

TAIWAN STRAIT DILEMMAS

CHINA—TAIWAN—U.S. POLICIES

IN THE NEW CENTURY

EDITED BY GERIT W. GONG

Foreword by Richard C. Bush

NOTICE: THIS MATERIAL MAY BE
PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT LAW
(TITLE 17 U.S. CODE)

Duke University Libraries



D02603452M

THE CSIS PRESS

Center for Strategic
and International Studies
Washington, D.C.

Significant Issues Series

Timely books presenting current CSIS research and analysis of interest to the academic, business, government, and policy communities.

Managing editor: Roberta L. Howard

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), established in 1962, is a private, tax-exempt institution focusing on international public policy issues. Its research is nonpartisan and nonproprietary.

CSIS is dedicated to policy analysis and impact. It seeks to inform and shape selected policy decisions in government and the private sector to meet the increasingly complex and difficult global challenges that leaders will confront in this new century. It achieves this mission in four ways: by generating strategic analysis that is anticipatory and interdisciplinary; by convening policymakers and other influential parties to assess key issues; by building structures for policy action; and by developing leaders.

CSIS does not take specific public policy positions. Accordingly, all views, positions, and conclusions expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the authors.

The CSIS Press

Center for Strategic and International Studies
1800 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

Telephone: (202) 887-0200 Fax: (202) 775-3199

E-mail: books@csis.org Web site: <http://www.csis.org/>

CHAPTER ONE

AGAIN ON INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS
IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Harry Harding

ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ASPECTS of the Taiwan issue in the past several months has been the concept of some kind of mutually acceptable framework for relations between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC), and for Taiwan's place in the international community, during the long interim before the ultimate status of Taiwan can be determined.

Proponents of this concept have used different terms at different times to refer to what they have in mind. Some have described them as interim agreements, others as a *modus vivendi*, still others as mechanisms for peace and stability. Perhaps the most generic term is the one I use here: interim arrangements. I use the word "arrangements" rather than "agreements" to suggest that they need not necessarily be formal written compacts but may be embodied in parallel statements, tacit understandings, or any other conceivable form.

The concept of interim arrangements is based on three key assumptions:

- The present situation in the Taiwan Strait is unstable, although it possesses many more elements of mutual interdependence than it did 15 years ago.
- A final resolution of the Taiwan question is inconceivable in the short to medium term, given the different levels of development of the two economies, the differences in their political systems, the low level of mutual trust, and the inability thus far to find a formula acceptable to both sides.

- Therefore, given the impossibility of a final resolution of the question anytime soon, and given the dangers of instability, some kind of interim arrangement should be seriously explored.

The purpose of these arrangements is not to freeze the status quo but to make a highly dynamic situation more stable.

CONCEPT OF INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

The concept of interim arrangements is not new. A tacit and incomplete set of interim arrangements has been in place, and evolving, since the two sides began to expand their economic and social relations in the late 1980s and started their quasi-official dialogue in the early 1990s. The U.S. interest in promoting interim arrangements can be dated to the mid-1980s when Secretary of State George Shultz supported expanded cross-strait relations.

But the topic has become more salient and aroused greater controversy since the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995–1996. At that time, Taiwan's president, Lee Teng-hui, obtained a visa to attend a meeting at his alma mater, Cornell University. The PRC saw this successful effort as a significant step toward Taiwanese independence and a sign of U.S. support for such a move. The results were the suspension of the quasi-official cross-strait dialogue and China's engaging in a series of military exercises, including missile firings off the coast of Taiwan, to display its displeasure. To show its own commitment to a peaceful future for Taiwan, the United States moved two aircraft carrier battle groups into the area in the spring of 1996.

During and after the crisis, several U.S. analysts, including some who were former government officials and one who subsequently joined government service, encouraged the resumption of dialogue across the Taiwan Strait and the construction of a more stable set of cross-strait relationships that could prevent such a crisis from recurring. Then, in April 1999, Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth, in a speech on the twentieth anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, endorsed what he called interim agreements between Taiwan and the PRC.

