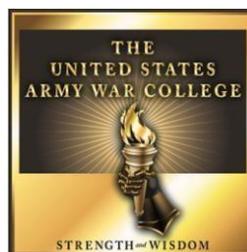


Guaranteeing Taiwanese Independence through the Use of Landpower

by

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Abstract

The United States, China, and Taiwan have a long and confusing history concerning the “one China” policy. While the United States bears a moral responsibility to recognize Taiwan as a rising democracy it has not done so despite Taiwan being a key economic trading partner and an integral defense partner in the East Asia region. There is a real concern that recognition of Taiwanese independence will result in China engaging in major combat operations to prevent an independent Taiwan from becoming a reality. Arguments will put forth that proper U.S. application of landpower will act as a deterrent and prevent China from exercising a military option in response to formal Taiwanese independence.

Guaranteeing Taiwanese Independence through the Use of Landpower

With United States' military operations in Southwest Asia slowly winding down, interest in the importance of the East-Asia region has re-awakened. As a result, the United States has been in the process of re-balancing its instruments of power with increased efforts in the Pacific region. This re-balance, despite the best intentions of the liberal worldview of the United States, has upset the People's Republic of China's (PRC or China henceforth) more realism based approach. China sees the United States' actions as strictly hegemonic and unwelcome in what the PRC perceives to be its region.

In the late 1980s, likely as a result of the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis, The People's Republic of China realized it could not prevent the United States Navy from defending Taiwan in the event of hostilities. To ensure they would not be powerless in a situation like this again, the PRC began a concerted effort to modernize and restructure their military with the express purpose of denying the United States Navy access within the first island chain. This modernization has also led the PRC to utilize tactics that are causing increased friction in the region and which, to date, the United States has not had an effective response for.

Driving the regional conflict is the China's disregard to adhere to the Rule of Law and other treaties to which it is party (UNCLOS) and to use coercion to get its way. The PRC's aggressive and unchecked military is resulting in an increasing number of violations of other nations' sovereignty. To support these unreasonable claims and actions China requires a military that has the capability to prevent the United States from intervening in East Asia. Allowing China to grow strong enough to deny the U.S. military from operating within the first island chain will force Taiwan to comply with reunification

on Beijing's terms under threat of punishment. This will also negatively impact the United States' ability to aid its treaty partners; particularly South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines.

The PRC's overly assertive behavior and territorial expansion is problematic to all nations with an interest in the East Asia region. The PRC's highly effective operations in the Grey Zone are generating a level of conflict that requires a substantial response by the United States.¹ This response is necessary to curb China, reassure United States treaty partners, and demonstrate commitment to maintaining the security of the region. This paper supports the premise that it is in the best interest of the United States and the nations of East Asia to confer formal diplomatic recognition on the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan). Leveraging U.S. relations with Taiwan would send a strong message to the PRC that hegemonic behavior, disregard for nations' sovereignty, and deliberate violation of the rule of law will have negative consequences. This would also demonstrate United States commitment to its partners in the region that it will not allow a rising China to subjugate U.S. allies. Additionally, recognition of Taiwan would counter China's efforts in the South and East China Seas to consolidate Anti Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities out to the first island chain. It is plausible to argue that United States recognition of Taiwan will bring a hostile response from the PRC. If so, how should the United States posture its forces to ensure its diplomatic efforts do not trigger major combat operations (MCO) with China? Phrased another way; in the event Taiwan declares independence what landpower applications need to be in place to prevent MCO with the PRC? The proper planning and application of landpower

exercises, rotational deployments and permanent forward basing will guarantee an independent Taiwan.

This paper will not deal with the moral justification for recognizing Taiwan, which alone is sufficient enough for recognition, but rather the national security benefits for doing so.² Proper utilization of military power, specifically landpower, will support Taiwan's move to independence, the United States' diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, and would deter China's hegemonic efforts without escalating to major combat operations.

The United States' current relationship with Taiwan is complex, confusing, and outdated. When the Carter administration severed ties with Taiwan in 1979 it solidified the efforts started by the Nixon administration to decide that China, rather than Taiwan, would be the "one China" the United States would officially recognize. With the United Nations and most of the world following suit Taiwan was effectively isolated diplomatically, militarily, and economically. The Carter administration's action regarding Taiwan did not sit well with the United States Congress (or the general public) which did not want to abandon Taiwan and begin friendly relations with the communist PRC.³ Congress responded by passing veto proof legislation that would be known as the Taiwan Relations Act (PL 96-8) (TRA). The act provided that the United States would guarantee the survival of Taiwan against the PRC by Congress enacting legislation forcing the Executive:

To help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, and for other purposes.⁴

