and technology transfer.[124]

Should Taiwan move toward formal independence, the P.R.C. likely would attempt coercive measures before resorting to military force. Should the P.R.C. successfully conquer Taiwan before the U.S. could intervene militarily, the U.S. would face the prospect of attempting coercive diplomacy before having to decide on a military response. Domestic and allied support for the latter is unlikely.

What the U.S. is unable to deter, it may be able to delay. The difference between deterring and delaying is a function of China's willingness to pay the costs of military action. If forced to choose between Taiwanese independence and using force, China will use force. There is no credible threat serious enough to deter China. But as long as there is the likelihood of settling the conflict peacefully, it is less costly for China to delay acting.

The likelihood of American intervention, the fear of failure, domestic and international consequences of military action, increased economic leverage over Taiwan, and belief in an improvement in the

relative military balance over time may encourage China to delay action against Taiwan. One long-term concern for Taiwan is the large number of Taiwanese businessmen residing and educating their children on the Mainland. This is more important than it might appear. A delay measured in decades rather than years would allow for changes in both China and Taiwan that could lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in a way few may even be considering now. While long-term indicators, apart from Taiwanese public opinion, appear to favor the P.R.C., it is unclear that the P.R.C. leadership sees things that way due to its fixation on "Taiwanese independence."

Options

Crisis deterrence requires knowing what one is trying to deter. In the Taiwan Strait situation, it also means the U.S. needs to consider P.R.C. efforts to deter U.S. intervention. The latter is the more difficult task due to the nature of the P.R.C.'s deterrent threats and the secretiveness of its decision-making process. It will only become more difficult as the P.R.C. increases the quality, quantity, and survivability of deterrent assets.

Each party involved in the Taiwan Strait has a range of options. Which option each will or should choose depends on what that party hopes to accomplish and the resources it has available. China has a wide range of options, and this creates a problem for U.S. policymakers because different options require different forms of deterrence. The cost of trying to deter all the possible Chinese options would exceed the resources and time available.

Thus, the first task is to evaluate the P.R.C.'s options in terms of likelihood. The key determinants are Chinese capabilities and weaknesses and the risk to China involved in each course of action (China's interest in Taiwan is clear). The less spectacular and blatant courses minimize the risk of international and domestic repercussions and can be tried more than once.

A failed invasion would harm the P.R.C. economy, weaken the armed forces, probably delegitimize the Chinese Communist Party and topple the government, and irrevocably alienate the people of Taiwan

from the Mainland. That would be a high price to pay for an action with little likelihood of near-term success.

The P.R.C.'s minimal goal is to prevent Taiwan from becoming formally independent.[125] China has stated clearly and repeatedly the behaviors by Taiwan and its allies that would provoke a P.R.C. military response. Most American analysts believe China is serious about its readiness to back its claim with force.[126]

No Chinese government can hope to survive if it allows Taiwan to gain its independence without a fight. Even war with the United States would be a lesser evil. It is equally doubtful the people of Taiwan would agree freely to assimilation apart from a drastic deterioration in the military balance or major improvements in the political and economic conditions in the P.R.C. China's leaders need the support of the PLA, which sees itself responsible for successfully concluding China's civil war, unifying the country, and defending its proper borders. For the PLA, Taiwan is non-negotiable.

Unfortunately, Taiwan, the U.S. and Japan are less clear about their goals. Taiwan's desire to remain separate from Mainland China does not currently include a plan for formal independence. The stated American goal is for the P.R.C. and Taiwan to settle their differences peacefully. This would not necessarily advance American interests, however. Any result that limited U.S. freedom of movement and action in East Asia and the western Pacific would be unacceptable.

Japan's goal or goals are even more unformed because of constitutional constraints, residual fears on the part of its Asian neighbors, and domestic political and generational differences. Japan doesn't want to have to choose between the U.S. and China. Japan is concerned, however, about Chinese aspirations to regional hegemony and claims to the Senkaku or Diaoyutai Islands.[127]

Continuation of the status quo would be the best short-term solution. Although it is no one's ideal (least of all the P.R.C.'s), there appears to be no alternative acceptable to all. China, however, looks at Taiwan's democratic society, the growing Taiwanese sense of identity, and negative political attitudes toward the P.R.C. with concern. The P.R.C. fears the status quo is shifting subtly but steadily toward Taiwanese separatism.[128] If so, coercion or direct military action will be required to achieve the P.R.C.'s goal.

Despite China's sovereignty claims, it is likely to prefer options least confrontational internationally and least likely to result in outside intervention. Shulsky says history suggests any Chinese military action against Taiwan is likely to occur at the lower end of the scale in terms of force.[129] Whether he is right will depend on what precipitates P.R.C. military action, the window of opportunity before an American response, and the perceived likelihood of American action given the international situation at the time.

China's Options

China has two deterrence concerns. First is preventing Taiwan from taking steps toward formal independence and deploying weapons that would make P.R.C. actions against Taiwan more difficult or most costly. Second is deterring the U.S. from providing encouragement and support to Taiwan and from intervening militarily in support of Taiwan should a crisis lead to war. China has shown little reluctance to replace failed deterrence with coercive actions directed at both Taiwan and the United States, but it has also demonstrated a willingness to negotiate or compromise with regard to objectives.[130] China also uses the lure of its potential market and trading relationship to discourage American support for Taiwan, even having U.S. business lobby in its behalf. It is doing the same with Taiwanese business and industrial leaders. When this fails, China has not hesitated to use trade as a form of coercive diplomacy.

The P.R.C. and Taiwan have become increasingly economically interdependent. Much of this is the result of Taiwanese investment in and exports to the Mainland. Some have suggested this is causing Taiwan to be pulled increasingly into China's orbit with inevitable unification; China certainly hopes so. Taiwan's leaders have recognized this danger and encouraged businesses to diversify their investment into other parts of Asia. This cross-Strait economic relationship would make conflict extremely costly for both parties. Both stand to suffer enormous economic loss in the case of war.

An underlying difficulty with the absorption theory, however, concerns China's economy. Economists have suggested China's rapid economic growth masks serious weaknesses in its banking system, state-

owned enterprises, and other parts of the economic infrastructure.[131] Chinese have actually expressed concern that Taiwan might see a Chinese economic crisis as an opportunity to declare independence because China would be too distracted and disorganized to respond. Non-Chinese analysts have expressed concern the P.R.C. might use military action against Taiwan to divert domestic attention from a domestic political or economic crisis.

Some China specialists have suggested that in the P.R.C. decision-making process good analysis and creative options are unlikely to survive the bureaucratic gauntlet and gain the attention of the actual decision-makers.[132] This would mean any easing tensions in the Taiwan Strait are unlikely to come from China. Additionally, the PLA may keep Taiwan a matter of concern for budgetary reasons, to maintain a sense of mission, and to reinforce its nationalist self-image.

Chinese strategic culture differs significantly from the American way of war – use of these two different terms is intended to demonstrate this, although that oversimplifies matters. China's strategic concept is broader than the American, more multidimensional and integrated. Well before conflict begins, China begins an integrated psychological, political, diplomatic, economic and military offensive intended to isolate and unsettle its potential adversary.

Following Sun Tzu's famous (and widely misunderstood) adage,[133] China attempts to achieve victory without war, but, because this rarely happens, it also aims to shape the multidimensional battlefield to its advantage before the adversary even realizes there is a battlefield. So, Chinese goals are more complex than Americans recognize. They are often unsure what is at stake and what counts for victory or defeat. In any Taiwan Strait crisis, China probably will be engaged strategically before the U.S. realizes a crisis exists, hoping to outmaneuver the U.S. and foreclose options *before* any combat.

China would prefer to deter Taiwan from taking any step toward greater independence than it already enjoys. It can attempt this using military threats, psychological warfare and economic pressures. Because of domestic changes on Taiwan, China does not appear to consider this a long-term option, although its economic leverage over Taiwan continues to grow. China's concern should not prevent American and Taiwanese policymakers from seeking innovative ways of maintaining the current

situation acceptable to China. Although most long-term indicators favor the P.R.C. over Taiwan, it is uncertain whether China's leaders are inclined to wait as long as might be required.

