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**CHINA'S MILITARY THREAT TO TAIWAN
IN THE ERA OF HU JINTAO***

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China's unfulfilled quest to gain sovereignty over the island of Taiwan, and the resulting tensions between China, Taiwan, and the United States, poses the greatest threat to peace and stability in East Asia, or so opine most analysts who study the region.¹ Yet, since 1950, when Mao Zedong's makeshift Taiwan invasion fleet was grounded on the Fujian coast by President Harry S. Truman's decision to interpose the United States Seventh Fleet and commit forces to the Korean Peninsula in the summer of 1950, no major military conflict has erupted in the Taiwan Strait. The Strait has of course witnessed a series of crises, most recently in 1995-1996.

Is the likelihood of military conflict in the Taiwan Strait greater now than during the past fifty years? What is the extent of the current Chinese military threat to Taiwan? Does the current Chinese military modernization effort and concentration of military power in the coastal areas opposite Taiwan portend a coming military conflict in the Taiwan Strait? The number of writings on the subject, and the diversity of opinions expressed therein, suggest there are no easy answers to these questions. Acceptance of the "status quo" by China, Taiwan, and the United States worked well in avoiding military conflict from the 1970s until the mid-1990s. Taiwanese democracy and electoral politics since the Taiwanese presidential election of 1996, however, have turned Taiwan into the wild card in the delicate triangle of China-Taiwan-United States relations. The heightened tensions between China and Taiwan related to the upcoming Taiwanese presidential election, and President Chen's push first for legislation authorizing referendums and then for a national referendum on the Chinese missile threat, seen by the Chinese as steps toward independence, highlights the potential for military confrontation in the Taiwan Straits. It is also clear that modernization of the Chinese air force and navy, and the positioning of an ever increasing number of short and medium range ballistic missiles within range of Taiwan is increasing the potential destructiveness of a military conflict to Taiwan (and the United States).

The Chinese do not seek a military confrontation with Taiwan and the United States. Such a confrontation would put at risk the number one priority of the Chinese leadership; maintaining China's impressive economic growth and increasing regional and international influence. On the other hand, the Chinese leadership will never give up the "sacred" mission of Taiwan unification. Use of force to attain unification is likely if China sees Taiwan abruptly and

irreversibly rejecting the concept of eventual reunification. This paper examines China's military threat to Taiwan in the first decade of the 21st century. While the authors recognize that China also poses a military threat to the United States, due to the constraints of time and space, this paper limits its attention to the military threat that China poses to Taiwan.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

There are several fundamental propositions from which any analysis of China's military threat to Taiwan must begin. First, China has a vital national interest in exercising sovereignty over the island of Taiwan. This vital interest has not changed since the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) declared victory over the Nationalists on the Mainland and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1950. The status of Taiwan is closely associated with the CCP's domestic legitimacy. With the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and of Macau in 1999, Chinese leaders see Taiwan as the last remaining obstacle to completion of the communist revolution and restoration of the Chinese nation after a century and a half of foreign intervention and civil strife. National unification is identified as one of "the three historical tasks of the Chinese people in the new century."² Shortly before traveling to the United States to meet with President Bush in mid-December 2003, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao emphasized to U.S. reporters that in regard to Taiwan "The Chinese people will pay any price to safeguard the unity of the motherland."³

The CCP has long fostered nationalism over the Taiwan issue and the desire to unify the "motherland" as a means of building unity and drawing attention away from internal problems.⁴ This is especially true now, in an age when few Chinese are interested in communist ideology and few believe in Marxism-Leninism and/or Mao Zedong Thought. Chinese leaders also regard control over Taiwan as an important step in establishing Chinese influence in East Asia and blunting American influence. The loss of Taiwan through independence would be a critical blow to the Chinese regime. China will not give up its over fifty-year claim to Taiwan. Only the military might of the United States for the past half a century has prevented China from fulfilling the quest for reunification with Taiwan.

Second, Taiwan has a vital interest in preventing Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. This vital interest is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, and, in fact, appears to be of increasing importance to Taiwanese leaders. The continued economic and political advancement of Taiwan and the much greater personal freedoms enjoyed by the Taiwanese has led to a growing sense of identity separate and apart from the Mainland. The

democratization of Taiwan has led to the rise to political power of native Taiwanese, at the expense of the Mainlanders (and their descendants) who fled to Taiwan with the Nationalists in 1949. The people of Taiwan increasingly view eventual unification with the Mainland as undesirable, although a majority is for maintaining the “status quo,” for fear of provoking a military response from China. Interestingly, the factions in Taiwan most supportive of eventual unification with China are found within the island’s armed forces and the Kuomintang (KMT), legacies from Chiang Kai-shek’s retreat to Taiwan in 1949. Recently, even the KMT leadership has publicly discarded eventual reunification as a party platform.

Third, the United States has an important national interest, but not a vital national interest, in ensuring the dispute between China and Taiwan is settled peacefully. Even a limited war between China and the United States over Taiwan would be incredibly destructive diplomatically and economically for both nations, not to mention Taiwan. Failure of the United States to come to the aid of Taiwan in case of a Chinese attack, on the other hand, would destroy U.S. credibility in East Asia and seriously damage U.S. alliances with other East Asian countries.⁵ U.S. interests in the China-Taiwan issue may be reputational more than strategic, but nevertheless are important if the United States is to maintain geostrategic influence in the Western Pacific and East Asia.⁶ The United States has stood between China and Taiwan for over fifty years, and may continue to do so for another fifty years, as there is currently no peaceful solution to China-Taiwan unification that is acceptable to both China and Taiwan.

Fourth, China poses a substantial military threat to Taiwan, even though China may not be strong enough militarily to invade and occupy Taiwan successfully. Taiwan, on the other hand, poses little offensive military threat to China (or any other country). For the time being China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) seems to pose a direct threat to the United States only if the United States becomes involved in a China-Taiwan cross-Strait military conflict, and then likely only to the extent of American military assets in the Western Pacific. The use or threatened use of weapons of mass destruction is excluded from consideration in this paper.⁷

USE OF FORCE FOR REUNIFICATION

China has long indicated that it may use force against Taiwan if “a grave turn of events occurs leading to the separation of Taiwan from China,” or “if Taiwan is invaded and occupied by foreign countries.” In a 2000 white paper entitled “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan

Issue” China added a third condition under which it may use force: If the Taiwan authorities refuse indefinitely to agree to a peaceful reunification through negotiations. Boiled down, this means that China may resort to force if the United States bases military forces on Taiwan, if Taiwan declares independence, or if Taiwan refuses over time to come to the table to discuss reunification. Although there appears to have been some discussion of setting a timetable and deadline for reunification in the aftermath of the events of 1999-2000, the results of this discussion are far from clear.⁸ Beijing may have formulated an internal timetable for reunification, but has avoided public announcement of any timetable.⁹ The threat of force is increasingly China’s only viable deterrent to Taiwanese independence.