Such proposals attracted great attention, and harsh criticism, on Taiwan. Indeed, one reason that Lee Teng-hui introduced the so-called two-state theory (*liang guo lun*) in an interview with the German radio station Deutsche Welle in July 1999 was apparently to forestall further U.S. pressure for interim agreements.

The objections expressed on Taiwan did not reflect a rejection of the concept of interim arrangements *per se*. After all, President Lee himself proposed the creation of "mechanisms for cross-strait peace and stability," a form of interim arrangement. Instead, Taipei's concerns reflected deep suspicion of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. Specifically, they embodied the apprehension that interim arrangements designed in the United States would inevitably favor the interests of the PRC over those of Taiwan.

Taiwan's suspicions of the United States in turn were rooted in the following developments:

- After the tensions in the Taiwan Strait in 1995–1996, the U.S. government formulated the so-called three no's and articulated them increasingly publicly and increasingly authoritatively. The three no's were that the United States would not pursue a policy of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan," that it would not support Taiwan's independence, and that it would not support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that require statehood. None of these three no's represented a change in policy. But they were seen as a clear tilt toward Beijing. The third in particular was regarded in Taipei as a rejection of Taiwan's attempt to play a more active role in international affairs and as a violation of the provision of the Taiwan Relations Act saying that the United States would continue to support Taiwan's membership in international organizations.

- After the first public articulation of the three no's during Jiang Zemin's visit to the United States in 1997, Chinese analysts began to probe their U.S. counterparts to determine whether the PRC could obtain further "adjustments" in U.S. policy toward Taiwan. They suggested a moratorium on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, assurances that the United States would not deploy theater missile

defense systems to the island, exclusion of Taiwan from the scope of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, an explicit U.S. statement that it preferred the eventual unification of Taiwan and China, or even U.S. endorsement of the PRC's one-country, two-systems formula, in light of the successful return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. Officials and analysts on Taiwan worried that the interim arrangements proposed by the United States might be the mechanism by which those adjustments would be made.

- These concerns were exacerbated by the one-sidedness of some of the specific proposals put forward by U.S. analysts. One in particular called both for a moratorium on discussions of unification and for a pledge that negotiations on unification would begin after the moratorium had expired. This was seen in Taiwan as reflecting a U.S. commitment to the eventual unification of Taiwan with China and as setting a deadline for negotiations similar to the deadline that the lease on the New Territories had set for negotiations on the future of Hong Kong.

Thus, in the spring of 1999, Taiwanese analysts and political leaders were sharply criticizing the concept of interim arrangements. They even charged that the U.S. suggestions in this regard violated some of the six reassurances that the United States had given Taiwan in August 1982 at the time of the arms sales communiqué between Washington and Beijing (e.g., that the United States would neither press for negotiations across the Taiwan Strait nor mediate between the two sides).

ASSESSING INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

The first question in assessing the desirability of interim arrangements is whether they address a serious problem. I believe they do. Although, as noted above, cross-strait relations are far more extensive today than they were in the mid-1980s, they are not necessarily stable. I reach this judgment for the following reasons:

- The development of cross-strait commercial relations has stalled in part for economic reasons, the sluggish growth of the mainland economy in recent months. But it also reflects Taiwan's reluctance to reduce its restrictions on cross-strait transportation and economic ties.
- The two sides have each placed conditions on the resumption of political dialogue that are unacceptable to the other. Beijing insists that Taiwan accept the so-called one-China formula: There is one China, the PRC is the sole legitimate government of China, and Taiwan is part of China. Taiwan has now countered with the two-state theory: There may be one China again some day, but in the meantime the two sides should deal with each other as separate and equal states. In other words, Taiwan is insisting on an equal legal status with the PRC, which Beijing is reluctant to acknowledge.
- Both sides are growing impatient with the status quo. With the return of Macao to Chinese sovereignty in December 1999, the PRC may assign even higher priority to resolving the Taiwan question. At the same time, as the assertion of a distinct Taiwanese identity grows, many on Taiwan are dissatisfied with the restricted role that the island plays in the international community.
- Relatedly, both sides may be more worried that time is running out—or at least that it is not on their side. Analysts in Beijing must be concerned about a steady shift of identity on Taiwan, away from a sense of being Chinese toward a self-image as Taiwanese, and the related decline in support in public opinion polls for unification with the mainland. Conversely, analysts in Taipei are apprehensive about the eventual rise of Chinese power. Not only will this allow Beijing to exert various forms of coercion against Taiwan, but it may make the United States less willing to support Taiwan's initiatives or to defend it against the mainland.
- Finally, an arms race in the Taiwan Strait is possible. The PRC is developing the capability to put military pressure on Taiwan, not

only through deployment of ballistic missiles but also through development of conventional air, naval, and amphibious forces. It also seeks the capability to deter the United States from intervening in a crisis on Taiwan's behalf. For its part, the United States is considering deployment of theater missile defense systems to Taiwan to counter the PRC's missile deployments. And some in Taiwan talk about the need for developing counteroffensive capabilities if the island is to deter or defend against an attack by the mainland.

Two crises over cross-strait relations since 1995—the controversy over Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in 1995 and the recent dispute over his two-states theory—are ample evidence of the possibility of instability in the Taiwan Strait. That the first crisis gave rise to military exercises and deployments by China and the United States and that some Chinese still talk of using force to deal with the second crisis indicate that the consequences of this instability could be profound. Thus a set of interim arrangements that reduce this instability benefits all parties.

DESIGNING INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

But what would such interim arrangements look like? Can they be designed in ways acceptable to both sides? Five elements might be part of a comprehensive set of interim arrangements. These elements were originally contained in a paper I presented in Taipei earlier this year,¹ but the objective now is less to advocate these five ideas than to use them to analyze the feasibility and desirability of interim arrangements. Those who wish to design interim arrangements must address some serious dilemmas on each of these dimensions.

Set of Mutual Reassurances on the Basic Issues

A first assumption is that, to be effective, a set of interim arrangements must address in mutually acceptable fashion the issues of greatest concern on both sides. The mainland is concerned that Taiwan will declare independence from China. Taiwan is apprehensive that the mainland will use military force, or other forms of coercion,

to compel it to accept unification on Beijing's terms. A set of interim arrangements that deal only with secondary issues, without touching on these more fundamental problems, will not be complete.

One possibility—indeed one suggested in my earlier paper and frequently mentioned by others—is that there could be a set of mutual, conditional reassurances on these two points. That is, the mainland would commit itself not to use force against Taiwan as long as Taiwan did not declare independence, and Taiwan would forswear a unilateral declaration of independence as long as the mainland did not employ coercion to impose unification. The advantages of such an approach are clear:

- It addresses the issues of fundamental concern to each side.
- It does so in a balanced manner: An assurance by Taiwan is linked to a parallel assurance by the mainland.
- It also does so in a conditional way: The PRC would not renounce the use of force unconditionally, but only if Taiwan does not provoke that use of force by a declaration of independence. Similarly, Taiwan does not renounce a unilateral declaration of independence unconditionally, but does so only if the mainland continues to pursue unification by peaceful means.
- Finally, this approach is relatively feasible because it builds on existing trends. The PRC, although refusing to renounce the right to use force, has been increasingly willing to specify a narrow range of circumstances in which it would do so, the most important of which is precisely a unilateral declaration of independence by Taiwan. Indeed, Beijing has said it would agree to a cessation of hostilities if Taiwan accepted the one-China principle. Conversely, Taiwanese political leaders have increasingly acknowledged that a unilateral declaration of independence would be unnecessary and counterproductive, given the island's current autonomy from mainland rule and the likelihood that it would trigger the use of force by the mainland.