China has a history of provoking crises in order to test its adversaries' reactions and show them the political and possible military costs of pursuing policies antagonistic to China.[134] Because China views crises as opportunities, not only dangers, it is willing to create a sense of crisis for its adversary and historically has been successful in evaluating risk. China might use a series of carefully orchestrated crises to try to unsettle the U.S. and Taiwan publics, divide the two parties, and damage their will to fight. While this is a low-risk strategy, it is not risk-free. The possibility of miscommunication and misperception raises the risk of unintended escalation.

In seeking to deter the U.S. from responding militarily to Chinese initiatives to gain control of Taiwan, the P.R.C. has a range of options. China's most likely courses of action, in terms of its strategic culture – and assuming non-military measures are unsuccessful – are those that could be accomplished before the U.S. could respond or those that never rise to a level that would trigger a U.S. military response. The latter includes a low-intensity, unconventional attack on Taiwan's economic infrastructure and a long-term obstruction of Taiwan's sea lines of communication, disrupting the trade that is the island's lifeblood. So China's best options are a quick, intense, surprise attack and a slow, low-intensity strangulation campaign.

Because Taiwan is resource poor and has one of the world's densest populations, its survival depends on a thriving export economy supplied by a steady flow of oil and raw materials.[135] During the 1995-96 Crisis, the P.R.C. learned it can disrupt Taiwan economically and possibly destabilize it politically at an acceptable cost and without the need for direct confrontation.[136] This would both make it difficult for the U.S. to decide if or when to intervene and could wear out both the U.S. and Taiwan. This is a situation where a dictatorship has the advantage over democracies with limited tolerance for long-term conflicts.

Presenting the U.S. with a *fait accompli* would be the most advantageous military course for China,[137] although it would have serious political and diplomatic consequences – consequences China says it is willing to accept. P.R.C. success means the U.S. would have to counter

P.R.C. action with its own invasion of the island to restore Taiwan's independence. Gaining public support for this would be far more difficult than for assisting Taiwan in its own defense – as would the counter-invasion itself be – unless the P.R.C.'s quick strike included first strikes on U.S. forces in East Asia that caused heavy casualties, something PLA writers have discussed.

Unfortunately, the Chinese discussion has emphasized U.S. timidity in Somalia, Haiti and Kosovo, concluding the U.S. is so averse to casualties it might be deterred from acting. Chinese writers have apparently ignored Pearl Harbor and forgotten American willingness to suffer major casualties in the Persian Gulf in 1991. Chinese belief the U.S. is casualty-averse could lead it to take provocative actions that would almost certainly result in war in the Taiwan Strait.

Thus, one crucial aspect of crisis deterrence must be to disabuse the P.R.C. of this dangerous misperception about American casualties. The P.R.C. leaders' view that Taiwan is much more important to them than to the U.S. joined with the (mis)perception that the U.S. is casualty-averse creates precisely the condition for unintended war between China and the United States.

A second difficulty for the U.S. in the face of a swift P.R.C. conquest of Taiwan would be the response of America's Asian allies. The U.S. would require, at a minimum, use of regional bases and local logistical support to mount a military response to the P.R.C. In the face of a *fait accompli*, regional allies would be unlikely to provide such support. This would be the result of limited domestic public support coupled with fear of P.R.C. retaliation. Japan, the only nation with first-hand experience of nuclear attack, would have to provide most of the support for such an operation. A credible Chinese threat, coupled with doubt the U.S. would be willing to suffer a nuclear attack in Japan's defense, almost certainly would mean Japanese refusal to assist the U.S. in supporting Taiwan.

One form of the *fait accompli* the Chinese have discussed is a surprise attack on Taiwan, Japan and U.S. military facilities in the East Asia-Pacific region. Some Chinese believe this would render all three unable to respond militarily to China before it could gain control of the island and would so shock the populations psychologically they would not permit their governments to act. Classic Chinese military writers

emphasize the use of surprise and shock to gain strategic advantage.[138] Few American analysts and decision-makers take this as seriously as Chinese military history would seem to warrant, and Taiwan is unprepared militarily or psychologically for such an eventuality.

Such a first strike could be a conventional attack on Taiwanese, American and Japanese military assets in the region coupled with one or more high altitude electromagnetic pulses in the upper atmosphere. This would have the advantage of devastating high-tech weaponry without the provocation of a nuclear attack. Computer network attacks could degrade command and control, logistics and counterstrike assets.

The least risky option for the P.R.C. would be a computer network attacks against Taiwan's banking system, stock market, communications system, electrical grid, transportation network and early warning system. This is within the P.R.C.'s current capabilities. The P.R.C. has discussed openly using cyber warfare not only to damage Taiwan's economy and communications, but also the U.S. information and financial infrastructure, which it considers vulnerable.

Such serious disruption would devastate the economy and defense system and possibly panic the populace. If applied only to Taiwan, this course of action has the advantage it is unlikely to rise to the level where the U.S. could justify responding or to determine an effective way to intervene. It might even be carried out covertly.

An attack on this same scale on American government and civilian computer networks probably would result in a public outcry for retaliation. While such an operation might be deniable, detection would expose the P.R.C. to a devastating response. The *threat*, however, to use cyber war is the one Chinese weapon that could affect the entire continental United States and place at risk essential infrastructure.

This option becomes increasingly attractive as Taiwan becomes more democratic. The P.R.C. fears this democratic trend for four reasons: it means the P.R.C. cannot reach an agreement with leaders over the heads of the people of Taiwan (as happened to Hong Kong and Macao), the people of Taiwan find political union with the repressive P.R.C. increasingly unattractive, a democratic Taiwan demonstrates democracy and Chinese culture are not incompatible, and the continued existence of a democratic Taiwan makes easier for western democracies to justify defending it.[139]

A second course of action would be an attack by precision guided ballistic and cruise missiles against Taiwan's air force bases, radar installations, and command and control centers. If successful, The P.R.C. could achieve air superiority over the Strait and Taiwan itself. This would allow the air drop of troops, capture of Taiwan's ports, and the movement of large numbers of soldiers quickly across the Strait, followed by occupation of the island.

This scenario assumes the P.R.C. can keep its preparations hidden from U.S. and Taiwan intelligence, that a missile attack followed by aircraft attacks would rapidly destroy Taiwan's air force, P.R.C. troops delivered by aircraft could defeat Taiwan's army on the ground, that the P.R.C. has accurate terminal guidance systems for its missiles, and – most important – that the P.R.C. could synchronize such an operation – all of this before the U.S. could react. Although P.R.C. writers have mentioned this course of action, each element is problematic. RAND analysts have concluded a missile attack, especially if China can argue it was directed exclusively against military targets, might not receive as serious an international response as would an invasion or an indiscriminate missile attack. They also suggest such an attack might seriously affect Taiwanese morale.[140]

A third option is some form of blockade. This would cripple Taiwan's economy and further isolate it diplomatically. Chinese leaders appear to consider this less provocative than missiles or an invasion, but it would tax China's naval forces to enforce a full blockade. Anything less than a full blockade would take so long to be effective Taiwan and its friends could develop countermeasures.

Michael O'Hanlon says, "Even a limited blockade effort conducted by China's modern submarine force could stand a reasonable chance of dragging down Taiwan's economy – and keeping it down for a prolonged period. U.S. military intervention might be needed to break the blockade quickly."[141] Current and proposed improvements to China's navy are intended to inhibit U.S. Navy access to the area, hampering its ability to break blockade.[142] Any U.S. effort would probably require the assistance of Japanese minesweepers.

A variation on this would involve using submarines to lay minefields outside Taiwan's main harbors and even threatening to sink

commercial vessels that entered an exclusion zone outside Taiwan's main ports. This could be part of a larger blockade or implemented on its own. The sinking of one merchant ship would virtually halt seaborne commerce and devastate Taiwan's economy. This is within the P.R.C.'s capabilities, but could provoke U.S. intervention. But if the operation spread over a sufficiently long period, the U.S. might tire of involvement and Taiwan become too worn down to continue resistance. The result, again, would be disruption and collapse of Taiwan's economy with a probable capitulation by Taiwan.