REUNIFICATION STRATEGIES

From 1949 until the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 Chinese policy centered on military “liberation” of Taiwan, although China lacked the military means to conduct such an offensive, especially in the face of American intervention and the 1954 United States-Republic of China mutual defense treaty. Nevertheless, throughout the fifties and sixties tensions between China and Taiwan often flared, with China periodically shelling the small off-shore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, held by the Nationalists, and the Nationalists staging occasional “commando” type raids on the Mainland to blow up Chinese ships and harbor facilities. The United States stood firmly behind Taiwan, and extended generous economic and military aid to the Nationalists, and encouraged land, economic and political reform.

When Deng Xiaoping came to power in late 1978, China abandoned the policy of liberation of Taiwan through military means, and adopted a policy of peaceful reunification.¹⁰ This shift coincided with the United States’ shift in formal diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China (Taiwan) to the People’s Republic of China. In 1981 China announced a nine point proposal for Taiwan reunification that was more conciliatory and offered more specific concessions to Taiwan than ever before.¹¹ This proposal became known as the “one country, two systems” formula which still stands as the basic Chinese framework for unification, and served as the model for the Chinese-British agreement for the return of Hong Kong in 1997. The PRC adopted a long-term horizon for unification and emphasized flexibility. In the minds of China’s leaders, they have been remarkably patient, forward thinking, and magnanimous. Moreover, Beijing has offered Taipei “a high degree of autonomy” and promised that the island could keep its economic and social systems intact following unification. While never renouncing the use of force against Taiwan if compelled, slow but steady improvement in China-Taiwan

relations throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly in the economic sphere, militated against Chinese use of force.

By the late 1980s burgeoning Taiwanese trade with, and investment in, China and cross-strait travel satisfied Chinese leaders that progress toward eventual reunification was being made. By 1990, Taiwanese businessmen were investing one billion dollars annually in China. By 1993 this figure had grown to 2.5 billion annually. The highpoint of improved China-Taiwan relations came in 1993, when the heads of quasi-governmental organizations from both China and Taiwan met in Singapore to discuss cross-strait intercourse and problems. Between 1993 and early 1995, 15 more meetings between representatives of the two quasi-governmental organizations took place to discuss problems of cross-strait exchanges.

Not all senior Chinese leaders were sanguine about the future of cross-strait relations and the pace of reunification. Many members of the PLA were distrustful of the Taiwanese leadership and viewed U.S. relations with Taiwan with suspicion. Many Chinese analysts and PLA leaders felt that with the end of the Cold War the United States determined that China was no longer needed as a counterweight to Soviet power, and had started to downgrade the importance of good relations with China. They felt that the United States was upgrading the importance of Taiwan in an overall policy aimed at containing China.¹² When President George Bush approved the sale of 150 F16 fighters to Taiwan in 1992, many PLA leaders called for a strong Chinese response. Deng Xioping, however, disapproved any military response. Sustaining China's rapid economic growth and increasing regional influence took precedence over Taiwan reunification.

1995-1996 TAIWAN STRAIT MISSILE CRISIS

In May 1995, the United States issued a visa for Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to travel to the United States to visit his alma mater, Cornell University, in June to deliver an address to an alumni group. No senior Taiwan official had been allowed to visit the United States since the United States shifted diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China in 1979. The issuance of the visa caught the Chinese by surprise, as they had earlier been assured by the U.S. government that Lee would not be granted the visa. This embarrassing turnaround angered Chinese senior leaders, but their anger was initially directed against the United States. In addition to issuing a strident formal protest to the United States, China recalled its ambassador, and cut short or cancelled high level meetings with U.S. officials. When President Lee subsequently visited the

United States and made what the Chinese perceived as a provocative speech at Cornell University, the Chinese turned their anger toward President Lee and Taiwan, with the PLA leading the charge for a tough response to Taiwan. President Lee's visit marked a turning point in the Deng era approach to reunification with Taiwan.

In addition to a number of diplomatic moves to punish Taiwan, including the canceling of a second planned meeting of the heads of the two quasi-governmental organizations in Taipei, China launched a series of missile tests in the Taiwan Strait and assembled PLA troops in Fujian province for a series of military exercises that lasted from July 1995 to March 1996. In July 1995, the Chinese fired a total of six DF-15 ground to ground missiles from Fujian province to a target area around 90 miles from Taiwan's northern coast. These were followed with naval and aerial live fire exercises off the Fujian coast. In November 1995 the Chinese conducted air, land, and sea exercises in along the Fujian coast. In March, 1996, the Chinese launched more missiles, with target areas around fifty miles from the largest ports in northern and southern Taiwan and held additional exercises with around 40 naval vessels, 260 aircraft, and 150,000 troops.¹³

The military exercises in 1995 were a direct response to Lee Tenghui's visit to the United States and were a sign of China's great displeasure with Lee Tenghui and the United States. The exercises in March 1996 were meant to intimidate the Taiwanese electorate shortly before Taiwan's first popular presidential election, in which President Lee was the leading candidate. A broader aim of the 1995-1996 exercises was to warn Taiwan away from seeking the path of independence. A further aim of the exercises was to send a clear message to the United States of the importance of Taiwan reunification and the consequences of straying from the "one-china" principle to which the United States had adhered since 1979.

When the United States sent two carrier battle groups to the vicinity of Taiwan in March 1996 in response to the Chinese missile firings and exercises, the Chinese were surprised. The earlier missile tests and exercises had elicited only a muted response from Washington. The Chinese had no intention of actually launching an attack and likely believed the United States and Taiwan understood their actions as signaling and a warning to Taiwan not to stray too far from the fold. Regardless of whether testing U.S. resolve over Taiwan was an additional reason for conducting the missile tests and exercises, this response from the United States did send

strong signals to the Chinese that the United States was serious about peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue.

The economic and diplomatic sweeteners China extended to Taiwan from the late 1980s to 1995 had limited effect on Taiwan's position on reunification. In Beijing's view, while the 1995-1996 Strait Crisis was quite successful in chastening Taipei and, eventually, in improving relations with Washington, this success was only partial and temporary. Positive steps toward peaceful reunification, rebuffed by Taiwan, have been overshadowed by coercive measures aimed at preventing a Taiwanese slide toward independence. The hardening of the Taiwanese stance, together with the showing of American resolve during the missile crisis, reinforced the impetus for launching of an expansive modernization of its armed forces, with the key focus being PLA preparation for possible conflict in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁴ One reason Beijing felt able to concentrate on a Taiwan attack scenario was China's improved relations with border countries.

CHINA'S IMPROVED SECURITY SITUATION

China's external security situation has improved dramatically during the last 15 years. Between 1988 and 1994, China established diplomatic relations with 18 countries and with the Soviet successor states.¹⁵ During the 1990s, China moved to resolve many territorial border disputes that had traditionally caused tension. Since 1991, China has settled border disputes with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Russia, Tajikistan, and Vietnam. Troop-reduction agreements signed in the 1990s have greatly reduced tensions with India. Similar agreements have been signed with Russia and Central Asian states.¹⁶ Because of these moves, China's land borders have never been more secure. The increased security and reduced need for Chinese military attention along China's land borders has allowed the PLA to focus and concentrate resources on possible military action against Taiwan, and military modernization in support of such action.