In the TRA, Congress dictated to the Executive Branch that while the President may decide which countries would receive recognition from the United States, Congress would not consent to abandonment of an ally and potential democracy.⁵ The act was structured for the United States to maintain the security of Taiwan against the PRC. To ensure this, Congress authorized the sale of defensive weapons and United States military expertise to ensure the defense of Taiwan. The act also provided that the United States would guarantee the survival of Taiwan against the PRC by forcing the Executive to maintain security, commercial, and cultural ties with the people of Taiwan.⁶

To ensure that both ties remained and some level of diplomacy would still remain, Congress, through the TRA, established the American Institute of Taiwan. The Institute is a partially government funded, non-profit agency that receives diplomatic guidance from the Department of State. In effect, it acts as a consulate type organization.⁷ The bottom line was that Congress desired Taiwan to remain independent from China and for the United States to defend Taiwan to guarantee its independence.⁸ A byproduct of this security guarantee would allow both Taiwan and China to maintain the *status quo* and to review how each framed the problem of unification or independence, while postponing the possibility of violent resolution.

While both China and Taiwan initially laid claim to the title of the true representative of the Chinese people and espoused the goal of reunification under their respective leadership, time and circumstance has caused the Taiwanese position to evolve. Taiwan is a *de facto* independent nation that has all the identifying intuitions of other sovereign nations; control of territory, an independent and growing international economy, a capable military, and a functioning democratic government with a peaceful

transition of power. Taiwan has become, as Kaplan writes, “one of the Third World’s most successful democracies.”⁹

Taiwan has made great strides in transitioning into a model democratic state. The political situation in Taiwan has stabilized over the last twenty-five years. While the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) ruled the ROC under martial law for many years eventually Taiwan effectively transitioned to predominantly two-party rule. The 23 million people who live there have consistently elected into power a democratic government with a peaceful transition of power since the reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Currently there is disagreement regarding the question of independence between the major political parties of Taiwan. The KMT adhering to “one China” with Taiwan being the “one China” and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) advocating the independent Taiwan position. However, each party is fearful of how the PRC would react to a declaration of independence and so each is content to maintain the *status quo*.¹⁰

Financially, Taiwan has done an exceptional job growing its economy. Taiwan is the ninth largest trading partner of the United States, totaling over \$67 billion in exports and imports. The economy also supports over two hundred thousand jobs in both the export and services industries, according to the United States Department of Commerce.¹¹ Taiwan and China also are interdependent trading partners with \$198 billion in trade. China provides the cheap labor for Taiwanese business, allowing each significant economic growth. China is Taiwan’s largest trading partner while Taiwan is China’s seventh largest.¹² This economic success has enabled Taiwan to maintain a significant military capability. While both countries have benefited from their economic

cooperation, it is probable that in the aftermath of independence the PRC will cut off economic ties to Taiwan. While this may have negative short term effects, it is unlikely to harm Taiwan in the long run. Taiwan, realizing the dangers of being too closely tied to China economically, has sought to diversify its economy, noticeably to ASEAN and the other regional economies, doubling its investments in recent years. The service sector increasingly drives China's economy, this combined with rising Chinese labor rates and economic slowdown has reduces manufacturing as a percent of their GDP. This is further forcing Taiwan to diversify by moving their manufacturing out of China.¹³

One of the most significant aspects concerning the reality of an independent Taiwan is how the citizens of Taiwan view themselves. With the passage of time the people of Taiwan increasingly identify themselves as a separate people from the mainland, seeing themselves as Taiwanese and not as Chinese. The cultural and social result is that the desire to unify with the mainland diminishes and becomes less likely.¹⁴ With the growth of Taiwanese identity, the meaning of the Republic of China fades and with it the inherent challenges of the "one China" policy. The people of Taiwan see themselves as Taiwanese, not Chinese, and they increasingly desire recognition of Taiwan as an independent, legitimate nation, in the same way the PRC sought legitimacy. The reality is that Taiwan is a *de facto* nation. As the two nations continue to drift apart Taiwan will most likely seek *de jure* recognition. Depending on when this happens and how Taiwan approaches the issue will determine if forcible, violent reunification under the PRC takes place or Taiwan will become a universally recognized independent nation.¹⁵

It is also unlikely Taiwan will allow itself to be willingly incorporated into the mainland as long as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is in power. How intensely Taiwan advocates for independence largely depends on which party is in power; however, the population increasingly identify themselves as Taiwanese and distinct from China and this will most likely shift the Taiwanese political parties view toward the people.¹⁶ Taiwan is a legitimate nation that does not place any correlation between its existence and a “one China.” This is where Taiwan has moved forward and China, despite its economic growth and reach, remains stagnant, held back by its politics and ideology.