But there is a dilemma. Some Taiwanese leaders, renouncing the idea of a unilateral declaration, add that they can do so because Taiwan is already independent and no formal declaration is necessary. At

the same time, public opinion polls on Taiwan reveal that support for unification, and the public's degree of self-identification as Chinese, is at an all-time low. This suggests that the threat to stability is not so much that Taiwan will unilaterally try to change the status quo but that it will unilaterally try to freeze it.

This in turn focuses attention on another situation Beijing has occasionally mentioned as a possible trigger for its use of force: a "protracted refusal to negotiate" on the part of Taiwan. It is increasingly this scenario, rather than a unilateral declaration of independence by Taipei, that an interim arrangement in the Taiwan Strait must successfully address.

One obvious way of approaching this issue is a moratorium on negotiation for a long period of time, followed by an agreement to negotiate the terms of unification at some future point, but it seems unrealistic. Beijing will not want a long moratorium on the issue; Taiwan will want neither a deadline for negotiations nor an agreement in advance on the ultimate outcome of those negotiations.

Rather, a different framework for dealing with this issue might include the following:

- Taiwan would continue to keep unification on the table—as a possible, even preferred, outcome—even while justifiably insisting that certain preconditions will have to be met if unification is to be achieved. For all the controversy surrounding it, Lee Teng-hui's interview with Deutsche Welle did precisely this.
- The PRC would acknowledge that preconditions for unification have not been met and that serious negotiations on this issue are infeasible in the foreseeable future. It would also have to acknowledge, at least tacitly, that the main challenge will be to persuade Taiwan of the desirability of unification, not merely to devise acceptable formulas by which unification might be achieved.

Development of Cross-Strait Dialogue

The second element in a comprehensive set of interim arrangements would be the expansion of cross-strait dialogue on political as well as

technical issues. In my earlier paper, I suggested that the nature of this dialogue could be expected to evolve over time. At first, its principal purpose would be simply to enhance mutual understanding: to help people on the mainland understand the rising sense of local identity on Taiwan and to help people on Taiwan understand the importance the mainland attaches to unification. Over time, the dialogue might evolve to exploring the feasibility of unification, including preconditions, and the various formulas that might ultimately prove acceptable to the two sides. The dialogue might eventually become a formal negotiation on these issues.

This dialogue should involve not just the current discussions between representatives of the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). It should also involve Track Two channels for discussion that could involve broader participation by influential people on both sides, especially the various political parties on Taiwan. This reflects the fact that, in Asia, Track Two dialogue is a well-established way of dealing with sensitive issues in a responsible but informal manner, and that broader participation would help build the political base on Taiwan for a redefined relationship with the mainland, whether an interim or a final arrangement.

This second element in an interim arrangement is in many ways increasingly feasible. The ARATS-SEF channel is already a form of Track Two dialogue, although (as just noted) it needs to be expanded. There are now many forums for dialogue between policy analysts from the mainland and Taiwan. The Taiwanese government's position has steadily evolved from the "no-contact" policy of the 1980s, to an insistence on discussing only "technical" issues, to a conditional willingness to engage in political dialogue.

There are also several dilemmas here that need to be openly acknowledged and seriously addressed. For example, we should not be naive about the results of dialogue. Dialogue can build mutual understanding, identify common interests, and produce innovative ideas for solving problems. But dialogue can also reveal the depth of mistrust, the differences in interest, and the gaps between the policy preferences of the participants. It is always possible therefore that

dialogue can make a situation worse rather than better. Moreover, although governments increasingly give lip service to Track Two dialogue, they remain highly suspicious of high-level exchanges they cannot control.