The P.R.C.'s "one China" claim provides legal cover for this option. Blockades are acts of war under international law, but because it considers Taiwan a part of China, the P.R.C. asserts any blockade is solely a domestic matter. When considered in conjunction with China's self-understanding as a moral actor, the domestic claim points in the direction of some form of blockade if the other relevant factors are conducive.

The least likely scenarios involve an amphibious assault across the Taiwan Strait or a nuclear attack on Taiwan. The first is impossible without P.R.C. air superiority over the Taiwan Strait, additional sealift capacity, and a combined arms capability the PLA has yet to demonstrate. In any case, it would be a formidable task and the cost of failure would be high, including almost certainly the *de jure* independence of Taiwan. This would be the last resort of a desperate Chinese government.

The second course would produce a hollow victory with Taiwan's economy destroyed, its surviving population forever alienated, and the P.R.C. an international pariah. China has stated repeatedly that it will not use nuclear weapons against other Chinese; the threat of their use appears directed at American and Japanese intervention.

Distinct from actual use of nuclear weapons would be the threat to use such weapons against the continental U.S. or forward deployed U.S. forces in East Asia and the western Pacific. A U.S. president would have to consider carefully how the crisis appeared to the Chinese leadership before deciding whether the threat was serious or a bluff. There are no adequate historical analogies to help in making this decision.

The threat to use nuclear weapons is the most powerful deterrent the P.R.C. has to discourage American involvement in any Taiwan conflict, but actual use of such weapons would invite a massive retaliatory response. The P.R.C. currently has more to lose to such retaliation than at

any time in its history, so nuclear threats likely will be used to deter conventional U.S. intervention.

Currently, the P.R.C. believes it can achieve its goal without resorting to force. It is convinced that if it does use force, the U.S. will intervene on the side of Taiwan. China also recognizes the U.S. is greatly superior to China militarily. So if the day ever comes that China believes war is inevitable, it will seek to choose the time, place (or places), and nature of the conflict so as to overcome the American material advantage through strategic and tactical surprise. The China Security Review Commission warns, "China's leaders believe that the United States, although technologically superior in almost every area of military power, can be *defeated*, most particularly, in a fight over Taiwan in which China controls the timing."[143] China's targets will be those Taiwanese, American and Japanese assets most able to respond to China militarily and those whose destruction will deliver the sharpest psychological blow to China's potential adversaries. Chinese suggestions that the most effective action would be a powerful surprise attack inject an inherent instability into the situation.

Taiwan's Options

Taiwan's best option is to lay low and maintain the status quo. This leaves the initiative with China. The people of Taiwan do not want to become part of the P.R.C., and they now have a say in the matter. "There is strong popular opposition to China's coercive diplomatic and military moves, little support for China's position on unification, and strong support for maintaining Taiwan's current status in the face of Chinese pressure. However, the public also wants to benefit from cross-strait economic and other exchanges and to avoid confrontation with China and tensions in relations with the U.S."[144]

Taiwan's political development precludes a simple unification with the Mainland. Events in China have done nothing to ease Taiwanese reluctance. Taiwan's safest path is to maintain a low profile internationally while highlighting its democratic political system and thriving economy, improve its defensive capability by buying the weapons systems it really needs, developing or improving informal relationships with the United

States and other regional actors, and doing nothing the P.R.C. could construe as steps toward *formal* independence.

Taiwan needs to prepare its citizens for the domestic impact of P.R.C. action, coercion as well as attack, and make critical improvements to its defenses against surprise attack and cyber warfare. Taiwanese leaders should also develop unconventional options that respond to P.R.C. concerns and preserve P.R.C. "face" while preserving a separate existence for the island and its population. A moderate improvement in Taiwan's defensive capability could help stabilize the situation as well as enhance deterrence.

U.S. Options

The United States has a range of options, not all of which are equally attractive. Actually, there are two sets of options regarding Taiwan. The first concerns U.S. actions when the situation is relatively calm and aims to maintain that calm. The intent is good decision-making and execution will prevent crises from developing. The second concerns U.S. actions when a crisis occurs. The purpose is two-fold: to prevent the crisis from becoming a shooting war and to prevail should war break out. The former includes unofficial travel between the U.S. and Taiwan, types of weapons sold to Taiwan, unofficial military exchanges and coordination with Taiwan, official military exchanges with the P.R.C., deployment of a national or theater missile defense system, and similar actions whose cumulative effect will influence U.S.-China-Taiwan relations. The latter involves trying to persuade both China and Taiwan not to choose a military solution or provoke the other party to do so. This could mean naval deployments, political and economic sanctions, breaking a blockade, or direct military intervention. Deterrence must be matched by reassurance. For both the P.R.C. and Taiwan, this means a strong reaffirmation of U.S. support for the status quo, as the Bush Administration did in reining in Taiwan's President Chen.

American policymakers have not tried to use China's stated fear of a resurgent Japan to encourage China to moderate its international behavior. One benefit China gains from the U.S. presence in East Asia is a Japan whose military capability does not match its economic and political strength. Although China professes not to understand why Japan

might have any reason to fear it, an American departure from East Asia or failure to keep its commitments is likely to cause Japan to consider rearming. Were Japan to apply its technological and industrial capability to military development, China would have grounds for concern. When China complains about a forward American presence in East Asia, the U.S. can remind China's leaders this is a cheap price to pay for not having to worry about a militarized Japan.

The U.S. remains obligated under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with adequate weaponry to defend itself. The emphasis should be on low-profile, defensive weapons Taiwan needs to counter areas of current and expected P.R.C. advantage. The greatest needs are for anti-submarine and mine-clearing capabilities, a more flexible command and control system, missile defense, and modern fighter aircraft.

China also needs to be aware it does not have veto power over U.S. weapons sales. American weapons sales to Taiwan must walk the fine line of providing those items Taiwan needs for self-defense without providing systems or quantities that embolden Taiwan or cause the P.R.C. to react militarily.

Economic threats have often been proposed as a way to deter Chinese action. Actually, the only successful economic threats have been those China has made to the United States. Threatening sanctions has only turned China to alternate suppliers and led to vigorous lobbying by American businesses fearful of being shut out of the China market. Given the size of the U.S.-China trade imbalance and the P.R.C.'s creditor status regarding U.S. debt, the U.S. can take few economic measures within WTO rules.

Crisis-related options include withdrawing from the situation, seeking to maintain the status quo, or taking a clear position in support of the P.R.C. or Taiwan.[145] Much more than for China, American options must be evaluated in the context of domestic public opinion. A poll by the Foreign Policy Association questions the likelihood of public support for American military intervention if the P.R.C. invades Taiwan, the most blatant option Beijing has.[146]

A second limit to action is that as a superpower the U.S. has many interests other than Taiwan. One or more of those may already be claiming American attention and resources when a Taiwan crisis develops. Also, U.S. action in one area affects relations with nations in other areas. China

could use American commitments to instigate a crisis in some other part of the world to divert American attention and resources as it prepared to act against Taiwan. This would fit neatly into the classic Chinese approach to warfare.

The foundation of U.S. policy for the past half century has been "strategic ambiguity." This has left both the P.R.C. and Taiwan unsure of how the U.S. would respond to conflict in the Taiwan Strait – and that is how U.S. leaders have wanted it. This policy should be retained. It may not be the best policy, but none of the alternatives is better.

Strategic ambiguity's great advantage is it gives the U.S. room to maneuver. It also encourages caution on the part of both China and Taiwan because neither can ever be quite sure how the U.S. will act in a particular situation. The policy reflects the reality the U.S. cannot be sure how it will act in a crisis until one actually occurs.

Too much of a shift in either direction is liable to tempt the gaining party to take destabilizing risks. The U.S. can always fill in details quietly to each party within the overall policy. The policy does not prevent the U.S. from telling Taiwan and the P.R.C. it views particular actions by each to be out of bounds and automatically precluding or mandating U.S. military intervention.

