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U.S.-China Relations: Communication and Misperception in the Taiwan Strait

by

Paris E. Crenshaw, III

September 2003

Thesis Advisor:	Gaye Christoffersen
Second Reader:	H. Lyman Miller

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Taiwan's political status remains the central, most difficult issue in U.S.-China relations. The question has created tensions that erupted in three crises of direct confrontation between the United States and China in the Taiwan Strait. The central dilemma in solving these conflicts has been that both states tied vital national interests to the issue. Despite the fact that both sides have managed to avoid the Taiwan question when negotiating agreements in less sensitive areas, Taiwan's status continues to present the greatest risk factor for a future armed conflict between the United States and China.

This thesis examines the three Taiwan Strait crises and argues that experiential learning coupled with a realpolitik view of international relations has led decision-makers to follow consistent modes of behavior when handling them. The development of positive relations between the United States and China after 1971 has not mitigated the inherent risks presented by the Taiwan question. The thesis concludes that the value of strategic ambiguity is overestimated, given the likelihood of misperception by both parties in a mutual deterrence relationship. Since a future crisis may not be averted, the United States and China must develop robust lines of diplomatic communication to avoid inadvertent escalation.

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U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS: COMMUNICATION AND MISPERCEPTION IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Paris E. Crenshaw, III
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.S., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1995

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2003

Author: Paris E. Crenshaw, III

Approved by: Gaye Christoffersen
Thesis Advisor

H. Lyman Miller
Second Reader

James J. Wirtz
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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This thesis examines the three Taiwan Strait crises and argues that experiential learning coupled with a *realpolitik* view of international relations has led decision-makers to follow consistent modes of behavior when handling them. The development of positive relations between the United States and China after 1971 has not mitigated the inherent risks presented by the Taiwan question. The thesis concludes that the value of strategic ambiguity is overestimated, given the likelihood of misperception by both parties in a mutual deterrence relationship. Since a future crisis may not be averted, the United States and China must develop robust lines of diplomatic communication to avoid inadvertent escalation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Taiwan question is the most crucial and most sensitive issue in the relations between China and the United States. – from 'The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue'[1]

Time and again over the past half-century the question of Taiwan's political status and the possibility of reunification with the Chinese mainland has been the crux of debates, conflict and negotiations between and within the United States and the People's Republic of China. The issue has been both the source of tesne confrontation between the two powers and a stumbling block in the rapprochement and improved relations between them.

The bulk of the literature on the United States and China focuses in one way or another on the difficult relationship between the two states. Whether scholars argue that the relationship is unnecessarily hostile or that the United States should view China as a current or future threat, the discussion frequently revolves around arguments about the role of deterrence and defense and its impact on national security policy-making and strategic behavior in both countries.

Critics of the U.S. approach to Chinese policy point out that many deterrent strategies of the past have resulted from inconsistencies and misperceptions on the part of U.S. leaders. Many scholars also point out that similar mistakes have been made by policy-makers in Beijing. In general, those who support the deterrence or containment of China respond that, while mistakes may have been made in the past, the risk of not deterring Chinese ambitions is too great to ignore. They argue that, regardless of the way we would like things to be, the demands of the "real world" dictate that the United States must check the power of potential adversaries or risk losing its own power and prestige. In short, there is no lack of reading material on either side of this issue.

However, much of the literature on U.S.-China relations tends to ignore the question of why both states tend to resort to *realpolitik* modes of policy-making and bargaining strategy during times of crisis. If the critics of deterrence theory are correct and the problem with its application is one of misperception or cultural bias, one would expect that years, even decades, of interaction between the states would result in

[1] 'The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue.' New York Times. February 21, 2000 http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/022200china-taiwan-text.html, August 13, 2003.

increased understanding and, therefore, a decreased reliance on deterrence of China or the United States.

Some scholars argue that the answer lies in strategic culture and that policy- and decision-making processes are bound up in historical legacies that limit options and shape perceptions to the detriment of both sides. The argument seems plausible, but the question still arises: "Why can't we learn to understand one another?" If cultural biases are the problem, one must still expect that over time the two sides can interact often enough to gain a better understanding of the goals and motivations of each other. Such interaction should eventually reduce the misperception of threat that necessitates a deterrent relationship and the resort to hostilities that lead to international crises.

It is more likely that the answer lies in the lessons of experience. It has been shown that states frequently base their crisis decision-making on the lessons their leaders learned in past crises. Applying a different view of learning to the question of U.S.-China relations fills many of the gaps that strategic culture scholars have shown in deterrence theory's answers to the problem. More importantly, the approach does so without resorting to emphasis on understanding cultures or similar paradigms.