An even bigger obstacle to cross-strait dialogue exists not at the Track Two level but at the Track One, or official, level. The principal message contained in Lee Teng-hui's interview with Deutsche Welle was that, in any official dialogue, Taiwan would insist on being treated as the mainland's equal. In Lee's words, it would reject being categorized as a "province" (or other local government), let alone a "renegade province."

In fact, the mainland has already promised to deal with Taiwan on the basis of "equality," so one could argue that the two sides have already agreed in principle on this question. But finding an operational definition of an equal, official relationship will not be easy. The PRC has offered to deal with the president of Taiwan as the leader of the ruling party (the Kuomintang) on a par with the leader of the mainland's ruling party (the CCP [Chinese Communist Party]). Indeed, it was in the capacity of general secretary of the CCP that Jiang Zemin met with Koo Chen-fu during the latter's visit to Beijing in 1998. But it is very difficult for a multiparty system such as Taiwan's to engage in official discussions on a party-to-party basis. And it begs the question as to the nature of the government on Taiwan, which presumably would have to convert formal agreements between the two sides into legal form.

Lee Teng-hui's solution was that the two sides regard the situation as a "special form of state-to-state relations." Whatever the ambiguities of the English version of his remarks, the phrase used in Chinese, *guo yu guo guanxi*, implies country-to-country relations. And the notion that cross-strait relations are international, rather than intranational, in character is completely unacceptable to the mainland.

From an outside perspective, the obvious solution is to define the relationship between the two sides as a government-to-government relationship within a nation divided by an inconclusive civil war. That, before announcement of the *liang guo lun*, was the essence of Taiwan's position. But that formula has at least three implications

that so far Beijing has refused to accept: There is a legitimate government on Taiwan (Beijing refers only to the Taiwan "authorities"), that government is sovereign over the territory it controls (Beijing refers only to "jurisdiction"), and that government is headed by a president (Beijing refers only to a "leader"). It will not be easy to bridge these remaining gaps, which are key to creating an official cross-strait dialogue on equal terms or even to permitting meetings between Lee Teng-hui or his successor and mainland representatives such as Wang Daohan.

Expansion of Cross-Strait Economic and Cultural Ties

A third element in any comprehensive set of interim arrangements would be the further expansion of cross-strait economic and cultural ties, including establishment of more direct transportation and communications links (the so-called *santong*) and the relaxation of remaining barriers to trade and investment. Such a development would be in the economic interests of both parties. From a political perspective, it would meet the demands of business communities on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, in the longer run, these enhanced links between the two societies help enhance mutual understanding, build interdependence that can prevent conflict, and promote economic development of the mainland, which is one (although not the only) precondition for unification.

What then is the dilemma? The most obvious problem is that Taiwan has used the expansion of cross-strait economic links, especially the *santong*, as a bargaining chip in its tacit negotiations with Beijing. Specifically, Taipei has sought a renunciation of force, or a cessation of hostilities, as the precondition for the inauguration of the *santong*. This problem can best be resolved by seeing the expansion of cross-strait ties as part of a comprehensive package of interim arrangements, including the mutual reassurances discussed above.

But there is also a deeper problem: Taipei's fear that growing economic links will create an asymmetrical form of interdependence that makes Taiwan more vulnerable to the mainland than the mainland is to Taiwan. It is clear that the issue is not the type or direction of the economic relationship. Taiwanese leaders and analysts seem to

worry not only that their investments on the mainland are making them vulnerable to pressure from Beijing but also that mainland investment on Taiwan would do the same. (Logically these two types of investment should have parallel and reciprocal consequences.) Rather, the issue seems to be Taiwan's concern that the authoritarian nature of politics on the mainland makes economic sanctions (or economic pressure more generally) a tool that is easier for Beijing to use than for Taipei to use.

The challenge then is to find ways to reassure Taiwan that growing economic interdependence does not produce asymmetrical vulnerabilities. One approach might be for the two sides to agree to apply the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to each other, once they are both members. That would reduce the ability of both sides to exercise economic pressure against the other and make many attempts to do so a violation of a multilateral international obligation.