China, despite a growing economy, still has a repressive government that utilizes the economy and the military as the primary and preferred method of maintaining power. The PRC/CCP consistently attempts to use coercion and the threat of force to impose its will on determining Taiwan’s status rather than allowing the self-determination of a people and a land it has never ruled. The fact is the PRC has never had control over Taiwan since coming to power. Taiwan has been separate from the mainland since ceded to Japan in 1895 following China’s (Qing Empire) defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. Following World War Two Taiwan reverted back to the Republic of China (under nationalist, KMT control). The legitimate government of Taiwan has continuously maintained control of the island since that time.¹⁷

The PRC has been very consistent with their position on Taiwan since the KMT withdrew from the mainland and established themselves on Taiwan. China views Taiwan as a breakaway Chinese province that inevitably must return to mainland control. For China, reunification under the communist PRC is a non-negotiable issue.

The PRC leadership is adamant that China and Taiwan will eventually unify, citing unification as one of its core interests. This idea of reunification is a central tenant to their leadership which they regard as a means to maintain the legitimacy of their government.¹⁸ Furthermore, the PRC views the Taiwan issue as an internal Chinese matter and any foreign intervention as unwelcome. Finally, the PRC has never disavowed the use of force to affect reunification should Taiwan declare independence. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to position forces in the region poised to give the impression that combat power is available to use against Taiwan.¹⁹

Attempting to conquer an independent nation that is protected by the United States carries a risk that the PRC is unlikely to overcome. China cannot avoid the fact that the United States military is too strong for the PLA to engage effectively. The United States is the only military force capable of significant force projection. Its numerous defense partners and ability to build coalitions place the PRC, with its penchant for unilateral action, at a disadvantage. Finally, the United States' overwhelming experience in naval warfare, domination of the air domain, and 15 years of recent land combat is something the PLA will not be able to replicate for generations. While the modernization efforts of the PRC are something that the United States and its regional partners should be concerned about, it is offset by the long-term efforts of the various coalitions in the region and the extensive military capability of the United States. Should the PRC decide to escalate to MCO over Taiwan or any other friction point in the region, the PLA would not fare well against the United States. A crushing defeat would set China's military modernization plan back significantly and possibly permanently. Most critically, the CCP internal security apparatus would be threatened when it becomes apparent the PLA is

perceived as incapable of defending China. This failure would be seen as a negative reflection on the ability of the CCP to effectively manage the security of the state.

Despite China's consistent position to discard peaceful means in response to Taiwan declaring independence, it is unlikely the PRC will do so in the immediate future.²⁰ Any escalation of the situation resulting in military action would work in Taiwan's favor by aligning the international community against the PRC. While China is indeed a rising power, the PLA is not capable of waging successful major combat operation (MCO) against United States. Any open hostilities that result in MCO could be catastrophic to the PLA and, as a result, the CCP. Therefore, it is not necessary for the United States to enter into MCOs with the PRC, it is enough to show force, demonstrate a willingness to use military superiority and reinforce to the PRC that the threat of punishment against the PLA is a very real option for the United States. As such, the United States should increase their presence in the region.

With the unlikelihood of major combat the United States should more aggressively engage the PLA in the Grey Zone. This could be accomplished by increasing United States naval presence in the South and East China Seas, as well as conducting joint maritime operations with Japan and our other treaty allies. The Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) currently conducted are minimal in frequency and are often contested by Chinese Coast Guard and paramilitary maritime forces.²¹ These operations only serve to confuse the situation. United States and coalition partners would be better served to conduct Surface Warfare exercises to demonstrate the capability gap between coalition and PLA naval forces. Also, Strike Warfare demonstrations will undermine the PLA's ability to defend land features in the

South China Sea and elsewhere, and demonstrate United States' commitment to the region.²² The U.S. emphasis needs to be on coalition exercises that stress offensive operations. This will visibly demonstrate to the PRC that its modernization efforts, even if effective, will not be sufficient to overcome a peer competitor with committed allies.

Annual landpower exercises conducted by the United States and its defense treaty partners demonstrates the capability of the combined force.²³ Thailand annually hosts *Cobra Gold*, the region's largest military exercise focusing on interoperability and security cooperation. In 2017 *Cobra Gold* placed an emphasis on amphibious operations, senior leader engagement and combined arms live fire exercises (CALFEX).²⁴ The Republic of Korea conducted *Ulchi Freedom Guardian* (now a compilation of many exercises), largely a command post exercise focusing on interoperability. Primarily a bilateral event, there are United Nations partner nations that also participate. During this exercise, the cyber domain is heavily tested for interoperability between all joint and coalition partners. The U.S. Army's First Signal Brigade supported 30,000 participating military personnel with 99% network availability.²⁵ Another key component of the 2016 iteration was the focus on U.S. and Korean Theater Air and Missile Defense. The 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command and their Korean counterpart managed the Combined Air and Missile Defense Command Post to validate interoperability of the defense system against North Korean attacks.²⁶ Another treaty partner, Japan, conducts *Yama Sakura*, a bilateral command-post exercise focusing on the defense of the island nation. The exercise is designed to improve interoperability and readiness between United States and Japanese Defense forces. *Yama Sakura* also demonstrates U.S. resolve to the region.²⁷