Probably the greatest advantage in an age of media-driven foreign policy is everyone knows the U.S. probably will act, but no one is quite sure how. The imprecision of strategic ambiguity provides U.S. leaders with flexibility and time to think if crisis arises. The U.S. response can be tailored to the particular crisis and not constrained by previous public statements. If the U.S. does decide it must act to prevent Chinese action against Taiwan, it should do so early and delicately enough to permit China a way out that doesn't cause it to lose face – as happened in 1996.

Withdrawal would have the same practical result as openly supporting the P.R.C.'s claim to Taiwan. Both courses would have domestic U.S. and regional repercussions. Domestically, there could be a revival of the "Who lost China?" debate of the 1950s, exacerbated by the fact Taiwan is a democracy in a way Nationalist China never was. Regionally, the action would undercut the credibility of U.S. commitments to allies, who likely would seek alternate security means or cut a deal with China.[147] Here, Japan with military and technological potential and regional history becomes a matter of concern. According to Charles

Freeman, "A U.S. failure to respond to a P.R.C. attack on Taiwan would so devalue the U.S.-Japan relationship that Japanese would feel even more impelled to develop a military capable of independent action to defend their strategic interest."[148]

Open U.S. support for Taiwan might not lead to a formal declaration of independence, but certainly would encourage Taiwan in that direction. Such support would require a clear American security commitment. This would be unacceptable to the P.R.C. and would result in Chinese coercion against the U.S. and Taiwan. A declaration of independence or Taiwan's obstinacy in the face of P.R.C. coercion probably would result in war.

Open U.S. support of Taiwan would mean U.S. facilities in the region could be targeted as well as the Taiwan military. P.R.C. military have threatened this, and the missiles that can reach Japan and other U.S. allies are nuclear-capable.[149] Chinese military history demonstrates readiness to use surprise attacks, especially against more powerful foes.[150]

During earlier crises, the U.S. was able to plan a response without needing to consider China's capability to harm American forces in the region, much less the continental United States. For any future crisis involving the P.R.C., the U.S. must consider China's potential use of conventional, cyber and nuclear weapons against U.S. forces in East Asia and the Pacific and targets in the continental United States.

While many consider the statement by a Chinese general that the P.R.C. could act militarily against Taiwan without fear of U.S. intervention because U.S. leaders "care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan" to include a great deal of bluff, it would be foolish to ignore such threats. It is not clear the P.R.C. leadership understands the seriousness of using nuclear weapons against another nuclear power, especially first use.[151] In any case, all future U.S. planning regarding Taiwan must include the remote possibility it could escalate into a nuclear war.[152]

Current U.S. doctrine includes attacking the enemy's command and control system, strategic weapons, airfields, and communications and utilities infrastructure, but the U.S. has never fought even a regional war against another nuclear power. American war planning for the Taiwan Strait should consider potential consequences of striking Mainland

Chinese facilities – or allowing Taiwan to do so – and consider options that do not risk escalation to nuclear war.[153]

The U.S. must also plan for a protracted crisis. Democracies do not handle long-term conflicts well, and the U.S. is known for its desire to get in, get done and get out. The P.R.C. would be at an advantage if the U. S. had to deploy resources to the region over an extended period, without the crisis ever rising to a level that would require military intervention. How the American public, Congress and American allies would respond to the expense, stress and impact on the U.S. to meeting its responsibilities in other areas is unclear, but history is not encouraging.

One possibility relates to China's self-image as a moral exemplar. This both places a limit on how the U.S. can deal with China and opens a door. The limit is the U.S. should neither put China in a place where it is forced to see itself or allow others to see it as acting immorally nor use language that portrays China's behavior toward Taiwan as immoral.

At the same time, it might be possible to portray to China what could constitute a settlement of the Taiwan situation that leaves Taiwan separate from China (but not formally independent) and puts China in a morally favorable light. This would have to be approached cautiously because of China's sovereignty concern and fear of internal instability, but as a long-term process, it might offer the greatest prospect of enduring peace.

Taiwan would have to be encouraged at the same time to accept the status quo with its lack of "international space" for the foreseeable future in order to ease domestic pressure on Chinese leaders. To be successful, this policy would have to maintain the status quo for several generations in hope Chinese irredentism would moderate over time.

Deterrence theory suggests effective deterrence requires understanding the motivation and degree of determination of our adversary. Ellis says the U.S. should "determine the pressure points to which Chinese leadership will respond."[154] Applying this to China's expressed concerns about national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the threat to encourage separatist movements within Mainland China would strike at a matter of expressed Chinese interest and concern. It would also be relatively inexpensive and unlikely to result in a direct U.S.-P.R.C. military confrontation.

The downside is being able to turn the threat off as readily as one turns it on. This option would require major preparation, and it could easily outpace U.S. ability to control or halt it. This option would also be constrained by both American law governing covert operations and domestic opinion when the operation became public knowledge (as it surely would).

A final possibility, one whose application in this case is unclear, would be to make conquering Taiwan appear much less valuable to China than it now does. This seems to be difficult to implement because China's greatest perceived benefits are self-image and prestige, not economic resources or strategic position.

Given Taiwan's rugged interior and history of guerrilla activity against occupiers, well-publicized preparations for such operations and a discrete American expression of readiness to encourage and even assist them would warn China it could be entering into a situation that could slowly bleed its resources in the way Vietnam did the U.S. and Afghanistan did the Soviet Union. But would this threat deter China? Probably not.

Japan's Role

More than half a century after its defeat in World War II, Japan remains in an awkward position in East Asia. Despite its peace constitution, relatively small military and weakened economy, Japan's neighbors have not forgotten its imperialist history and continue to fear the possibility of a remilitarized Japan. Japan has the strong scientific and economic foundation to quickly develop a powerful military. Japan has its own regional concerns, not the least of which is a potentially powerful China. Chinese success against Taiwan would only increase the P.R.C.'s regional power and the danger to Japan. Control of Taiwan would put the P.R.C. astride the sea lanes through which passes much of Japan's commerce.

For Japan, the best option is continuation of the status quo, both in the China-Taiwan relationship and in the Japanese-American relationship. While the mutual security treaty and more recent security guidelines create obligation on Japan's part, they also protect Japan from the need to create

a powerful military with the regional reaction this would engender. If it so decided, Japan could quickly become the peer (other than in size) of any regional power except the United States.

Conflict in the Taiwan Strait would be a nightmare for Japan. Japan would have to choose between its U.S. alliance and the strategic benefit of a non-hostile relationship with China. Freeman believes this dilemma would lead many Japanese to advocate developing an independent defense force to pursue Japan's strategic interests.[155] Because of lingering anti-Japanese feelings in China, any direct Japanese involvement in a Taiwan crisis would likely exacerbate the crisis and even provoke escalation.[156]

Japan's current leaders are disinclined to accept guilt for Japan's imperial past and are also taking a close look at the U.S.-Japan security alliance. While the alliance is less costly to Japan and less threatening to Japan's neighbors than other options, it brings with it the domestic consequences of having American military bases in Japan and is a source of contention on Okinawa where most of the U.S. bases are located.

Conclusions

The Taiwan Strait remains a potential flash point between the United States and China. This is not only because the U.S. has interests in the East Asia-Pacific region that conflict with China's, but also because the current status of Taiwan focuses those interests in a way that demonstrates their incompatibility. The tension has existed for 60 years without war, but the past is no guarantee of the future. The leaders of the P.R.C. appear to take the possibility of war more seriously than do American leaders and are preparing for that eventuality. There is the distinct possibility the U.S. and Taiwan are preparing for a different type of military crisis than the P.R.C. may be planning. The more this is true, the less successful will be deterrence efforts.