Since the 1996 missile crisis and Lee Tenghui's election, PLA training, doctrine and procurement programs have focused on Taiwan attack or blockade scenarios. China has sought help from Russia and Israel to create weapons designed specifically for a Taiwan combat scenario and possible United States intervention, including sophisticated aircraft, missiles, destroyers and other advanced technology. A decisive factor guiding China's strategic modernization drive is a desire to deter the United States from such intervention.¹⁷ Many experts, however, agree that China's military is at least 20 years behind the United States in

modernization and technology and that it will be several decades before the Chinese possess the capability to engage and defeat a modern adversary beyond China's borders.¹⁸ In a Taiwan attack scenario, however, China currently aims not to defeat the United States, but to make intervention so costly in terms of lives and equipment, that political constraints may come into play to limit United States involvement.

2000 TAIWAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The Chinese leadership received another rude awakening to the derailment of reunification efforts in 2000, when pro-independence candidate Chen Shui-bien was elected to the Taiwan presidency despite Chinese pre-election threats of war and military mobilizations in the coastal regions of China. Chinese anger was also directed at the United States for the perceived failure of the Clinton administration to contain pro-independence sentiments in Taiwan.¹⁹ President Chen alleviated the tension in his inauguration address when he declared that as president he would not seek independence.²⁰ Despite the pre-election threats of war and increased military activity in China's coastal regions opposite Taiwan, China did not engage in overtly aggressive military actions such as the 1995-96 missile tests.

CHINESE RESTRAINT

After the Chinese attempts to influence Taiwanese presidential elections and intimidate the electorate failed in 1996 and 2000, China seemed to pull back from its campaign of verbal attacks and threats. Relations between China and the United States, nose-diving after the April 2001 E-P3 incident, rebounded after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, after the Chinese quickly showed support for the United States and agreed to cooperate in some areas to combat terrorism. From the time the dust settled from the 2001 E-P3 incident to the present (with the exception of recent strong statements from Beijing related to the upcoming presidential election in Taiwan), there has been a lull in cross-Strait tension and a relative lack of menacing rhetoric from Beijing, even in the face of continued plans for U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan and occasional provocative statements from President Chen. Beijing's response to President Chen's August 2002 statement that there exists "one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait" was restrained compared to the response to Lee Tunghua's visit to Cornell and the 2000 presidential elections. This lessening of tensions may be due, in part, to the sensitive Chinese leadership transition in 2002,²¹ and in part to a recognition that the key to progress on the Taiwan issue lies more with influencing the United States than it does with influencing Taiwan. Premier Wen Jiabao's recent visit to the United

States and meeting with President Bush in which he sought the help of the United States in reigning in President Chen is the latest evidence of this recognition on the part of the Chinese. Wen seems to have gotten what he wanted when President Bush, standing next to Chinese premier, stated that the United States opposed “any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo,” and that “the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose.” Chinese leaders no longer protest every mention of US arms sales to Taiwan or each indication of improved US-Taiwan relations. Various experts have noted that Chinese officials have stopped talking about Taiwan in conversations with foreign officials, visiting experts, and members of the foreign media,²² at least until recently when Taiwan election campaign rhetoric has fanned the flames.

Some experts contend that with the passing of the leadership torch to Hu Jintao and a younger generation of leaders, China has begun to take a less confrontational, more sophisticated approach to global and regional affairs. They note that the current crop of Chinese diplomats are better educated, often with advanced degrees from foreign universities, have spent more time in overseas posting, and are generally more skillful and savvy than their predecessors.²³

Nevertheless, China’s recent restraint in cross-Strait relations and improved relations with the United States should by no means be taken to indicate a softening of the Chinese goal of Taiwan reunification. The strong warnings to Taiwan currently emanating out of Beijing in response to President Chen’s drives for a referendum on removal of Chinese missiles from the coast opposite Taiwan, and the fact that the meeting between Premier Wen Jiabao and President Bush seems to have centered around Taiwan, clearly indicate that the “sacred” mission of Taiwan reunification has not slipped from the political agenda of Chinese leaders. The continuing build-up of ballistic missile strength opposite Taiwan is a clear signal that the Chinese remain very serious about Taiwan.

Are the Chinese paper tigers? Are the threats of military action and the conducting of military exercises or mobilizations of the last nine years mere saber rattling and posturing? The answer is both yes and no. Clearly the last thing the Chinese desire is warfare in the Taiwan Strait. On the other hand, allowing Taiwan to slip away through declared independence would be domestically devastating to the regime and would force the Chinese to take military action,

even if victory is unlikely. Saber rattling and posturing, however, have had an effect on the behavior on the leaders of Taiwan (and the United States). After the 1995-96 missile crisis, President Lee was fairly quiet and restrained until his 1999 “special state to state” comment on German radio. Although avidly pro-independence after leaving office in 2000, while in office he steered clear of tacit pro-independence statements. The saber rattling in the lead-up and aftermath of the March 2000 Taiwanese presidential elections died down when President Chen, from the pro-independence Democratic People’s Party, promised not to declare independence. The current saber rattling, in conjunction China’s apparently successful request for United States assistance in reigning in President Chen, may ultimately result in President Chen again backing down after the March 2004 election from actions that China perceives as steps toward independence. The recent heavy-handed pressure that President Bush and Bush administration officials are exerting on President Chen is a result, in part, of Chinese saber rattling. Were it not for Chinese saber rattling and the long standing Chinese threat to use force, if necessary, Taiwan would almost certainly already have declared independence.²⁴

The Chinese, however, seem to be in a “prevent defense,” giving up short yardage to prevent Taiwan from officially declaring independence, the “red line” that China says Taiwan must not cross. President Lee’s visit to the United States and speech at Cornell drew an immediate response from China in the form of military exercises and missile launchings and angry warnings to the United States and Taiwan. President Chen’s 2003 travel to the United States, where he made a speech and gave press interviews, on the other hand, drew only the obligatory condemnation of the Beijing press. President Lee’s July 1999 statement that relations between China and Taiwan were “special state to state” relations drew a more vitriolic response from China than President Chen’s August 2002 statement that there exists “one country on each side” of the Taiwan Strait and that holding a referendum on Taiwan’s independence is a basic human right.” In the 1996 and 2000 Taiwanese presidential elections, Beijing vilified Lee Tunghui and Chen Shuibian personally, with the goal of influencing the popular vote. In the lead-up to the March 2004 elections, Beijing is attacking not individual candidates, but issues, signaling its displeasure with President Chen’s drive for a new constitution and plan to hold a referendum on the Chinese missile threat. This restrained approach may have expanded the limits of both Chinese and American tolerance of “creeping independence,” and may result in China being on their own goal line defending against the one remaining play Taiwan has yet to call – Independence. The Chinese seem desperate for the assistance of the United States in reigning in President Chen.