All these exercises reinforce the importance of effective landpower and should demonstrate why increased defense cooperation with Taiwan would help secure their formal independence. The important aspect of these exercises is they all support combined operations in a multi-domain environment, the key aspect to defending any landmass against the PRC. While these various exercises demonstrate military capability, support defense cooperation, and contribute to regional stability by exhibiting U.S. ability to deploy forces to the region, it does not truly demonstrate commitment. Therefore, United States' efforts to develop its landpower presence throughout the region should adequately be increased to meet the growing security concern posed by China to United States' interests.²⁸

It is a common misconception to think of the Asia Pacific region as strictly a maritime and air domain. While both the Navy and Air Force are major factors in the region (due to those services abilities to overcome the tyranny of distance more quickly than CONUS based ground forces) it is landpower that will ultimately determine the success or failure of the United States ability to influence the region. The greatest challenge in any theater is on land. Unlike the other domains, ground forces must deal with the population of that region. Governance and security must be established or maintained and it needs to be locally controlled, not managed by an occupation force. Resource requirements need to remain uninterrupted to maintain the population to ensure stability. Once landpower is installed it is committed. A nation cannot easily remove itself from the mission. Achieving objectives will not come from the sea or air. It will come from the nation that has the best application of landpower; capability and size (tempered with technology) are the key to success.²⁹ It is not enough simply to occupy

landmass. Once invested the ground force must control not just the land but all the domains supporting or influenced by it. Technology can provide the capability to accomplish this without excessive numbers. This is important for mitigating risk against highly lethal adversaries. Adaptive mobile formations capable of operating in, and controlling all domains, will be important.

The effective use of landpower can, and must be utilized to defend U.S. interests in the region. The Island of Taiwan is a natural means to project power into the South and East China Seas. Geographically close to the Chinese mainland, Taiwan offers forces based there the ability to interdict Chinese maritime movement into the Pacific from a large number of their home ports. It also acts as a platform to control the air domain over the strait and further integrate air and missile defense from Korea to Japan to the United States Fleet operating to the South. By linking Japan and the Philippines it acts, according to James R. Holmes of the Naval War College, as the key strategic location to control access between the security/conflict systems of Northeast and Southeast Asia.³⁰ The sea lines of communication (SLOC) to Japan and South Korea would be especially vulnerable if the PRC controlled the island of Taiwan. Utilizing landpower to provide for security and maintain allied and coalition SLOCs in the region therefore is paramount. The PRC knows this and places a premium on eventually gaining control of the island. U.S. land-based weapons systems, specifically radar (AN/TPY-2, AN/MPQ-64F1) and other ISR assets (MQ-1C Grey Eagle) operating as part of an integrated air defense network, in friendly defended airspace, will be able to influence the operational area deep into the mainland.³¹ This will help establish a secure

axis for the United States Navy to operate in a relatively secure zone inside the first island chain.

With ongoing worldwide commitments, a finite number of carrier strike groups, and an uncertain budget, it is possible that there may be no carrier group available if hostilities start in the region. Without establish shore-based systems to immediately counter PLA forces the U.S. Navy may not be willing to risk sending a carrier into an operational area where the United States does not possess at least localized superiority, as the ability of the carrier to control the seas and the ability to counter Chinese A2/AD systems is in question. The problem to solve is what type and configuration (addressing all domains) of landpower can provide an A2/AD capability to counter the PLA and provide security for Taiwan? The answer is the introduction of forward-based landpower.

The PRC desires to move out to the first island chain and exclude the United States with an anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) system. An independent and militarily integrated Taiwan would seriously inhibit the PRC's capability to do this by linking Japan to United States naval operations in the South China Sea and Western Pacific. United States landpower will enable this. Forward basing of Army land systems on Taiwan and its islands, would be key to shaping operations in the region by dominating all domains. The Army's missile defense systems, THAAD and PATRIOT, are integrated, short to medium range systems that will be instrumental in setting the theater to include defense of the fleet and interdiction of PLA operations in the greater Taiwan region. When integrated with the Navy's AEGIS systems as well as Taiwan's internal systems, the missile defense capability that can be fielded is formidable. In turn, this allows the

United States military to use A2/AD to limit the PRC's ability to project power in the Western Pacific.³² This will limit China's influence to its mainland-based systems. In effect, the United States can cancel the PLA's ability to completely deny access to the region by establishing an A2/AD umbrella over Taiwan that extends well into the Chinese interior. This will allow the United States to use forces based on Taiwan as a potential gateway to access the mainland either with airpower or amphibious forces.