The purpose of this thesis is to show how the combination of experiential learning and a realist perspective can explain the evolution of behavior between the United States and China during three successive crises in the Taiwan Strait. Chapter II briefly examines the evolution of the Taiwan question from early Chinese history to the 1995-1996 crisis in order to place the three confrontations in historical context. Chapter III discusses the relevant theories and the literature on which the paper relies in the formulation of its conclusions. In particular, the chapter discusses deterrence theory, cultural realism, and Leng's ELR model of crisis bargaining behavior and their application to U.S.-China relations. Chapters IV, V, and VI each covers one of the three crises between the United States and the People's Republic of China that led to a confrontation in the Taiwan Strait, describing the instigating factors, the strategies employed by each side, and the outcomes. Chapter VII concludes the thesis by looking at how the outcomes of the recurrent crises shaped subsequent interactions. The final section discusses the future of U.S.-China relations in the light of the theories described in previous chapters. The goal of the thesis is to elucidate an alternate view of the

relationship between the United States and China and explain how, despite the influence of engagement and other policies that are intended to improve relations between the United States, we may yet face future crises and confrontations based on misperceptions and failures of communication over the Taiwan Strait.

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II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE TAIWAN ISSUE

Despite claims by the PRC (such as those in the 1993 White Paper on the Taiwan Question), Taiwan has not always been an inseparable part of China. The island was originally inhabited by Malayo-Polynesian aborigines, who numbered about 120,000 by the late 1800s.[2] Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the Pacific, Chinese dynasties would occasionally send missions to the island, some as early as the Third Century A.D.[3] These early expeditions never resulted in the development of any dynasty's administrative control over Taiwan. It was not until the late 16th century that significant numbers of Chinese traders and other travelers began making their way to Taiwan for a variety of purposes.[4] Yet, even then, the island was not under the direct control of the Chinese imperial government.

In the 1600s, the Spanish and later Dutch traders settled on the island. From 1624 to 1662, the Dutch East India Company possessed several posts that were administered from the company's headquarters in what is now Djakarta.[5] Chinese settlements grew up around these communities, but the early Chinese settlers frequently chose to return to the mainland during the winter, leaving the Europeans to administer the island.[6] In the latter part of the century, as the Ming dynasty fell, Zheng Chenggong (also known as Koxinga) and his troops held out against the conquering Manchus as a maritime power based on the islands near the Fujian coast for many years.

In 1683, the Qing emperor Kangxi's forces, under the command of Admiral Shi Lang, defeated the remaining troops loyal to Koxsinga's son on Taiwan. Choosing to incorporate Taiwan into Fujian province, Kangxi stationed 8,000 Qing troops there permanently and established Tainan as the capital on the island's southwestern coast. It is at this point that the Qing firmly established administrative control over the island.

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[2] Fairbank, John K. et al. East Asia: Tradition and Transformation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989, p 897.

[3] White Paper: "The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China," Section I. Beijing, August 1993. (http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/whitepaper/7(1).html) Last accessed: 13 August, 2003.

[4] Fairbank et al. East Asia (p 897)

[5] Ibid. (p 216)

[6] Spence, Jonathan D. The Search for Modern China. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990, p 54.

However, the emperor also placed strict limits on emigration to and trade with the island.[7]

The Qing continued to administer Taiwan as a prefecture of Fujian province for many years, adhering to its traditional ambivalence about such overseas holdings. It was not until 1721, after the rebellion of Zhu Yigui, that the Yongzheng emperor allowed true settlement of Taiwan by mainland emigrants and their families.[8] The island served as a refuge both for entrepreneurs and traders and for those who were dissatisfied with Qing rule. In the 17th and 18th Centuries, Taiwan was the source of numerous secret societies and religious cults that occasionally called for the end of Qing rule and the restoration of the Ming dynasty.[9] For example, in the 1780s the "Heaven and Earth Society" revolted and declared the foundation of a new dynasty on Taiwan. Of course, the rebellion was quickly crushed by Qing forces.[10]

Over the next century, the number of immigrants from the mainland to Taiwan continued to grow. In response to the swelling number of Chinese on the mainland, many people migrated to Taiwan during the second half of the 1800s.[11] After the French defeated China in the Sino-French War of 1884-1885, the island was established as a full province in 1885 and the population grew to 2.54 million by 1893.[12] Unfortunately, as the Qing Empire grew weaker from within and fell to the predations of imperialist states, China lost its ability to hold onto its claimed territories. On April 17, 1895, after a humiliating defeat by the Japanese, Li Hongzhang was forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which, in part, ceded Taiwan to Japan.[13]