Despite the recent “soft” approach to Taiwan, China has been engaged in a much tougher strategy in ensuring Taiwan’s continued isolation in the international community. Because of China’s increasing economic clout, the number of countries that recognize Taiwan has dropped to 26, and the majority of these countries are in Latin America and Africa. China has used its diplomatic power to ensure exclusion of Taiwan from governmental and non-governmental international organizations. In the spring of 2003, in the midst of the SARS epidemic, China again successfully pressured the World Health Organization to reject Taiwan membership, and blocked visits by World Health Organization officials to Taiwan. Taipei officials claim that China has blocked Taiwanese participation in international conferences and exchanges in areas such as agriculture, the arts, the environment, arms control and social issues.²⁵

While the recent “soft” approach to Taiwan reunification may be a change in tactics, it should not be taken as a change in overall strategy concerning Taiwan. So what will Chinese leaders do about what they perceive as Taiwan’s gradual but deliberate move toward independence? Will China use military force to bring Taiwan back into the fold? Do the Chinese have the capability to accomplish reunification through military means? If use of military means for reunification is likely, when and how will force be employed?

CHINESE MILITARY STRENGTH

Despite large troop reductions over the past 20 years, China still has the world’s largest military, with around 1,700,000 ground troops, 420,000 air force personnel and 220,000 naval personnel, not to mention reserves and a million plus strong paramilitary People’s Armed Police. Nevertheless, not all of these forces can be brought to bear in a Taiwan scenario. These forces play significant internal security roles and border defense roles along China’s extended periphery. Moreover, the PLA has limited air and sea lift capabilities. These issues are discussed below.

GROUND FORCES

The PLA is moving toward overall reductions and reorganization of both personnel and equipment, with the long term goal of a smaller, more mobile force. The ground force is divided into seven military regions and 27 military districts. The number of regions may be reduced in the near future. In total, China has around 40 infantry divisions, 13 infantry brigades, 10 armored divisions, 12 armored brigades, 5 artillery divisions, 20 artillery brigades and 7

helicopter regiments. In addition there are 5 infantry divisions, 2 infantry brigades, 1 armored brigade, 1 artillery division, 3 artillery brigades and three anti-aircraft brigades that are independent elements of the PLA, and not assigned to a group army. China also has three airborne divisions.²⁶

Beginning in the early 1990s, China moved from the military doctrine of “fighting a people’s war under modern conditions” toward the doctrine of fighting and winning a high technology war against a modern opponent. Most Chinese ground forces are equipped, however, with obsolete arms in poor condition. There are around 10,000 tanks in the PLA inventory. The majority of the tanks are old models based on 1950s or 1960s technology and many are probably not operational due to poor construction and maintenance. The ground forces have insufficient airlift, logistics, engineering, and medical capabilities to project power very far beyond China’s borders.

AIR POWER

The Peoples Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) has around 3,400 aircraft. The majority of these aircraft, however, are near obsolete combat aircraft. China has acquired around 150-170 modern fourth-generation fighters, the SU-27 and SU-30, from Russia.²⁷ The SU-27 is used primarily for high altitude interception, is capable of travel at Mach 2.35, and carries radar homing Alamo air-to-air missiles and Archer air-to-air missiles. It is highly maneuverable at high altitude and has been compared to the American F15C. The SU-30, with a range of 3000 kilometers, has the air combat capabilities of the SU-27, as well as ground attack and close air support capabilities. The SU-30 gives the PLAAF the capability to fly missions far from the Chinese coastline. The PLAAF, however, still has limited capability to conduct ground and naval support and air-to-air interception. The PLAAF also lacks off-shore long-range bomber or long-range strike aircraft capability. Pilots are not well trained and would have difficulty sustaining a prolonged air campaign.

NAVAL POWER

The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has around 60 destroyers and frigates, 50 diesel and six nuclear submarines, 40 amphibious landing ships and around 350 smaller craft. Many of China’s naval vessels are old and in poor repair. China has, however, acquired two Russian Sovremenny-class destroyers, with two more on order. The Sovremenny was designed to counter U.S. Aegis-class destroyers, and is a major improvement for the PLAN. These

destroyers carry Russian Sunburn anti-ship missiles, which are among the most advanced in the world. China also has acquired four Kilo-class submarines from Russia, equipped with wake homing torpedoes. Eight more Kilo-class submarines will be delivered to China by 2007. The PLAN is limited by lack of integration of command and control, communications systems, targeting, air defense and antisubmarine capabilities. PLAN ships are vulnerable to attack by aircraft, torpedoes, and anti-ship missiles.

NUCLEAR ARMS AND CONVENTIONAL MISSILES

The Chinese nuclear arsenal consists of about 400 warheads. Around twenty of these warheads are mounted on intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with a range of around 13,000 kilometers. These ICBMs are primitive, liquid fueled missiles, housed in fixed silos. Around 230 nuclear warheads can be deployed regionally by aircraft, missiles and submarines. Around 150 warheads are believed to be reserved for tactical uses on short range missiles, aircraft, and possibly artillery shells or demolition munitions.²⁸

China has only one nuclear powered submarine equipped with nuclear ballistic missiles. These missiles carry a single 200-300 kt warhead, with a range of around 1,700 kilometers. Due to a history of reactor and acoustic problems, this submarine is not deployed outside of regional waters.²⁹ China has a large inventory of ballistic missiles, and perhaps 10 liquid fueled missiles that can deliver nuclear warheads to the continental United States. The PLA's Second Artillery has deployed around 400-450 conventionally armed short and medium ranged ballistic and cruise missiles within targeting distance of Taiwan and this number is likely to grow in coming months and years. The Second Artillery now uses global positioning systems to support midcourse and terminal guidance, increasing accuracy and lethality of the missiles.

TAIWAN'S MILITARY

Taiwan's military forces total around 360,000, with 220,000 in the ground forces, 70,000 in the air force and 68,000 in the naval forces.

GROUND FORCES

The 220,000-strong army is organized and trained to defend Taiwan and the offshore islands against amphibious or airborne invasion. Since the 1995-96 missile crisis, the Taiwan army has emphasized rapid reaction, airborne invasion interdiction and special forces operations.

Modernization has focused on improving mobility and firepower. The army has upgraded its tank force, helicopter fleet and short-range air-defense missile systems.

AIR POWER

Taiwan has around 400 combat aircraft, including 150 F16s purchased from the United States, 60 Mirage fighters purchased from France, and 130 locally made Indigenous Defense Fighters. All of the F16s, Mirages and Indigenous Defense Fighters were newly produced aircraft when entered into the service in the 1990s. The great majority of Taiwanese combat aircraft are, therefore, of recent vintage and superior to the Chinese fighter force with the exception of the Chinese SU-27 and SU-30 aircraft. Taiwan also has four E-2T early warning aircraft, purchased from the United States.

NAVAL POWER

Taiwan's navy contains around 40 frigates and destroyers, 4 submarines, around 100 small patrol vessels, 30 mine warfare ships and 25 amphibious vessels. Taiwan purchased six Lafayette-class missile frigates from France in the 1990s and has leased eight Knox-class guided missile frigates from the United States. Taiwan has also commissioned seven advanced Chengkung-class missile frigates. Taiwan's warships are equipped with updated weapons and technology.³⁰

TAIWAN MILITARY MODERNIZATION

Military ties between the United States and Taiwan have greatly increased in the past three years. The increased ties mark a major departure from previous United States policy, which strictly limited military relations with Taiwan. The goal of the United States is to provide more advanced weapons to Taiwan and assist the Taiwanese in improving command and control, strategy and force planning, communications and joint operations. U.S. officials have urged the Taiwanese to simplify command structure, reduce the strength of the army and focus resources on navy and air force modernization, the forces most critical in fending off a Chinese attack.