The United States' perceived lack of a peer adversary in 1990s and the distraction of 15 years of fighting a low-tech adversary in Central Asia and the Middle East has allowed the PRC to close the capability gap.³³ During this time funding and procurement was spent in the pursuit of defeating a terrorist, asymmetric threat rather than developing the next generation of weapons and the tactics required to employ them.³⁴ China has used this time to study United States doctrine and tactics, and to develop new systems to counter existing U.S. military capability. The United States has not had to fight a near-peer adversary since the first Gulf War (the Cyber and Space domains were in their infancies and had only a small bearing on the outcome of that conflict). This, combined with the delay in developing newer weapons systems forces the United States military to develop new approaches to dealing with the strategic reality that now exists in East Asia.³⁵

Historically the West has used technology to defeat numerically superior forces. Airland Battle was designed on this premise. Using the technological superiority of the United States to conduct integrated battle and to extend the battlefield (Deep Battle). This culminated in the First Gulf War and was quickly forgotten in the rush toward the "peace dividend."³⁶ However, the idea of the integrated and extended battlefield still

applies and this premise should be adapted by incorporating the new domains. To counter the PLA's potentially effective A2/AD the United States needs to consider the forward_basing of ground forces that are capable of surviving within the range of PLA fires, most noticeably the proliferation of PLA short and mid-range rocket artillery and cruise missiles. This enduring force would help provide increased insurance against PLA action through threat of punishment. While the Navy may or may not be available, the landmass and the ground forces situated on it would not go anywhere. The United States would also demonstrate commitment to the region with the introduction of forward-based landpower. These forces would provide a level of deterrence as well as provide time until more combat power could be built up in the area of operations. The presence of active ground forces needs to be adequately comprised to contest the area credibly across all domains. This presence will deny the PLA the ability to prepare their force absent the traditional long buildup of U.S. forces; those forces will already be established and influencing actions.³⁷

The Navy and Air Force have advocated the Air-Sea Battle (ASB) concept as a means to deal with A2/AD.³⁸ While initially this concept showed promise, it is not adequate to counter Chinese efforts to deny United States' access to East Asia. Air Sea Battle concerns itself in countering A2/AD, about maintaining some type of access for follow-on forces. The Air Sea Battle concept paper even admits this: ASB is a limited objective concept that describes what is necessary for the joint force to sufficiently *shape* A2/AD environments to enable concurrent or follow-on power projection operations.³⁹ Unfortunately, shaping needs to be accomplished prior to the opening of

hostilities and land forces are the best method of doing this based on their persistent nature once forward deployed.

An argument can be made that not all interstate conflicts are a threat to United States national security objectives, and that is certainly true. Indeed, if deterrence failed and the United States and China engaged in an increasingly hostile conflict that resorted to a nuclear exchange, is it worth trading Los Angeles for Taipei? More realistically, would the PRC trade Beijing for Taipei? A nuclear exchange between the PRC and United States would only take place after an escalation of hostilities that resulted in the PRC facing defeat as a result of MCO. To save face at home the PRC may decide to punish Taiwan with a nuclear strike. The United States would be compelled to respond in kind to a nuclear strike on China in defense of Taiwan, especially if involved in MCO with China. However, the PRC surely realizes this is an existential threat to China but not the United States. The United States has the advantage based on demonstrated success of its theater ballistic missile defense and substantial domination in weapons type, quantity and quality of its nuclear triad. It is in the United States national interest to support the recognized international order. The United States has and will continue to exert its influence to maintain the global commons. An independent Taiwan is a key component of ensuring the access to the global commons in the East Asia region, maintaining SLOC to Japan and therefore, in the U.S. national interest.⁴⁰

If Taiwan declared independence it is possible that China would make good on its promise to resolve the issue without peaceful means, particularly if they felt compelled to act immediately. While China does have an increasingly capable military it

is not developed fully enough to effectively execute a combined arms invasion of Taiwan. Michael O'Hanlon cites three criteria that were present for all, save one, successful amphibious invasion in the twentieth century. First, air superiority, second, using maneuver and surprise to land where defending forces are weakest, and last, the ability to bring in follow on forces faster than the defender.⁴¹ China can meet none of these criteria. The PLA air force cannot guarantee superiority over the Taiwan Strait against the United States and Taiwan. They will be unable to mass land forces and cross the strait without being detected, and the PLA's ability to establish a beachhead for follow-on operations is questionable. Taiwan's military, while not as strong as the PRC, is lethal and capable enough to deter the PLA from attempting an invasion, particularly when supported by the threat of United States intervention. All this contributes to the uncertainty that the PRC could effectively use their military to take Taiwan by force. While the PLA is currently incapable of mounting a cross-strait invasion against a determined opponent or projecting serious military power at sea, they do have the capability to conduct a significant number of missile attacks against Taiwan. Doing so would undoubtedly cause great damage to Taiwan in terms of infrastructure and casualties, but that would be detrimental to the PRC's position.