Part of the complexity the U.S. faces is historical attachment to Taiwan, but "Taiwan is a place that Americans ought to like."[157] In a part of the world populated by dictatorships and failed democracies, Taiwan has progressed in less than 20 years from a reactionary dictatorship to a vibrant, if rowdy, democracy. It has a strong economy, vibrant society and

a range of freedoms. Taiwan offers a model for other Asian states, and that makes China uncomfortable.

All parties would prefer the status quo continues. This worked well through the late 1980s, but political and economic developments have frayed it. So China and Taiwan no longer understand the status quo in precisely the same way. The new dynamic threatens regional stability because China faces the possibility of Taiwan following a separate path. Acquiescing in this would be political suicide for China's leaders.

Most discussion of the Taiwan situation emphasizes the military elements. These are important, but not the most important. The P.R.C.-U.S.-Taiwan relationship is fundamentally political and can only be settled politically. The military emphasis avoids the hard work of developing non-military options acceptable to all. Just as strategists attempt to "think outside the box" to develop better military solutions, so too must policymakers think unconventionally about Taiwan to find creative possibilities short of war.

The U.S. military has planned and war-gamed conflict in the Taiwan Strait. The question is whether it has been preparing for the right conflict. When deterrence breaks down, the course of action the U.S. has been preparing for may not be the one China chooses – and China is likely to strike first in case of war. China would prefer to gain control of Taiwan in a way that provides the U.S. no rationale for intervening and every incentive not to. American leaders should consider now how they might respond then, instead of waiting for a *fait accompli*. It is essential to convince Chinese decision-makers to remember Pearl Harbor and not "Blackhawk Down" when they think about American willingness to fight. At the same time, U.S. and Taiwanese leaders should remember other, no less crucial lessons of Pearl Harbor.

China brings many advantages to conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Geography is obvious, but probably even greater is timing. Unless Taiwan for some reason decides to strike first, China can decide when, how and even where to act. The ideal time for China would be when the United States is distracted by another part of the world and has deployed significant forces there.

In a war over Taiwan, everyone will lose, but some more than others (Taiwan the most). The military, political and economic cost will be high. The consequence of the P.R.C. forcibly gaining control over Taiwan

without an American response would probably be even more serious because of the regional military and political repercussions. China's stated interests are such that, apart from an unexpected resolution, deterrence will almost certainly fail in the long run.

The U. S. can delay Chinese action against Taiwan, but cannot deter China indefinitely. At least in part, this is because China does not believe American interests and commitment match those of China. The U.S. needs to clearly define and explain its interests relating to Taiwan, both to the American public and to China's leaders.

The best situation would be an indefinite continuation of the status quo and of the American policy of strategic ambiguity. The former is unlikely, but the latter is possible. It will require close coordination within the U.S. government, careful consideration of the military and political impact of deploying a missile defense system to the region, continued visible American military presence in the region, and encouragement to the P.R.C. and Taiwan to explore unconventional options for settling the future status of Taiwan.

The United States should begin by gaining a better understanding of how China sees itself and its place in the world. U.S. policymakers also need to consider how their words and actions appear to Chinese and Taiwanese leaders. What they intend from their historical and cultural perspective is not necessarily what the Chinese see from theirs.

Equally important is recognizing the many Chinese misperceptions about the United States and working to correct them. Planners will have to take these misperceptions into account because they can increase political friction and lead to military conflict. The most serious misperception is the U.S. actively seeks to weaken China and block its rise and every U.S. action in the region is directed toward this end.[158]

Apart from a Taiwanese misstep, the crucial variable is the perception of China's leaders. While recognizing Chinese interests regarding Taiwan, the U.S. must clearly state its interests in the area and a willingness to use force to defend them – without compromising the strategic ambiguity that has been central to U.S. policy. This should be balanced by encouraging China and Taiwan to see the advantages, especially economic, that derive from the status quo.

The greatest danger is if China's leaders come to believe they have more control over the situation than they actually do or they become

convinced they have run out of options. There will be some situations where China believes the time is right for action, and it has the advantage, but can be convinced otherwise. Under other conditions, however, the cost becomes irrelevant and nothing will deter China from taking military action against Taiwan.

Notes

CHAPTER 5

[1] In this study, People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) or China designates the nation the United States, the United Nations and most of the world's countries recognize as China. The government of the Republic of China and the island it is primarily located on will be called Taiwan. While this study focuses on the U.S.-P.R.C.-Taiwan relationship, it is important to remember Taiwan is not the only point of disagreement between the P.R.C. and the U.S.

[2] Denny Roy, *Taiwan Strait Update: Crisis Deferred* (Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, February 2006), 2.

[3] Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (June 2008). The 2010 National Security Strategy, however, describes the military situation more indirectly and encourages development of a cooperative relationship between the U.S. and the P.R.C. See Barak Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington: The White House, May 2010), 43.

[4] Michael McDevitt, "For Taiwan, the Best Defense Is Not a Good Offense" (Pacific Forum CSIS, PacNet Number 9, Feb. 22, 2007). See also Kenneth Lieberthal, "Preventing a War over Taiwan," *Foreign Affairs* 84/2 (March/April 2005), 53.

[5] Su Ge, "Sino-American Relations: Climbing High to See Afar," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, (September 2001), as found on the U.S.-China Commission web site, http:www.uscc.gov (Nov. 6, 2002).

[6] Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen, "China: Getting the Questions Right," *National Interest* 62, (Winter 2000/2001), p.17.

[7] Denny Roy, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," *Survival* 42 (2000), 78.

[8] Roy, *Taiwan Strait Update: Crisis Deferred*, p. 8.

[9] I am indebted to Alan Wachman for the language to make this distinction between delaying and deterring clear.

[10] Roger Cliff, et al, *Entering the Dragon's Laire: Chinese Antiaccess Stretagies and Their Implications for the United States*, "Some of the measures are relatively low cost, but others will require additional capabilities and still others may require a fundamental reassessment of operational doctrine and plans" (Santa Monica: Rand, 2007), xix.

[11] See, for example, Gao Fuqiu, "The Real Purpose of the American March into Central Asia," *Liaowing* (May 10, 2002), as found on the US-China Commission web site, http:www.uscc.gov (Nov. 6, 2002). Su warns the P.R.C. will not permit Taiwan's status as part of China to change.

[12] I am indebted to Andrew Scobell for emphasizing to me the P.R.C.'s self-image as an international moral leader.

[13] Wang Jisi and Xu Hui, "Pattern of Sino-American Crises: A Chinese Perspective," in Michael D. Swaine, et al. (editors). *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 135

[14] Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited," *China Quarterly* 121 (1990), 115.

[15] Cited in Jaw-ling Joanne Chang, "Lessons from the Taiwan Relations Act," *Orbis* 44, (2000), 69.

[16] David A. Shlapak, et al., *A Question of Balance: Political Context and Military Aspects of the China-Taiwan Dispute* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2009), 141.

[17] Alan Wachman, *Challenges and Opportunities in the Taiwan Strait: Defining America's Role*, China Policy Series Number 17 (New York: National Committee on United States-China Relations, 2001), 27.

[18] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Scobell suggests both the Confucian-Mencian and *realpolitik* approaches are operative and interactive, combining dialectically. This could explain how China can display realism while at the same time claiming the moral high ground. Scobell made this suggestion at a conference on "The Rise of China: Security Implications" in Chapel Hill, N.C. (March 2-3, 2001).

[19] Ibid., 256-257.

[20] Andrew Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*, (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), 3.

[21] Ibid, 3. What Scobell calls preemptive is better described as surprise attacks. See also Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Crisis Management: Framework for Analysis, Tentative Observations, and Questions for the Future," in Andrew Scobell and Larry M. Wortzel (editors.), *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking under Stress* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 36.