Taiwan remained under Japanese colonial control from 1895 through the fall of the Qing and the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911, and well into World War II. During this period, Taiwan provided Japan with both agricultural supplies and raw materials for use by Japanese industry. Under Japanese rule, the Taiwanese were subject to institutional and organizational changes that were intended to bring the island

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[7] Ibid. (p 55-7)
[8] Ibid. (p 85)
[9] Roberts, J. A. G. A Concise History of China. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. p 174
[10] Spence, The Search for Modern China. (p 114)
[11] Ibid. (p 208)
[12] White Paper: "The Taiwan Question" (Section I)
[13] Fairbank et al (p 554)

fully in line with Japan's imperial vision. Despite the oppressive colonial rule, Taiwan's economy flourished under the Japanese administration.[14]

After the defeat of the Japanese, sovereignty over Taiwan, in principle to be returned to China, was turned over to Chinese Nationalist forces at the Cairo Conference in 1943, although the island was not fully restored to Nationalist rule until 1945. After a half-century of Japanese colonialism, the Taiwanese looked forward to the prospects of their newfound freedom. However, the Nationalists established a regime that was, in many ways far more oppressive than the Japanese had been. In February 1947, rebellion broke out in opposition to the harsh policies of the Kuomintang government on Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek's forces ruthlessly put down the rebellion and remained on the island to maintain it as a base of operations in the future. By 1949, Taiwan held 300,000 Nationalist troops, guarding countless artifacts and Qing-dynasty documents, as well as protecting Chiang's last refuge from the looming threat of communist victory on the mainland.[15]

In the years immediately following World War II, China's civil war wracked the mainland. Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) forces were pushed inexorably toward the sea. The Nationalists held out positions from which they could retreat to Taiwan as their prospects for victory continued to look increasingly grim. Chiang Kai-shek finally relinquished his rule of the mainland in January 1949 and relocated the Republic of China to Taiwan by December of that year.[16] He immediately began consolidating his power on the island and prepared his KMT troops for what he expected to be the eventual return to the mainland.

Meanwhile on the mainland, Mao Zedong announced the foundation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Among the key priorities of the new communist government was consolidation of its territory, which meant the occupation of Tibet and the invasion of Taiwan. Although Tibet was placed fully under PRC control by 1951, the reclamation of Taiwan would prove to be a much more difficult problem for Mao and his government.[17]

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[14] Spence, The Search for Modern China. (p 429)
[15] Ibid. (p 485-6)
[16] Roberts, Concise History of China. (p 251)
[17] Spence, Search for Modern China. (p 500)

In an effort to quickly deal with the Taiwan situation, PLA forces attempted to capture Quemoy (Jinmen) in October 1949. KMT forces rebuffed this attack, and the PRC delayed further attempts to recapture Taiwan and the other islands occupied by the KMT. It is evident that the PRC leadership fully intended to invade Taiwan in the future, despite the fact that rising military expenses and the need to stabilize the Chinese economy demanded demobilization of millions of PLA troops.[18]

There is some speculation that the PRC chose to postpone its attack on Taiwan for purely internal reasons. Spence suggests that Mao was hoping that Taiwan would fall into PRC hands as a result of the insurrection against the KMT or that a widespread illness among PLA troops prevented action that would have otherwise been decisive.[19] However, Shu Guang Zhang argues that China's major concern was over what the United States would do in response to PLA invasion of the island. Mao may have assumed that Chiang's failure to gain control of the mainland equated to the inability of the United States to control China. He reasoned that the loss of China would force U.S. policy-makers to attribute high strategic importance to Taiwan. Consequently, he expected the United States to aid in the defense of Taiwan at all costs.[20]

The question of U.S. intentions combined with the American distrust of a communist China to lay the foundation for a stand-off in the Strait. The United States' continuing military and economic support for Chiang's regime served as proof to Mao of American imperialist behavior. Similarly, the formation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance and China's announcement of its policy of "leaning to one side" convinced U.S. policy-makers that actions by the Chinese were, in effect, part of an international communist strategy orchestrated by the Soviet Union.

Regardless of the reasons for waiting to attack Taiwan, the outbreak of the Korean War, and President Truman's decision to place forces from the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait as a means of "neutralization" put an end to China's immediate aspirations of reunification.[21] The move also provides a clear marker for the beginning of the United States' long-term involvement in the Taiwan issue.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid. (p 501)

[20] Zhang, Shu Guang. Deterrence and Strategic Culture. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992, p 64-5.

[21] Shulsky, Abram N. Deterrence Theory and Chinese Behavior. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000, p

As Spence puts it, "The Korean War further complicated China's international status by fixing the United States in a position of hostility, which in turn ensured that Taiwan would remain outside the control of the PRC and the PRC outside the United Nations."[22] The subsequent five decades, which would include three military confrontations in the Taiwan Strait, were shaped by perceptions of the threat posed to China by the United States and vice versa.