China would be attacking what it claims is its own people and province. Killing thousands or tens of thousands would not be easily overcome in the international arena. Given the PRC's carefully crafted attempt to look like a reasonable world leader, it is doubtful the PRC could recover from so drastic an action.⁴² Additionally, a PRC attack on Taiwan would bring a substantial conventional retaliation from Taiwan and the United States. Taiwan, while not possessing the numbers that China does, is a capable military

that would inflict serious losses on any attempt by the PLA to invade. Taiwan continuously ensures it maintains a military posture and capability at a level that is strong enough to deter China.⁴³ China also does not want to risk open warfare with the United States military and its allies. For this reason, China, has operated in the Grey Zone exclusively to avoid major combat operations. The PRC's "salami slice tactics" are designed to achieve their strategic goals incrementally, without triggering a military response from the United States or any of China's East Asia neighbors. The best way to stop China's incremental approach to expanding territory is to remove the territory the Chinese desire most.

While escalation will unlikely result in war, continuing to maintain the *status quo* will ensure it. China, Taiwan, and the United States are tied to what Steven Goldstein calls a "strategic triangle" of the Taiwan Strait. All fear war over any deviation from the *status quo* policy that has driven United States actions over the last thirty plus years. Underlying the fear of war are additional fears; the United States fears the entrapment of being drawn into a larger war against a nuclear power; Taiwan distrusts the mainland and fears for its existence; and China, should Taiwan be recognized, fears a loss of legitimacy.⁴⁴

Eventually the friction caused by aggressive Chinese territorial behavior will escalate the conflict between the United States and China, possibly resulting in a violent military exchange and possibly MCO. Maintaining that the *status quo*, as China, Taiwan, and the United States advocate, will continue to maintain peace, is, in reality, to maintain the fallacy of peace. Proponents of the *status quo* maintain that market reforms will eventually undermine the Chinese Communist Party, causing it to

eventually fail, enabling the PRC to become a democratic nation. However, this has not happened and does not appear likely in the near future. Given the current situation, barring something unforeseen like the fall of the Berlin Wall, the passage of time will only allow the PRC to complete the modernization of its military by 2030.⁴⁵

While it is only natural to expect a rising power to modernize its military, the main reason for the PLA to modernize, one that is held by the Department of Defense, is to challenge and replace the United States in the Western Pacific.⁴⁶ China argues modernization is required to ensure China's sea lines of communication and thus, its economy, can be defended.⁴⁷ However, the PRC has no peer or near peer on the mainland or in the region. Japan and the Republic of Korea individually have not proven to be a threat. Rather, it is the PRC's behavior has caused Japan to have a new outward looking defense posture.

Diplomatic recognition coupled with a defense treaty with Taiwan will provide the United States with the opportunity to maximize landpower applications in terms of basing, increased exercises, and increased offensive arms sales. Landpower is a key element to supporting our treaty partners in East Asia and Taiwan is a natural means to project this power in the region. Taiwan is a de facto independent democratic nation. Diplomatic recognition by the United States will rapidly bring the rest of the world's nations into alignment on the issue as well as compel the United Nations to positively address reunification. As the number of nations supporting an independent and recognized Taiwan increases, the ability of the PRC to affect anything relative to Taiwan will be diminished. Major combat operations would be detrimental to the survival of the CCP. China would be furious and will act bellicose, threaten and posture, but currently it

is not strong enough to do anything truly substantial to Taiwan without risking its own survival. If the PRC possessed the ability to credibly coerce Taiwan to unify by military force they would have done so already. Recognition of Taiwan is the catalyst for showing that China under CCP control is ineffectual and a weak. This will undermine the CCP's ability to maintain internal control and could be the trigger to move the government toward democratic reforms. The PRC has enjoyed remarkable economic growth, moving millions out of poverty, and should be commended for it. However, PRC focus needs to be on internal reforms and not on hegemonic behavior. The end result of a diplomatically recognized Taiwan is a diplomatically weakened PRC.

Endnotes

¹ While there is no formal US military definition of the Grey Zone, it is best characterized as a level of open conflict that is conducted below the threshold of major combat. Hostilities are usually between nation states. The conflict is asymmetric and ambiguous, the actors or their proxies are not always clearly defined, and the actions conducted are not quite strong enough to cause escalate this situation. In many cases the action in the Grey Zone is concluded before an effective response can take place. Russia's annexation of Crimea and China's actions in the South China Sea are examples.