In 2001, the Bush administration approved a \$20 to \$30 billion arms package for Taiwan. This package includes the sale of eight diesel submarines (despite the fact that the United States no longer manufactures diesel submarines), 12 P-3C Orion anti-submarine aircraft, and various other weapons systems, including the Patriot III missile system. As of early 2004, however, few weapons have actually been ordered, and none have been delivered. Taiwan is

balking at the enormous price tag of some items, including the submarines and the P-3C Orions.

CHINA-TAIWAN MILITARY BALANCE

Much has been written on whether Chinese armed forces currently have the ability to take Taiwan by force through amphibious assault, blockade, or coercive missile attacks, and if not, how long it will take China to acquire such a capability.³¹ The general consensus is that China currently lacks the capability to take Taiwan by invasion or blockade, even without U.S. intervention, and that coercive missile attacks alone will not force Taiwan to its knees. Some authorities argue that the military balance is tipping in favor of the Chinese and that by the end of this decade China will have a fairly decisive edge over Taiwan. Others argue that China's military power relative to Taiwan's military power, and regional United States power, will peak between 2005 and 2008, and that China's best chance of military success against Taiwan is during the present decade.³² Still others argue that China will not have the military capability to take Taiwan for decades.³³

Many authorities, however, recognize that political requirements and not military strength are the essential determinants of whether China will resort to force to settle the Taiwan issue. If the current regime is threatened by domestic instability, the PLA, for internal political reasons, could be ordered to launch a military campaign against Taiwan even if the chances of success are slim.³⁴ A declaration of Taiwanese independence would likely provoke China to act militarily against Taiwan.

ROLE OF THE CHINESE MILITARY

But what will Beijing do about what it perceives as Taiwan's gradual but deliberate move toward independence. Will China be more willing to use military means than in the past? Speaking in November 2003, Major General Wang Zaixi of the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office declared: "If the Taiwan authorities collude with all splittist forces to openly engage in pro-independence activities and challenge the mainland and the 'one China' principle, the use of force may become unavoidable."³⁵ Will Chinese saber rattling be enough to deter Taiwanese leaders from proceeding along the separatist path or is there no dissuading the island from continuing down the road toward eventual independence? In other words, in the minds of China's leaders, will coercion suffice or will military capture of the island be necessary? One cannot say for sure but it is likely that Beijing hopes desperately that a little saber rattling will be

all that is required to bring Taiwan's leaders around. This notion has strong appeal in Beijing because it implies that China can achieve its goals vis-à-vis Taiwan relatively easily, at minimal cost, and more or less with existing People's Liberation Army (PLA) capabilities. The coercion option is what a number of analysts have long assumed to be the focus of Beijing efforts rather than the more daunting and ambitious capture scenario.³⁶ Still, China's political leaders must also contemplate the unthinkable: a military operation to conquer the island and the leadership of the PLA must be prepared to execute such an operation if so ordered. First, the coercive option will be considered and then the capture option will be explored.

COERCION

At least some Chinese leaders seem to recognize that the kind of coercive diplomacy practiced in 1995-1996 was somewhat counter-productive in that it may have actually increased support for pro-independence forces on Taiwan and made China look like a bully to much of the world.³⁷ On the other hand, Beijing's logic could be that to get Taiwan's attention in the twenty-first century and achieve the desired result might require China to ratchet up its saber rattling. That is, Taiwan might not be so alarmed by a reprise of China's 1995-1996 show of force—a series of war games in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait and a handful of missile tests off the coast of the island. Indeed, Taiwanese might almost expect as much and be unfazed by this. Therefore, in order to get Taipei's attention in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Beijing might need to raise its saber rattling to a higher level.³⁸

What kind of coercion escalation might China consider? The challenge for Beijing would be to ratchet up the pressure without triggering actual hostilities or foreign military intervention. Among the coercive measures China might consider employing are:

- (1) Testing ballistic missiles in greater numbers than 1995-1996.³⁹
- (2) Establishing a limited sea blockade around Taiwan (but calling it a 'quarantine') enforced by surface ships, submarines, aircraft, and mines.⁴⁰ The declared rationale might be to prevent deliveries of military equipment from abroad. Beijing could publicly declare "no-go areas" with the expressed intent of inhibiting "anti-China" Taiwan naval operations. The PLA could announce that these areas have been mined and are being heavily patrolled by PLA Navy submarines.⁴¹

- (3) The blockading of an outlying Taiwan occupied island such as Taiping Dao or the Pratas Islands. Such a step would have a low risk of escalation and failure compared to blockading Quemoy or Matsu.
- (4) The seizure of an outlying Taiwan occupied island such as Taiping Dao or the Pratas Islands. As with option (3) the operation would be relatively low risk compared to seizing Quemoy or Matsu but still send a very powerful and unmistakable message to Taipei.⁴²

CAPTURE

But China cannot assume that any of these coercive means would achieve its intended goal given the uncertain overall situation and unfavorable trends. Beijing needs to have other viable options. While it is highly unlikely that Chinese leaders actually want to launch a military operation to capture Taiwan, this possibility cannot be ruled out. What if the coercion option fails in Beijing's view? China's leaders may feel that they have no alternative but to launch an attack.⁴³ A military effort to capture Taiwan would be extremely costly, not to mention risky with no guarantee of a successful outcome. Nevertheless, based on actual field exercises, authoritative military publications, and verifiable military planning efforts, we know that the PLA is preparing for Taiwan attack scenarios.⁴⁴

What are the fundamental factors that China's civilian and military leaders almost certainly keep in mind when planning the capture of Taiwan? There seem to be at least three key guiding principles that would inform their thinking.

(1) Keeping actual fighting and war damage to a minimum.

As with unification with Hong Kong, Beijing does not want to kill the "goose that lays golden eggs." If much of Taiwan's infrastructure were destroyed and its economic value was devastated in the course of the conquest then this would constitute a Pyrrhic victory. Moreover, China would seek to minimize the costs of post-conflict reconstruction and does not want to create unnecessary hatred for the PRC on Taiwan. The more brutal and bloody the battle, the more anger and resentment Taiwanese would have for their new occupiers.

(2) Keeping the duration of the conflict brief.

A quick win is the preferred option so that foreign forces would have minimal response time to show up to support Taiwanese defenders. China's civilian and military

leaders assume they will have to factor in the involvement of armed forces from other countries and presume these will include U.S. military components. Since the involvement of such external forces would significantly decrease the odds of an outright Chinese military success, ideally the battle for Taiwan would be over before outside forces arrived on the scene.⁴⁵ Second, a short war would keep the costs of a Taiwan conflict to a low level placing minimal strain on China's defense budget and taking fewer casualties, and less toll on equipment and weapon systems. Third, a war of short duration would significantly limit the negative impact on China's economy and its foreign economic relations. Chinese leaders recognize that a Taiwan conflict could inflict significant and major damage to their economy and seriously harm foreign investor confidence, and China's relations with other countries, etc.⁴⁶ Hence if a war were considered absolutely necessary, then a quick one would be best.