[22] In his *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington: National Defense University, 2000), xv and 39. Michael Pillsbury applies this to the U.S.-P.R.C. relationship and comments in particular that China seems to assume other nations share its view about the future use of military force. Interestingly, however, while the P.R.C. sees itself as a peace-loving nation, it views the United States as guided by *realpolitik*. This makes it very difficult for China to take "soft" American interests regarding Taiwan seriously. It also means not only that China sees itself as peace-loving, but also expects other nations to see it this way despite any actions to the contrary.
[23] Swaine in Scobell and Wortzel, *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking under Stress*, 23. "In China, domestic factions often are critically important in a political-military crisis, and, in some instances, arguably more important than external factors…. Both elite and popular views and actions involving internal issues and concerns can limit options, increase rigidity, slow response times, and distort signals in a crisis."
[24] Most of the insights in this paragraph come from Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
[25] Michael D. Swaine, "Conclusion: Implications, Questions, and Recommendations," in Michael D. Swaine, *Managing Sino-American Crises*, 436.
[26] Susan L. Craig, *Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Security Threats* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 1.
[27] Ezra F. Vogel, "Current U.S.-China Relations," *Harvard China Review* 2 (Spring/Summer 2000), 21-22.
[28] Phillip C. Saunders, "China's America Watchers: Changing Attitudes towards the United States," *China Quarterly* 161 (2000), 50-51.
[29] John W. Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 150-151.
[30] Michael D. Swaine and Oriana Skylar Mastro, "Assessing the Threat," in Swaine, et al. (editors), *Assessing the Threat: The Chinese Military and Taiwan's Security* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), 351.
[31] Richard Halloran, "Who's the Sleeping Tiger Now? U.S.?" *Boston Globe* (Sept. 10, 2000), F2. Halloran was specifically addressing the U.S.-China-Taiwan relationship and challenging the widespread misperception that the U.S. is afraid to suffer casualties under any circumstance.
[32] Richard Sobol at a discussion of his book, *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*, at the Harvard COOP Bookstore (March 12, 2001).
[33] Statement of Zhu Xianlong in *Zhongguo Pinglun* (March 5, 1999), quoted in Roy, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," 88. See also Andrew J. Nathan "China's Goals in the Taiwan Strait," *China Journal* 36 (1996), 90; James Mulvenon, "P.R.C. Information Operations: Myths, Trends, and New Opportunities," 246, in Swaine, *Assessing the Threat*; Denny Roy, *Taiwan's Threat Perceptions: The Enemy Within*, Occasional Paper Series (Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, March 2003), 2.
[34] See Phillip C. Saunders, "Project Strait Talk: Security and Stability in the Taiwan Strait," Center for Nonproliferation Studies (Monterey: Monterey Institute of International Studies, July 2000), 5, 6.
[35] Desmond Ball, "Strategic Culture in the Asian-Pacific Region," *Security Studies* 3 (1993), 63-64.
[36] Saunders, 9.
[37] Interview with Alan Wachman at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Feb. 8, 2001). Dr. Wachman was one of the academics involved in the conversation.
[38] Alan D. Romberg, "Future East Asian Security Architecture: Implications for the PLA," in Swaine, *Assessing the Threat*, 319.
[39] Craig, *Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Security Threats*, p. 47; Richard E. Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently … and Why* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 45.
[40] Vogel, 21-22.
[41] Garver, 147; Wang and Xu, in Swaine, *Managing Sino-American Crises*, 139.
[42] Robert D. Kaplan, "The Geography of Chinese Power: How Far Can Beijing Reach on Land and at Sea?," *Foreign Affairs* 89/3 (May/June 2010), 38.
[43] Garver, 147.
[44] Alastair Iain Johnston, "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behaviour 1949-1992: A First Cut at the Data," *China Quarterly* 153 (1998), 2.

[45] Lonnie D. Henly, "Evolving Chinese Concepts of War Control and Escalation Management," in Swaine, *Assessing the Threat*, 97. "One finds little consideration of the possibility that what China considers a resolute response to maintain the political initiative, the opponent might misconstrue as alarming preparations for aggressive military action. Chinese military authors seem to be unable to get outside of their own subjective view of china's innocent intentions and righteous principled stance to see China as others might view it."

[46] See Global Views Survey Research Center, *Survey on Signing of Economic Cooperation Agreement with Other Countries, People's Views on Unification with China and Independence and President Ma Ying-jeou's Approval Rating* (March 23, 2010), 3, http://taiwansecurity.org/2010/GVMaApproval_ECFA-032310.pdf, (May 31, 2010).

[47] Andrew Scobell, *Show of Force: The PLA and the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1999), 16.

[48] Taiwan Affairs Office and Information Office of the P.R.C. State Council, "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue," (issued Feb. 21, 2000,) *Asian Affairs* 27 (2000), 37-53.

[49] Banyan, "Bottoming out," *The Economist* 395/8678 (April 17-23, 2010), 50. It has been suggested the P.R.C. has overstated U.S. decline and the P.R.C.'s rise, emphasizing U.S. weakness while minimizing Chinese weaknesses and greatly overrating China's economic leverage over the U.S.

[50] David A. Shlapak, et al., *A Question of Balance: Political Context and Military Aspects of the China-Taiwan Dispute* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2009), 12. Shlapak says the P.R.C. has found economic coercion a potentially powerful weapon, but one difficult to use effectively.

[51] Shlapak, *A Question of Balance*, 16.

[52] *National Security Strategy* (2010), 43.

[53] Denny Roy, *Taiwan's Threat Perceptions: The Enemy Within*, 8.

[54] Jacob K. Javits, "Congress and Foreign Relations: The Taiwan Relations Act," *Foreign Affairs* 60 (Fall 1981), 59.

[55] Ralph N. Clough, *Reaching Across the Taiwan Strait: People-to-People Diplomacy* (Boulder: Westview, 1993), 187. See also Denny Roy, "Rising China and U.S. Interests: Inevitable vs. Contingent Hazards," *Orbis* 47/1, (Winter 2003), 136.

[56] Denny Roy, "U.S.-Taiwan Arms Sales: The Perils of Doing Business with Friends," *Asia-Pacific Security Studies* 3/3 (April 2004), 4.

[57] Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Struggle for Mastery in Asia," *Commentary* 110 (November 2000), 17. At an IFPA-Fletcher-USMC Security Conference in 2001, Ambassador Stephen Bosworth said if an East Asian state achieved regional hegemonic status, U.S. vital interests would be very much affected. William Perry, then-Secretary of Defense, says in March 1996, then-National Security Advisor Anthony Lake told a delegation of senior Chinese officials the U.S. has vital national security interests in the western Pacific and the ongoing Chinese missile firings threatened those interests. See Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, *Preventative Defense: A New Security Strategy for America*, (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1999), pp. 96-97.

[58] Kurt Campbell, in a luncheon presentation at MIT's Security Studies Program (Nov. 1, 2000).

[59] Sandy Berger, National Security Adviser during the Clinton administration, at Harvard's JFK School of Government (March 12, 2001). Governments like that of the P.R.C. often find it difficult to understand and respond to the American habit of making its national values part of its international relations – especially when these would appear to detrimental to U.S. national interest narrowly defined. Yet given the right set of circumstances, the P.R.C. would respond to Taiwan in a way other nations might consider irrational and contrary to its national interest.

[60] Douglas Porch, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996: Strategic Implications for the United States Navy," *Naval War College Review* 52 (1999), 29.

[61] Ephraim Kam, *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 71.

[62] Recent reports suggest neither the P.R.C. nor Taiwan has integrated the weaponry it possesses. In addition, the P.R.C. pilots do not appear to be well trained or to receive sufficient flying hours each year to maintain proficiency. Taiwan has been reported to suffer a lack of pilots for its latest generation fighters because many pilots leave the air force to fly for the airlines.

[63] Department of Defense, "Report to Congress Pursuant to Public Law 106-113" (Dec. 18, 2000), DefenseLink at http://www.defenselink.mil/twstrait_12182000.html, (Dec. 20, 2000).

[64] Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Crisis Management: Framework for Analysis, Tentative Observations and Questions for the Future," in Scobell and Wortzle, *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking Under Stress*, 28. "This critical set of variables influencing China's crisis management behavior is very poorly understood in the West, and even, it seems, within much of the Chinese political system."