Expansion of Taiwan's Role in the International Community

One of Taiwan's principal objectives in recent years has been to expand the range and formality of its international relationships. Taipei argues correctly that it has much to offer the international community, from financial capital to technical advice. But the main reason for this strand in Taiwanese policy is to enable the people of Taiwan to have a sense of international identity they now lack.

Thus far, this issue has been a serious sticking point in cross-strait relations and an arena for sharp competition between the two sides in the international community. Beijing has stymied Taiwan's attempts to join various intergovernmental organizations including the World Health Organization and the United Nations. The PRC has successfully kept Taiwan from securing dual recognition from other nations (most notably from South Korea and South Africa). Taiwan and the mainland engage in an ongoing (and costly) competition to secure diplomatic recognition from smaller states (such as Papua New Guinea, Macedonia, and Panama). From an international perspective, Lee Teng-hui's *liang guo lun* is a plea both for dual recognition by the international community and for dual representation in inter-

governmental organizations, as well as for equal and official relations across the Taiwan Strait. But that aspect of the *liang guo lun* has also been rejected by Beijing.

The situation, although difficult, is not without hope.

First, there is now ample precedent for Taiwan's membership in international organizations in which membership is not restricted to sovereign states. Taiwan has been able to join first the Asian Development Bank, then APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), and now the WTO, although the name by which it has done so has not always been agreeable.

Second, Beijing has said that, if Taiwan would only accept the one-China principle, a further expansion of its international activities would be "negotiable." This begs two obvious questions:

- What would constitute acceptance of the one-China principle? Would the kinds of mutual reassurances outlined above—in which Taiwan would agree to keep the possibility of unification on the table—be satisfactory?
- What kind of expansion of Taiwan's activities could Beijing accept? Could there ever be agreement on Taiwan's membership in intergovernmental organizations alongside the PRC, as the two Germanys and the two Koreas were able to do? Could there ever be agreement on dual recognition, again using the precedent (which Beijing itself adopted) of diplomatic relations with both Bonn and East Berlin, both Pyongyang and Seoul?

A step short of dual representation would be for Taiwan to participate in international organizations in some capacity other than that as a nation-state. Given the greater range of actors acknowledged to be key players in international affairs—from Hong Kong to the Palestinian Liberation Organization to multinational corporations to nongovernment organizations—there will over time be growing precedents for creative minds to consider in defining Taiwan's involvement in the international community. Indeed there is an intriguing paradox: Taiwan is insisting on sovereign status at a time when sovereignty in international affairs is becoming increasingly blurred.

Military Confidence-Building Measures

Finally, a comprehensive set of interim arrangements would also include various confidence-building measures between the military establishments of the two sides. These might include the following:

- Communication and other channels of coordination between the two sides that can allow peaceful interaction and deal with military incidents. For example, opening direct air and shipping links between the two sides will also require some mechanism for coordinated monitoring of civilian traffic in and above the Taiwan Strait. Hot lines—coupled with direct military-to-military dialogue—will make it possible to deal constructively with any incident.
- Restrictions on maneuvers and exercises that could lead to war by accident. The provocative aerial exercises over the Taiwan Strait in recent months show the importance of this aspect of military confidence building.
- Above all, restrictions on competitive military deployments that could produce a costly and dangerous arms race in the Taiwan Strait. In particular, there is an obvious potential trade-off between the PRC's deployment of ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan and the deployment of theater missile defense systems by either Taiwan or the United States.
- Because the level of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan is linked to the military balance in the Taiwan Strait, restrictions on the PRC's military deployments could lead to comparable limits on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

The mutual reassurances that lie at the heart of any interim arrangements will lay the groundwork for these kinds of continental ballistic missiles. But they will not make them easy. They will be complicated by three facts: that the PRC will not issue an unconditional use of force, that neither side will completely forgo military preparations, and that the United States will continue arms sales to Taiwan. It will be impossible to envisage a secure community in the Taiwan Strait where the use of force is inconceivable and preparations for

war are unnecessary. It may be possible for the various parties to exercise greater restraint in acquiring and deploying arms and in the size and character of their military exercises.