(3) Keeping operational requirements manageable.

When approaching the conquest of Taiwan, all military planning must be bounded by the PLA's significant capability constraints. China's military has serious limits on its power projection capabilities: one analyst has characterized the PLA as having "short arms and slow legs."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, its force projection abilities continue to improve and while a Taiwan operation would undoubtedly stretch these, such an operation would not necessarily prove a bridge too far. To off-set the limited military logistical resources, wherever possible it would be essential for the PLA to utilize available Chinese civilian assets and they plan to do so.⁴⁸ In any Taiwan operation it is important not to get too complicated: keep operations familiar and close to the comfort zone of the troops. This means keeping it simple and sticking to what they train for.

Most of these guiding principles favor a fait accompli—a military operation that will bring swift military surrender and political capitulation. The emphasis would be on surprise and daring through such steps as:

- Massed missile strikes against key military targets such as air bases and missile sites to win air superiority at the outset. Preventing Taiwanese fighters from getting airborne would be an extremely high priority.⁴⁹
- Sabotage and disinformation carried out by 5th column forces.⁵⁰
- Special forces infiltrated by submarine, small boat, parachute, or para-glider to secure key Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence (C4I) installations, radar, missile,

and early warning sites and perhaps even to capture high-level civilian and military leaders.

The PLA reportedly has perhaps 1,000 Special Forces soldiers.⁵¹

--Inserting at least 10,000 airborne troops to seize and hold airports, air bases, and communications hubs. Presently the PLA possesses only one corps-size airborne unit--the 15th Airborne. The 15th is estimated to be 35,000 strong. However, transporting the entire unit across the Taiwan Strait in a single operation might prove too much.⁵²

-Information Operations (IO), Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP) and Computer Network Attacks (CNA) to paralyze or otherwise disable critical infrastructures and Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligences, Surveillance and Recognizance (C4ISR).⁵³

--Submarines to keep Taiwanese naval vessels bottled up in port. Mines might not be used, or used sparingly in a capture scenario, because of concern that PLA Navy vessels might unwittingly stumble upon these in subsequent operations.

Still another option would be a more conventional all-out invasion of Taiwan.⁵⁴ How likely is this? In the past, many have argued that it is an “extremely unlikely” eventuality, but as of early 2004, we are inclined to be less dismissive of this option.⁵⁵ We do know that the PLA is definitely thinking, planning, and exercising for such a scenario.⁵⁶ Aspects include amphibious landings. Formally, the PLA does have an extremely limited amphibious capability. China has a small Marine Corps—reportedly two brigades totaling about 12,000 personnel and at least several dozen landing craft--estimates run anywhere from 70 to 700—most of which tend to be very small and unable to navigate the open sea.⁵⁷ Still, in a major naval/logistical operation across the Strait, the PLA plans to co-opt civilian vessels, such as passenger ferries, cargo ships, and fishing boats in what can be viewed as an updated application of People’s War.⁵⁸ The resulting operation has been called a “Dunkirk in reverse.”⁵⁹ In the Taiwan case, rather than an evacuation of troops to accomplish a withdrawal, there would be a massive ferrying operation by all manner of available water craft to land forces for an attack. The operation has been dubbed the ‘Million Man Swim’ because the nature of the vessels and coastline of Taiwan would almost certainly require soldiers to swim or wade ashore before stepping on terra firma.⁶⁰

ASSESSING THE OPTIONS

Two strategic level factors and two operational level factors are worthy of consideration in assessing the likelihood of the PRC and the PLA pursuing Options One or Two.

STRATEGIC LEVEL:

- (1) The PRC has demonstrated a propensity for risk taking in its use of force. Allen Whiting and other pioneers in the study of Beijing's use of military power since 1949 stressed caution, careful calculation, and use of signaling. These early studies were based on limited evidence and skillful use of deductive logic.⁶¹ More recent studies based on extensive primary sources reveal a far greater willingness by China's leaders to take substantial--albeit calculated--risks.⁶² Many studies assessing an attack on Taiwan stress the daunting challenges and assume the enormous difficulties would deter the PLA from even attempting any of these scenarios.⁶³ Nevertheless, as Harlan Jencks observes, "...wild speculation is...necessary when talking about the Taiwan Strait, given the vast range of variables which most studies about the 'military balance' assume away." Moreover, Jencks adds, "If one disregards all the sensible assumptions then...anything is possible."⁶⁴

- (2) PRC leaders appear adamant in their belief that China always uses military force in self-defense. The PRC civilian and military elites are under the sway of a "Cult of Defense" whereby even a preemptive strike can be justified as being a strategically defensive act. Indeed, the strategic principle of "active defense" [*jiji fangyu*] appears to blur the line between offense and defense in the minds of Beijing strategists to the extent that no distinction exists.⁶⁵ For China's leaders, any military operation involving Taiwan would without a doubt be perceived as purely a self-defense operation: fighting to "defend" or to "protect" Chinese sovereignty; certainly Beijing would never think of such an operation as constituting an "attack" on Taiwan!⁶⁶ If a nation's leaders believe they are acting defensively they will tend to be more willing to authorize the use of force.

OPERATIONAL LEVEL:

The PLA, like the armed forces of other states, is often considered to be a cautious and conservative institution averse to risk taking and highly resistant to change and innovation. Two factors, however, serve to admonish those who would be so dismissive of the PLA.

- (1) When an organization, including a military organization, focuses all its attentions toward one goal, it can get good relatively quickly as James Q. Wilson argues. Once a new doctrine has been adopted, operational requirements, tactics and logistical needs can readily be brought into line.⁶⁷ Taiwan is the scenario upon which the PLA is focused and

fits comfortably into the “limited war under high technology conditions” that its political masters have directed the military to prepare to fight. Since the end of the Cold War the environment on China’s periphery has become more complex and uncertain requiring the PLA to consider and plan for a greater range of contingencies, including countering “terrorists, separatists, and extremists.”⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it is still Taiwan that remains the consuming focus for China’s armed forces.

- (2) The PLA’s traditional stress on the ability of the weak to overcome the strong underscores the belief that force of will and seizing the initiative can “offset [a] gross imbalance of power.”⁶⁹ In other words, just because the PLA doesn’t have the capabilities that other militaries might consider essential to launch a lightning assault or major sea borne invasion of Taiwan, does not mean the PLA would not dare to attempt it. The PLA would proceed even if the attack is against a more heavily armed and far more technologically advanced foe. The PLA’s history of making do with what it has means that the Chinese military searches for “make do” solutions and is instilled with a “come as you are” mentality.⁷⁰ The United States was dismissive of the Chinese intervening in Korea in late 1950, notably General Douglas MacArthur. Even Chinese generals confessed to being daunted by the challenges of leading a force composed largely of light infantry into a confrontation with the world’s most powerful military. But the bravado and audacity of Mao Zedong combined with the PLA’s record of overcoming tremendous obstacles and defeating more powerful adversaries inspired Chinese soldiers to cross the Yalu and perform with great heroism and military effectiveness.⁷¹ The Chinese military intervention surprised United Nations Command Forces and turned the tide of the Korean War.