[65] Michael Pillsbury, "China's Military Strategy toward the U.S.: A View from Open Sources" (Nov. 2, 2001), 4, U.S.-China Commission website http://www.uscc.gov, (Nov. 5, 2002).
[66] Swaine and Mastro, "Assessing the Threat," 346, in Swaine, *Assessing the Threat*. See also Shlapak, *A Question of Balance, passim*.
[67] Mark A. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization: Implications for the United States* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1999), 145.
[68] Jason D. Ellis and Todd M. Koca, "China Rising: New Challenges to the U.S. Security Posture," Strategic Forum number 175, Institute for National Security Studies (Washington: National Defense University, 2000), 7.
[69] Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009* (March 2009), I.
[70] Swaine and Mastro, 345. See also Eric Hagt and Matthew Durnin, "China's Antiship Ballistic Missile: Developments and Missing Links," *Naval War College Review* 62/4 (Autumn 2009), 93, 95. They note hitting a moving ship with an antiship ballistic missile requires synchronizing a lot of very advanced technology and are skeptical that China has all the technology, much less the ability to synchronize it.
[60] Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China* (March 2009), 15.
[72] Richard A. Bitzinger, "Taipei's Arms Procurement Dilemma: Implications for Defending Taiwan," *Asia-Pacific Security Studies 3/4*, (April 2004), 2.
[73] Stokes, 137.
[74] "Q&A with Robert Kaplan on China," n.p., *Foreign Affairs* (May 7, 2010), http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/qa-robert-kaplan-on-china, (May 14, 2010).
[75] For an excellent overview of China's Information Warfare program, see Toshi Yoshihara, *Chinese Information Warfare: A Phantom Menace or Emerging Threat?* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002).
[76] Timothy L. Thomas, "Like Adding Wings to a Tiger: Chinese Information War Theory and Practice" (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, Foreign Military Studies Office, 2001), 2, http://call.army.mil/ call/fmso/fmsopubs/ issues/China, (Feb. 1, 2001).
[77] James Mulvenon, "The PLA and Information Warfare," 176, in James Mulvenon (ed.), *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1999), 183, Mulvenon also notes P.R.C. military planners tend to view IW as a preemptive weapon, which would make it especially attractive in a Taiwan scenario. Actually, we know something about Chinese cyber war capabilities because they have been used in various ways against the U.S. since 1999.
[78] Richard A. Clarke and Robert K. Knake, *Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do about It* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010). See especially Chapter 6. See also Wesley Clark and Peter Levin, "Securing the Information Highway," *Foreign Affairs* 88/6, (November/December 2009), 2-10.
[79] Mulvenon, in Swaine, *Assessing the Threat*, 256.
[80] Shlapak, *A Question of Balance*, p. 118, "An invasion of Taiwan would, in the face of properly prepared defenses, remain a bold and possibly foolish gamble on Beijing's part."
[81] See Yu Chuanxin, "A Few Issues Concerning Logistic Support for the Cross-strait Amphibious Landing Operation," *Journal of Military Economics Studies* (Jan. 15, 2001), 1, as found in translation on the U.S.-China Commission website, http://www.uscc.gov, (Nov. 6, 2002).
[82] Steven M. Goldstein, "China's Taiwan Strategy: Status Quo or Disequilibrium?" p. 186, in Jonathan B. Pollock (ed.), *Strategic Surprise? U.S.-China Relations in the Early Twenty-first Century* (Newport, R.I., Naval War College Press, 2003). "All these trends suggest that submarines will form the centerpiece of a gradual Chinese strategic reorientation toward maritime priorities." Robert Kaplan notes that a Chinese attack submarine tracked a U.S. carrier strike group in the Pacific undetected, finally surfacing within five miles of the carrier itself.
[83] Pillsbury, "China's Military Strategy toward the U.S.," 4. As Pillsbury notes, it is unclear how much influence this group has on P.R.C. military policy making.
[84] Pillsbury, "China's Military Strategy toward the U.S., 10-11. Pillsbury notes a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) officer as writing that instead of going head-to-head with U.S. Navy combatants, the PLAN should concentrate on attacking American naval command and control, information systems, and logistics because these are the minimally protected weak links in the system.
[85] Pillsbury, "China's Military Strategy toward the U.S.," 9-10.
[86] Tim Thomas, "China's Technological Stratagems," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 12 (December 2000), 39.

[87] Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, *America's Place in the World 2009: An Investigation of Public and Leadership Opinion About International Affairs*, (Dec. 2009), 2-3. A recent Pew survey found both that half of Americans believe the U.S. should "mind its own business and let other countries get along the best they can on their own," and that the public views a rising China as more worrisome than do opinion leaders.
[88] "Q&A with Robert Kaplan on China," n.p.
[89] Tom Donnelly, "Dire Strait," *Jane's Defense Weekly* 35 (March 14, 2001), 26.
[90] Mark A. Stokes, "China's Military Space and Conventional Theater Missile Development: Implications for Security in the Taiwan Strait," 151, in Susan M. Puska (ed.), *People's Liberation Army after Next* (Carlisle, Pa., Strategic Studies Institute, 2000). Roy, *Taiwan's Threat* Perceptions, 5. Taiwan's population apparently supports a force structure that would enable punitive strikes against the P.R.C. if it launched a missile attack on the island.
[91] This has become a political and security issue in the U.S. because compromise of the technology of the latest version of the F-16 fighter would harm U.S. airpower as well as Taiwan's.
[92] Drew Thompson, "China's Temper Tantrum," *The National Interest Online* (Feb. 2, 2010), http://www.nationalinterest.org/PrinterFriendly.aspx?id=22832, (March 22, 2010).
[93] David A. Shlapak, David T. Orlesky, and Barry A. Wilson, *Dire Strait? Aspects of the China-Taiwan Confrontation and Options for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), 51-54. Shlapak's 2009 update to the study, *A Question of Balance*, does not change this conclusion.
[94] Thomas J. Christensen, "Theater Missile Defense and Taiwan's Security," *Orbis* 44 (2000), 83.
[95] See Schlapak, *A Question of Balance*, *passim*, for a current assessment of Chinese capabilities.
[96] Stokes in Puska, *People's Liberation Army after Next*, 151.
[97] Richard Bush, "Chinese Decisionmaking under Stress: The Taiwan Strait, 1995-2004," 150, "As part of its negotiations playbook, Beijing seeks to get it adversary's acceptance of basic principles at the outset, which it manipulates to its advantage thereafter."
[98] Johnston, "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behaviour 1949-1992: A First Cut at the Data," 6-7, 28-29.
[99] See *NSS*, (2010), 43. The 2010 National Security Strategy seeks to counter this: "We welcome a China that takes on a responsible leadership role in working with the United States and the international community to advance priorities like economic recovery, confronting climate change, and nonproliferation."
[100] Swaine and Mastro, "Assessing the Threat," 346. McDevitt says the only way Taiwan can deter the P.R.C. militarily is to convince it that it cannot seize the island. This would require hard economic decisions in order to create a military that could do this. Also, "many observers assert that Taiwan is not improving its own military capabilities in many areas to a level and at a pace sufficient to ensure the maintenance of a credible deterrent against Chinese coercion or a PLA attack."
[101] Roy, *Taiwan's Threat Perceptions*, 8. "Ultimately much of Taiwan's insecurity stems from sources within Taiwan itself…. Taiwan in some instances lacks a mature democracy's capacity for serious, rational debate on important questions."
[102] Roy, *Taiwan's Threat Perceptions*, 5.
[103] Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), 55. "'Reasonable Western thinking finds it very difficult to accept that there are some conflicts which cannot be 'settled' other than by brute force."
[104] Americans forget other countries have the same problem in dealing with the United States, where domestic concerns often take priority over what would otherwise be pressing foreign policy matters and can lead to foreign policy decisions that make no sense if one does not know the domestic influences at work.
[105] I have drawn much of what I say about deterrence theory from Edward Rhoades, "Conventional Deterrence," *Comparative Strategy* 19 (2000), 221-253, Keith B. Payne, *Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), and Michael S. Gerson, "Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age," *Parameters* 39/3, (autumn 2009), 32-48. For attempts to apply deterrence theory to China, I am indebted to Robert S. Ross, Shu Guang Zhang and Abram N. Shulsky, among others. For an application of this to the Taiwan Strait, see Shlapak, *A Question of Balance*, 141-142. The conclusions with respect to China, however, are my own.
[106] Abram N. Shulsky, *Deterrence Theory and Chinese Behavior* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), 17.
[107] This is not solely a matter of applying moral standards to deterrence; a grossly disproportional threat is likely to lack credibility. Such a threat would be neither moral nor a deterrent. My assumption here is we should apply Just War criteria to deterrence in the same way we do (or should do) to war itself. After all, when deterrence fails, war is usually the result. I recognize for many this assumption creates a difficulty in regard to nuclear deterrence, but that is

all the more reason to inject moral criteria at the beginning of the process instead of appending them as an afterthought.