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

What would be the U.S. role in any set of interim arrangements in the Taiwan Strait? Analysts in Taiwan sometimes make two arguments on this subject that may at first blush appear contradictory: They regard direct U.S. involvement in any negotiation as illegitimate, but they want the United States to guarantee any interim arrangements that may be devised.

Taiwan's objection to U.S. involvement reflects in part the concerns outlined above: the fear that U.S. involvement will inevitably be biased in favor of the PRC's interests at the expense of Taiwan's, whether because of China's greater power or because of U.S. alleged romanticism about Beijing. Taiwanese analysts also point out that any U.S. attempt to mediate the Taiwan Strait dispute would violate assurances that Washington gave Taipei in 1982, that the United States would not engage in mediation between the two sides.

As the late Gerald Segal of the International Institute for Strategic Studies once pointed out, the dispute in the Taiwan Strait appears to be the only foreign conflict that the United States has said, as a matter of principle, it will never mediate. But, however unique, that is indeed U.S. policy. The current U.S. promotion of interim arrangements is not a form of mediation aimed at producing a substantive solution to the Taiwan Strait issue. Rather it is a way to encourage greater stability in the Taiwan Strait during the long interim before such a solution can conceivably be reached.

But what about a U.S. guarantee of interim arrangements? Some Taiwanese analysts have drawn a parallel with the U.S. guarantee of the Camp David agreements of 1979 and asked whether the United States would issue a similar guarantee for the Taiwan Strait.

There are two important points about the U.S. guarantee in the Middle East.² The United States had just mediated the Camp David accords, a much more intensive role than anyone expects the United

States to play in creating interim agreements in the Taiwan Strait. And the guarantee was quite vague. It promised to provide aerial monitoring of the situation on the ground and to promote the creation of some kind of multilateral peacekeeping force. In the event of an actual or threatened violation of the peace treaty, the United States promised only to "consult with the Parties . . . and take such other actions as it may deem appropriate and helpful."

One could argue that the existing U.S. policy toward the Taiwan Strait provides a tacit guarantee for any set of interim arrangements the two sides might reach. In particular, the Taiwan Relations Act would imply that any attempt by the PRC to use coercion in violation of the terms of such arrangements would be of grave concern to the United States. And certainly the United States would also expect Taiwan to fulfill obligations under any interim arrangements with the mainland.

Ultimately, one objective of interim arrangements should be to reduce the degree of U.S. involvement in the Taiwan issue. Each side is now negotiating with the other through Washington, trying to mobilize support for its own policy positions while portraying the other as a troublemaker. Under pressure from both sides, the United States often seems to vacillate, tilting first in one direction (granting a visa to Lee Teng-hui to visit Cornell University) and then in the other (issuing the three no's). This simply encourages the two sides to appeal to the United States for support rather than deal with each other more directly.

Although the main purpose of interim arrangements is to produce stability, increase mutual understanding, and enhance interdependence across the Taiwan Strait, another is to end this dynamic. The two sides should be dealing—hopefully more constructively and cooperatively—with each other, rather than through the United States. If so, although the United States will still play a stabilizing role in the Taiwan Strait, in other respects its role in cross-strait relations can become far more secondary than has been true thus far.

Notes

1. Harry Harding, "Toward a Modus Vivendi in the Taiwan Strait," paper prepared for the Conference on U.S.-Taiwan Relations: Twenty Years After the Taiwan Relations Act, sponsored by the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, April 9-10, 1999.
2. The text of the guarantee, conveyed in identical letters sent by President Carter to President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, is in William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington: Brookings, 1986), 406.