Moreover, the PLA has been labeled a “junk yard army.” Some observers have mistakenly assumed this is a pejorative term but it is not. The term was originally applied to the earliest days of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) as an accolade, a tribute to the IDF’s ability to scour the military junk yards of the world and to mix and match different weapon systems, and to cannibalize parts and ammunition. Somehow the ragtag IDF put it all together and was able to win on the battlefield and thereby ensure the state of Israel was not stillborn. So, one should not be too quick to write off the PLA as incapable of surmounting the daunting challenges of a military attack on Taiwan.

Capture and coercion by China constitute military threats to Taiwan and both should be taken seriously. Yet, in practice, the line between coercion and capture may be fuzzy and extremely difficult to discern. Indeed, these scenarios are not mutually exclusive and could be used in combination. For example, PLA saber rattling in the Taiwan Strait could morph into an actual invasion of the island. The latter could constitute probing exercises and/or deception. And, in a capture scenario, quick missile and air strikes could be used in combination with a slower sea borne invasion providing follow-on forces.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that in the past 10 years China has improved its ability to wage war against Taiwan. The vast number of ballistic missiles in targeting range of Taiwan has expanded Chinese military options should China determine to use force against Taiwan. Chinese leaders hope that modernization of the PLAAF and the PLAN, together with the increasing ballistic missile threat, could provide the coercive tools to keep Taiwan from straying from the “one China” concept. Chinese leaders and the PLA are prepared, however, to use force if deemed necessary to prevent the permanent separation of Taiwan from China. The “red line” of Taiwan formally declaring independence is an obvious trigger. A less obvious, but perhaps more likely trigger to some level of conflict is Taiwan’s “creeping separatism.” The level of Chinese military threat to Taiwan, therefore, is more dependent on the actions of Taiwan’s leaders than in the past. The dynamics of Taiwanese democracy, resulting, as it has, in no major political party publicly supporting reunification under the “one China” concept, indicates that retreat to the status quo circa the 1980s or early 1990s is unlikely. Taipei may continue to “push the envelope,” taking two steps forward, and one step back. It is possible that Beijing will react militarily to the Taiwanese dance of democracy in this decade. And, ultimately, China might just prove to be undeterable.⁷²

ENDNOTES

¹ See, for example, Richard Halloran, “Taiwan,” *Parameters* 33 (Spring 2003): 22, Andrew Scobell, *The U.S. Army and the Asia/Pacific*, Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2001), p. 7, and Kurt M. Campbell and Derek J. Mitchell, “Crisis in the Taiwan Strait,” *Foreign Affairs*, 80 (July/August 2001): 14.

- ² See, for example, the foreword of *China's National Defense in 2002*, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, December 2002.
- ³ Ed Lanfranco, "China Would Risk Much Over Taiwan," *The Washington Times*, 15 December 2003, p. 18.
- ⁴ Halloran, 25-26, and Robert Scalapino, "Taiwan – Opportunities and Challenges," in Alexander C. Tan, Steve Chan, Calvin Jillson, eds., *Taiwan's National Security: Dilemmas and Opportunities*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001), 13. For the usefulness of the United States to Mao Zedong and the CCP in mobilizing the Chinese people, see Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- ⁵ Halloran, 33, and Robert Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait, Deterrence, Escalation Dominance, and U.S.-China Relations," *International Security* 27 (Fall 2002): 54.
- ⁶ Halloran, 33
- ⁷ WMD will not be discussed because the author believes there is a low probability of China using them against Taiwan. Nevertheless such use should not be completely ruled out. See the discussion by various authors in James R. Lilley and Chuck Downs, eds., *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1997 and Michael O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," *International Security* 25:2 (Fall 2000): 51-86.
- ⁸ Yossef Bodansky, "Has Beijing Resolved to go to War," *Defense and Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* 28 (March 2000): 6. Beijing's thinking about Taiwan policy seems to have been influenced among other things by a major debate about Chinese national security that took place in 1999. See David M. Finkelstein, *China Reconsiders Its National Security: 'The Great Peace and Development Debate of 1999'* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses Corporation, 2000).
- ⁹ Andrew Scobell, *The U.S. Army and the Asia/Pacific*, Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2001), 12.
- ¹⁰ Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 174, and Lijin Sheng, *China's Dilemma, The Taiwan Issue*, (Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), 16.
- ¹¹ Lijin Sheng, 16.
- ¹² Arthur S. Ding, "The Lessons of the 1995-1996 Military Taiwan Strait Crisis: Developing a New Strategy Towards the United States and Taiwan," in Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, eds., *The Lessons of History: The Chinese People's Liberation Army at 75*, Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2003), 379
- ¹³ Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March*, 176, 177.
- ¹⁴ Adam Ward, "China and America: Trouble Ahead," *Survival* 45 (Autumn 2003): 43.

- ¹⁵ Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 82 (November/December 2003): 24.
- ¹⁶ Medeiros and Fravel, 26
- ¹⁷ Ward, 43
- ¹⁸ *Chinese Military Power*, Report of an Independent Task Force (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003).
- ¹⁹ Bodansky, 5.
- ²⁰ President Chen's full pledge was that "as long as the CCP regime has no intention to use military force against Taiwan, I pledge that during my term in office, I will not declare independence, I will not change the national title, I will not push forth the inclusion of the so-called "state-to-state" description in the Constitution, and I will not promote a referendum to change the status quo in regard to the question of independence or unification. Furthermore, the abolition of the National Reunification Council or the National Reunification Guidelines will not be an issue." (http://www.president.gov.tw/1_president/e_subject-043.html)
- ²¹ Ward, 50.
- ²² Medeiros and Fravel, 28.
- ²³ Medeiros and Fravel, 6
- ²⁴ Roy Denny, "Tensions in the Taiwan Strait," *Survival* 42 (Spring 2000): 78
- ²⁵ Robert Marquand, "China Throwing Diplomatic Elbows to Isolate Taiwan; Beijing has Recently Thwarted Taiwan's Free Trade Negotiations and Attendance at International Conferences," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 19, 2003, p.7
- ²⁶ Frank W. Moore, *China's Military Capabilities*, Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies, 2000, p. 3, available at www.comw.org/cmp/fulltext/iddschina.html. For a detailed review of Chinese and Taiwanese military forces see Dennis Hickey, *The Armies of East Asia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2001)
- ²⁷ "China's Military Modernisation Takes Shape," *Janes Intelligence Review*, February 1, 2004, available at www4.janes.com, accessed January 27, 2004.
- ²⁸ Frank W. Moore, 1-3
- ²⁹ Frank W. Moore, 6
- ³⁰ Dennis Hickey, *The Armies of East Asia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2001), 121.
- ³¹ See, for example, Justin Bernier and Stuart Gold, "China's closing window of opportunity," *Naval War College Review* 56 (Summer 2003): 72-86, Michael O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," *International Security* 25 (Fall 2000): 51-86, Ivan Eland, "The China-Taiwan

Military Balance: Implications for the United States,” Cato Institute Foreign Policy Briefing 74 (Washington D.C., February 5, 2003), and Ivan Eland, “Is Chinese Military Modernization a Threat to the United States,” Cato Institute Policy Analysis 465 (Washington D.C., January 23, 2003).