[108] Gerson, 40. "The credibility of conventional deterrence – and execution of the threat if deterrence fails – requires convincing potential aggressors the United States can and will rapidly respond to aggression against its global interests, and there is nothing the regime can do to prevent or hinder the response."

[109] Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 109-110.

[110] Gerson, 42. "Leaders motivated by the necessity to prevent losing something of value, however, may be willing to engage in a long and expensive conflict, especially if the stakes are deemed critical to national security or domestic political survival."

[111] Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1992), 272, 4.

[112] Rhoades, 222, 228.

[113] Ibid., 234-238.

[114] Payne, 79.

[115] Rhoades, 243.

[116] Robert Jervis, quoted in Rhoades, 238.

[117] Rhoades, 239.

[118] Payne, 121. "Because it is the challenger who ultimately chooses whether to be deterred but who cannot be controlled predictably, no deterrer, including the United States, can establish deterrence policies that it can be confident are 'ensured' or 'conclusive.' "

[119] Shulsky, 36.

[120] Shulsky, 35, 38, 39.

[121] Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 217.

[122] See Zalmay Khalilzad, et al., *The United States and a Rising China*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999), 85, and Alistair Iain Johnston, "China's New 'Old Thinking,'" *International Security* 20 (Winter 1995/96), 21.

[123] Shlapak, *A Question of Balance*, xix.

[124] Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force," *International Security* 25 (2000), 104.

[125] I agree with Betts and Christensen, page 28, about this. China will use all available military, economic and political options to achieve its goal.

[126] See, for example, Roy, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," 78.

[127] Eric A. McVadon, "The Chinese Military and the Peripheral States in the 21st Century: A Security *Tour d'Horizon*," 34, in Larry M. Wortzel (ed.), *The Chinese Armed Forces in the 21st Century* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1999).

[128] Bernice Lee, *The Security Implications of the New Taiwan*, Adelphi Paper 331, International Institute for Strategic Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 53. "Taiwan's domestic political development is gradually pulling the island away from reunification with China. Leaders in Beijing remain uncertain as how to respond, but know their nationalist agenda gives them little scope for compromise."

[129] Shulsky, 46.

[130] *Taiwan News*, (Nov. 22, 2002), Taiwan Security Research website (Nov. 30, 2002). "Top Envoy Says China Willing to Disarm: Proposal Hinges on U.S. Reduction of Military Assistance."

[131] Roy, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," 90, and interview with Dr. Leif Rosenberger at CINCPAC headquarters, (Nov. 13, 2000). But the often-predicted Chinese economic collapse has yet to happen.

[132] Wachman, 17-18. See also Banyan, 50.

[133] Sun Zi, *The Art of War*, trans. by Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 77. "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill." Those who understand this as the essence of Sun Zi's advice forget that it is surrounded by several hundred other sentences about how to fight wars, campaigns and battles.

[134] Mark Burles and Abram N. Shulsky, *Patterns in China's Use of Force: Evidence from History and Doctrinal Writings* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999), 17.

[135] Maria Hsia Chang, "The Future of Taiwan-Mainland Relations," 212, in Bih-jaw Lin and James T. Myers (eds.), *Contemporary China and the Changing International Community* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press,

1994). The 2002 China Security Review Commission report says Taiwan officials estimate the island could last only 120 days before it would require resupply of essential materials.

[136] Robert S. Ross, "The 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis: Lessons for the United States, China and Taiwan," *Security Dialogue* 27 (1996), 468.

[137] Gerson, 33-34. Gerson says preventing this is central to modern conventional deterrence.

[138] Jianxiang Bi, "Managing Taiwan Operations in the Twenty-first Century: Issues and Options," *Naval War College Review* 52 (1999), 38.

[139] See Andrew J. Nathan and Bruce Gilley, *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files*, (New York: New York Review of Books, 2002), 216 f. In *China's New Rulers*, however, Andrew Nathan quotes three members of the fourth generation of P.R.C. leaders as believing growing economic and cultural ties will inevitably draw Taiwan to the Mainland, the Democratic Progressive Party is passing phenomena, and the language of Taiwanese independence is an American plot. In a September 2002 study, the Atlantic Council reached much the same conclusion. It said China's leaders now believe that the rapidly increasing investment in the Mainland by Taiwanese businessmen is the first step toward the eventual incorporation of Taiwan into China. See also Charles Snyder, "Beijing Now Thinks Time on its Side, Report Says," *Taipei Times* (Sept. 6, 2002), Taiwan Security Research website, (Dec. 2, 2002).

[140] Shlapak, Orlesky, and Wilson, p. 60.

[141] Michael O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," *International Security* 25, (2000), p. 83.

[142] Jim Yardley and Thom Shanker. "Chinese Navy Buildup Gives Pentagon New Worries," *New York Times* (April 8, 2005), A3. "America's carriers responding to a crisis would now initially have to operate at least 500 miles from Taiwan" due to the threat of China's submarine fleet.

[143] China Security Review Commission, Report to the Congress of the U.S. (July 2002), Chapter 1, http://www.uscc.gov, (Oct. 28, 2002).

[144] International Crisis Group, *China and Taiwan: Uneasy Détente*, Asia Briefing No. 42 (Sept. 21, 2005), 5.

[145] Both China and Taiwan recognize American intervention almost certainly would be in support of Taiwan, the only questions being the nature and extent of intervention.

[146] Central News Agency (Taipei), "Poll Shows Americans Would Oppose Using Troops to Defend Taiwan," (Feb. 14, 2001), Taiwan Security Research homepage (Feb. 22, 2001). Other reports have suggested greater American support, especially if the P.R.C. attack were unprovoked and the U.S. president offered a clear and compelling statement of American interest in the outcome.

[147] Tucker, 153. "Even without formal obligations, many in the region think of Washington as Taipei's friend and patron, and might question their own relations with the U.S. if it stood aside."

[148] Charles W. Freeman, Jr., "Same Strait, Different Memories," 59, in Gerret W. Gong (ed.), *Remembering and Forgetting: The Legacy of War and Peace in East Asia*, (Washington: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1996).

[149] China Security Review Commission, Report to the Congress of the U.S. (July 2002), Chapter 8, http://www.uscc.gov, (Oct. 28, 2002).

[150] Burles and Shulsky, vii.

[151] Brad Roberts, "The Nuclear Dimension: How likely? How Stable?" in Swaine, *Assessing the* Threat, 234. China appears to believe "the asymmetry of stake and interest between China and the United States in a Taiwan contingency would only be magnified in a war that crosses the nuclear threshold."

[152] An attendee at a March 2001 conference on "The Rise of China," afraid China shows insufficient responsibility in the way it uses its nuclear status, commented that during the Cold War, no Soviet leader ever threatened nuclear attack on specific American cities if the U.S. intervened conventionally in a conflict the Soviet Union was interested in.

[153] See Shlapak, Orlesky and Wilson, xxi.

[154] Ellis and Koca, 7.

[155] Freeman, "Same Strait, Different Memories," 59.

[156] Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," *International Security* 23 (1999), 67.

[157] Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 149.

[158] Michael Pillsbury, "Dangerous Chinese Misperceptions: The Implications for DOD" (Washington: Department of Defense Office of New Assessment, 1998), 2, 4.