² The United States has a moral obligation to officially recognize Taiwan as a distinct and separate country from China. With a democratically elected government and free market economy Taiwan is everything the United States espouses for emerging nations while China has not progressed in terms of its authoritarian government, suppression of human rights, and unwillingness to work within the established international order to resolve her many claims and conflicts.

³ Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy* (New York: Norton, 2011), 73-74; Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011,2012), 216. Both Congress and the United states population had been brought up with the belief that Communism was bad and the sudden change in mindset that supporting Communist China was suddenly good policy could not be overcome immediately.

⁴ *Taiwan Relations Act*, Public Law 96-8, 96th Congress. (January 1, 1979) 1.

⁵ Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, 81.

⁶ *Taiwan Relations Act*, Public Law 96-8, 1-2.

⁷ American Institute in Taiwan Home Page, <https://www.ait.org.tw/en/about-us.html> (accessed January 8, 2017).

⁸ Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, 81.

⁹ Robert D. Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific* (New York: Random House, 2015) 147.

¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "East and Southeast Asia: Taiwan," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tw.html> (accessed January 8, 2017); Elanor Albert, "China-Taiwan Relations," December 7, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-taiwan-relations/p9223> (accessed February 18, 2017) 1.

¹¹ Office of the United States Trade Representative; Executive Office of the President, "Taiwan," linked from the *Office of the United States Trade Representative Home Page* at "Countries and Regions," <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/china/taiwan> (accessed December 20, 2016).

¹² Albert, "China-Taiwan Relations," 1.

¹³ DBS Group Research, "Taiwan: Diversifying into Southeast Asia," October 21, 2016, https://www.dbs.com/aics/templatedata/article/generic/data/en/GR/102016/161021_insights_diversifying_into_southeast_asia.xml (accessed March 4, 2017); Albert, "China-Taiwan Relations," 1; Kyle Churchman, "Taiwan Pivots Away From China, Towards the South," *The National Interest*, July 7, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/taiwan-pivots-away-china-towards-the-south-16879> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁴ Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific* 147.

¹⁵ Frank Cheng-Shan Liu, "Taiwanese Voters Political Identification Profile 2013-2014: Becoming One China or Creating a New Country," *Asia Survey* 56, no. 5 (September/October 2016): 931-957; Albert, "China-Taiwan Relations," 1; John J. Mearsheimer, "Say Goodbye to Taiwan," *The National Interest*, March-April 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931> (accessed February 13, 2017) 2. Some polls cited by Mearsheimer claim 80% of the Taiwanese population say they are not Chinese.

¹⁶ Gary J. Schmitt, eds., *The Rise of China* (New York: Encounter Books, 2009), 121-123.

¹⁷ Richard C. Bush, *Untying the Knot: Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2005) 15-16; Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific*, 146.

¹⁸ Mearsheimer, "Say Goodbye to Taiwan," 2-3.

¹⁹ Kissinger, *On China*, 279-280, 483. Also for variations that would trigger military action by the PRC towards Taiwan see Bush, *Untying the Knot; Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait*, 119-120.

²⁰ Mearsheimer, "Say Goodbye to Taiwan," 2.

²¹ Yuli Yang, "Pentagon says Chinese Vessels Harassed US Ship," *CNN Politics*, March 2009, http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/03/09/us.navy.china/index.html?eref=rss_us#cnnSTCText (accessed November 16, 2016). In 2009 PLA Naval forces harassed the USS IMPECCABLE and USS VICTORIOUS.

²² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations*, Joint Publication 3-32 (Washington, DC: J.S. Joint Chief of Staff, August 7, 2013). JP 3-32 defines Surface warfare as operations conducted to destroy enemy naval surface vessels or merchant marine shipping; Strike operations are offensive operations using missiles, aircraft, surface fires, or SOF, directed at land targets. Strike warfare uses joint fire support, interdiction, Strategic attack and CAS.

²³ U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements, linked from the *U.S. Department of State Home Page* at "Office of the Legal Advisor," <https://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/collectivedefense/> (accessed March 3, 2017).

²⁴ U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Thailand, "Exercise Cobra Gold 2017 to begin February 14, 2017," January 2017, <https://th.usembassy.gov/exercise-cobra-gold-2017/> (accessed March 3, 2017); Lisa Ferdinando, "Annual 'Cobra Gold' Exercises Commences in Thailand," *DOD News*, February 14, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1083001/annual-cobra-gold-exercise-commences-in-thailand> (accessed March 3, 2017).

²⁵ Robert N. Durr, "Ulchi Freedom Guardian - Defending the Cyber Network," September 1, 2016, linked from *The United States Army Home Page* at "Army Worldwide News," https://www.army.mil/article/174934/ulchi_freedom_guardian_defending_the_cyber_network (accessed March 3, 2017).