³² Bernier and Gold, 80.

³³ James Holt, “The China-Taiwan Military Balance,” *The Project on Defense Alternatives*, January 7, 2000, available at www.com.org/pda/nolt99.pdf, Ivan Eland, “Is Chinese Military Modernization a Threat to the United States,” p. 8.

³⁴ Scobell, *The U.S. Army and the Asia/Pacific*, 10.

³⁵ Cited in John Pomfret, “China Warns Taiwan That Attack May be ‘Unavoidable’; General Condemns President’s Moves Toward Independence,” *Washington Post*, November 20, 2003.

³⁶ See, for example, Thomas J. Christensen, “Posing Problems Without Catching Up: China’s Challenge to U.S. Security Policy,” *International Security* 25:4 (Spring 2001), pp. 5-40; Scobell, *China’s Use of Military Force*, chapter 8. Even analysts who focus on the invasion scenario acknowledge that such an option is not necessarily likely. See, for example, O’Hanlon, “Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan,” 53.

³⁷ Christensen and Glosny, “Sources of Stability in U.S.-China Security Relations,” 62.

³⁸ John W. Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan’s Democratization*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997, 162.

³⁹ Scobell, *China’s Use of Military Force*, pp. 190-191; Eric A. McVadon, “PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics Toward Taiwan: The Naval Dimension,” in Lilley and Downs, eds, *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait*, 271-272.

⁴⁰ This scenario is discussed in some detail in O’Hanlon, “Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan,” 75-79.

⁴¹ By using mines and submarines, the PLA would be playing to its strengths. See McVadon, “PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics,” 262, 272. “The mainland’s single biggest naval advantage over Taiwan lies in its large fleet of submarines.” David A. Shlapak, David T. Orletsky, and Barry A. Wilson, *Dire Strait?: Military Aspects of the China Taiwan Confrontation and Options for U.S. Policy*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000, 40.

⁴² Andrew Scobell, “China’s Strategy Towards the South China Sea,” in Martin Edmonds and Michael M. Tsai, eds., *Taiwan’s Maritime Security*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003, p. 47. On the challenges of PLA operations against the off-shore islands, see You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999, 183.

⁴³ Christensen, “Posing Problems Without Catching Up,” 23ff.

⁴⁴ See for example the discussion in the following PLA publications: Lt.Gen. Wen Guangchun, *Jidong zuozhan houqin baozhang* [logistical support for mobile operations] Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1997, 1997; Xu Guoxin, ed., *Zhanqu zhanyi houqin baozhang* [theater campaign

logistical support] Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 1997; Lt.Gen. Wang Houqing and Maj.Gen. Zhang Xingye, chief eds., *Zhanyi Xue* [campaign studies]. Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 2000. See also Dennis J. Blasko, *People's War Lives On: Chinese Military Logistics in the War Zone*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, forthcoming.

⁴⁵ Harlan W. Jencks, "Wild Speculation About the Military Balance in the Taiwan Strait," in Lilley and Downs, eds., *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait*, 150.

⁴⁶ For more extensive discussion of the economic fallout for China of a war over Taiwan, see Andrew Scobell, ed., *The Costs of Conflict: The Impact on China of a Future War*, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, September 2001.

⁴⁷ Russell D. Howard, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army: 'Short Arms and Slow Legs'* INSS Occasional Paper no. 28, Colorado Springs, CO: U.S. Air Force Academy Institute for National Security Studies, 1999.

⁴⁸ The PLA, for example, uses civilian vessels in exercises as transports as well as in amphibious operations. See Dennis J. Blasko, *People's War Lives On*, and Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy Enters the 21st Century*, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001, 103.

⁴⁹ On the importance of achieving air superiority, see Shlapak et al., *Dire Strait? O'Hanlon*, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," and You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, 129.

⁵⁰ Jencks, "Wild Speculation on the Military Balance in the Taiwan Strait," 149.

⁵¹ Michael S. Chase, "China's Special Operations Forces: 'Hawks in the Sky, Dragons Underwater and Tigers on Land?'" *Chinese Military Update* 1:4 (September 2003), 9-12.

⁵² O'Hanlon thinks that the PLA's airlift capability is "about 2 brigades." O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," p. 69. Exercises in the late 1980s and the 1990s have reportedly involved troops drops by as many as 100 aircraft in difficult terrain. PLA leaders aspire to the capability to parachute in as many as 100,000 soldiers but recognize that a more realistic number may be half of that. See You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, 143-146.

⁵³ Jencks, "Wild Speculation About the Military Balance in the Taiwan Strait," 154-156.

⁵⁴ O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan." Shlapak et al., *Dire Strait?*

⁵⁵ For the earlier assessment, see Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 190.

⁵⁶ See for example Wen Guangchun, *Jidong zuozhan houqin baozhang*; Xu Guoxin, ed., *Zhanqu zhanyi houqin baozhang*; Wang Houqing and Zhang Xingye, *Zhanyi Xue*. See also Blasko, *People's War Lives On*. Blasko details a series of PLA logistics exercises undertaken in 2000, 2001, and 2002 involving the use civilian vessels to transport troops, vehicles, and equipment in various scenarios including amphibious operations.

⁵⁷ On the marines, see Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, 114-115 and You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, p. 193. The latter source given the size of the marines as one brigade. On landing craft, O'Hanlon contends there are 70 while You Ji asserts there is ten times this number. See

O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," p. 62 and You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, p. 194. See also Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, 80.

⁵⁸ Blasko, *People's War Lives On*; Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, 103.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Shlapak et al, *Dire Strait?* 11.

⁶⁰ McVadon, "PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics," 254-55.

⁶¹ Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968; Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1975.

⁶² Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 193; Allen S. Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950-96, and Taiwan," *International Security*, 26:2 (Fall 2001), pp. 103-131. David Finkelstein, Mark Ryan and Michael McDevitt, eds., *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003.

⁶³ See, for example, O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan"; and McVadon, "PRC Exercises, Doctrine, and Tactics."

⁶⁴ Jencks, "Wild Speculation About the Military Balance in the Taiwan Strait," 160. Jencks is quoting Ellis Joffe in the latter sentence.

⁶⁵ Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, especially 34-35.

⁶⁶ See the similar logic outlined in Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma.: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict," *Washington Quarterly* 25:4 (Autumn 2002): 12.

⁶⁷ James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, New York: Basic Books, 1989, pp. 5-6, 14-15; Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 190.

⁶⁸ *China's National Defense in 2002*, 7ff.

⁶⁹ Whiting, "China's Use of Force 1950-96, and Taiwan," 130.

⁷⁰ Conversation with foreign defense attaché in Beijing, May 2002.

⁷¹ Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chapter 4, especially 90-91.

⁷² Christensen, "Posing Problems Without Catching Up," 36.