²⁶ Global Security.Org, "Ulchi Freedom Guardian," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/ulchi-freedom-guardian.htm> (accessed March 4, 2017); Jonathan Stafford, "Republic of Korea Partners with Deep U.S. Ties during Ulchi Freedom Guardian '16," September 19, 2016.

²⁷ U.S. Army Pacific Command, "Mission Brief," *Yama Sakura 61*, <http://www.usarpac.army.mil/ys61/> (accessed March 16, 2017).

²⁸ John R. Deni, "Strategic Landpower in the Indo-Asia-Pacific," *Parameters* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 2013): 78.

²⁹ Richard D. Hooker, Jr., "*American Landpower and the Two War Construct*, The Institute of Land Warfare: A Land Warfare Paper No. 106 (Arlington, VA: Association of the United States Army, May 2015) 2.

³⁰ Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific*, 143. This is attributed to James R. Holmes of the Naval War College, in a conversation with the author at The Center for a New American Security, 2011.

³¹ Zach Berger, "Army Navy Transportable Radar Surveillance (AN/TPY-2)," *Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance*, March 2017, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems-2/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-sensor-systems/armynavy-transportable-radar-surveillance-antpy-2/> (accessed March 20, 2017); Thales Raytheon Systems, "Improved

Sentinel Radar Sheet,” April 2011, http://www.thalesraytheon.com/fileadmin/tmpl/Products/pdf/Improved_Sentinel_Radar_Data_Sheet_-_April_2011.pdf (accessed March 20, 2017); United States Army Acquisition Support Center, “MQ-1C Gray Eagle Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS),” http://asc.army.mil/web/portfolio-item/aviation_gray-eagle-uas/ (accessed March 20, 2017).

³² Carlo Kopp, “Theater Ballistic Missile Defense Systems,” *Air Power Australia*, April 2012, <http://www.ausairpower.net/APA-BMD-Survey.html> (accessed March 20, 2017); U.S. Department of Defense: Missile Defense Agency, “The Ballistic Missile Defense System,” <https://www.mda.mil/system/system.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

³³ U.S. Department of the Army and U.S. Marine Corps, *Multi-Domain Battle: Combined Arms for the 21st Century*, White Paper (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, January 18, 2017), 4-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵ This is not a new development with the US military. Modernization suffered during the Vietnam War and its aftermath. Once the US realized the capability of the Soviets it led to the development of the big five weapons systems. The AH-64 and UH-60 helicopters, the M-1 Main Battle Tank, the M-2/3 fighting vehicle and the Patriot missile system. The irony is after the first Gulf War when these systems proved their worth the US immediately started the cycle they are in now.

³⁶ U.S. Department of the Army and U.S. Marine Corps, *Multi-Domain Battle: Combined Arms for the 21st Century*, 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 5, 12; Deni, “Strategic Landpower in the Indo-Asia-Pacific,” 78.

³⁸ Sam LaGrone, “Pentagon Drops Air Sea Battle Name, Concept Lives on,” *USNI News*, January 20, 2015, <https://news.usni.org/2015/01/20/pentagon-drops-air-sea-battle-name-concept-lives> (accessed February 17, 2017). This concept is now integrated into the *Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons* plan.

³⁹ Air Sea Battle Office, *Air Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti Access Area Denial Challenges* (Washington, DC: Air Sea Battle Office, May 2013), <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/ASB-ConceptImplementation-Summary-May-2013.pdf> (accessed 18 February 2017).

⁴⁰ Michael E. O’Hanlon, *The Future of Land Warfare* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 24.

⁴¹ Michael O’Hanlon, “Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan,” *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 54-56.

⁴² Kissinger, *On China*, 475. The Chinese actions during the Tiananmen Square protests set U.S.-Chinese relations back significantly. For many years following the PLA’s violent response to the student protests there were no high level talks between the two countries.

⁴³ Global Firepower, “Taiwan Military Strength,” http://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=taiwan (accessed January 8, 2017); Kaplan, *Asia’s*

Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific, 153-154. Currently Taiwan has approximately 300,000 active and 1.6 million reserve troops, 560 fighter/attack aircraft and 2000 main battle tanks. Strength wise not close to the PLA but sufficient to prevent any invasion the PRC could attempt in the near future.

⁴⁴ Steven M. Goldstein, *China and Taiwan* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 189-190.

⁴⁵ Malcom Davis, "Get Ready, Asia: China's Military is Rapidly Catching up to America's," *The National Interest*, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/get-ready-asia-chinas-military-rapidly-catching-america-14147> (accessed March 16, 2017).

⁴⁶, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2015* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2015), I, https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2015_China_Military_Power_Report.pdf (accessed February 18, 2017).

⁴⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman, Steven Colley, and Michael Wang, *Chinese Strategy and Military Modernization in 2015: A Comparative Analysis* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies October 10, 2015), 140.