Particularly threatening to China were what Mao saw as early attempts to encircle and isolate the PRC from the world. In September 1954 at a meeting held in Manila, the United States, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand formed the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). The express purpose of this organization was to halt communist expansion in the countries of Southeast Asia. China viewed the formation of this alliance as an aggressive and threatening move on the part of the United States against the PRC. Charges that the United States was continuing to assist the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan were paired with accusations of intending to rearm Japan.[23] Mao was convinced that he could not ignore an obvious threat to China's immediate security interests.

In the fall of 1954, the Chinese commenced shelling of KMT installations on the island of Quemoy (Jinmen). As will be shown later, the decision and timing of the bombardment was influenced both by the envisioned threat of SEATO and by perceived evidence of a stronger relationship growing between the United States and Taiwan.[24] Mao Zedong strongly wished to discourage the development of a formal security arrangement between Washington and the Chiang regime. However, even at this stage, PRC policy-makers were not willing to force an all out war with the United States.

Recognizing the risk of pushing the United States and Britain toward official recognition of Taiwan's independence, Zhou Enlai argued to halt the bombardment and allow the KMT to retain control of the islands.[25] Further, he began calling for a peaceful

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[22] Spence, Search for Modern China (p 524)

[23] Ibid. (p 526)

[24] Mao Zedong, "Telegram to the USSR: September 2, 1954" in Kau, Michael and Leung, John. The Writings of Mao Zedong: 1949-1976, Vol. 1. London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1986, p 471.

[25] Spence, The Search for Modern China. (p 528)

settlement to the Taiwan issue.[26] Despite the apparent desire for a peaceful resolution, the PRC remained prepared to defend its territorial interests.

After the crisis of 1954, the PLA concentrated its efforts on building up air power in the coastal regions near Taiwan.[27] There is good reason to believe that China was merely continuing to respond to the perceived threat from the United States. The Eisenhower administration continued to provide military and economic support to Chiang Kai-shek, going as far in 1957 to announce its decision to deploy Matador nuclear missiles on Taiwan.[28] However, Mao Zedong was convinced that the socialist camp was ultimately more powerful and even if events led to war between the United States and China the PRC would eventually prevail.

In an attempt to discourage the development of even closer ties between the United States and Taiwan in 1958, Mao ordered the bombardment of the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, which still held garrisons of KMT troops in readiness for an eventual return of Nationalists to the mainland. Although Mao achieved at least some of his objectives from the stand-off, the second Taiwan Strait Crisis marked a turning point in Sino-Soviet relations. Apparently not as confident as Mao of victory and, therefore, not wanting the situation to escalate into a larger war, Khrushchev refused to assist the PRC or even to show support for Mao during the crisis. For Mao, Khrushchev's betrayal was the nail in the coffin of Sino-Soviet friendship.

The period from 1958 to 1970 has been indelibly marked by the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, both periods of great difficulty within China. The rift between the USSR and the PRC left China feeling extremely vulnerable and unable to rely on anyone but itself survival. These years were a period of China's general isolation from the rest of the world and political and social turmoil.

Despite these internal problems, the question of Taiwan was never far from the minds of PRC policy-makers. Tensions in the Taiwan Strait remained high. In 1962, Chiang Kai-shek began making noise about a counterattack on the mainland, but was forced to back down when the United States refused to support his plan. In 1965, another crisis erupted in which PRC patrol boats fired on Taiwanese vessels near Quemoy. The

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[26] White Paper: "The Taiwan Question" (Section III)
[27] Spence, The Search for Modern China. (p 533)
[28] Zhang, Shu Guang. (p 226)

attack resulted in the loss of seven PLA craft and one Nationalist vessel.[29] The continued U.S. support for Taiwan was a thorn in Beijing's side, preventing China from resolving the situation to its advantage. The issue simultaneously prevented any forward movement in relations with the United States, so long as the question remained in the forefront.

A great turning point in U.S.-China relations took place during the early part of the 1970s. With the rising power of the Soviet Union, both the United States and China began to see it in their mutual interest to find some way in which to cooperate. President Richard Nixon's famous visit to China signaled the beginning of an opening to China. The subsequent issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué in February 1972 established the basis of U.S.-China relations.

In particular, the agreements worked out between Mao and Nixon were important to China because they did not require concession on the most difficult issue of Taiwan.[30] Both sides stated a desire for the normalization of relations, but recognized that the Taiwan Issue was a difficult problem for all concerned. On the U.S. side the communiqué indicated acceptance of a "one China" policy, while the Chinese side indicated its unwillingness to accept any actions that would indicate support for Taiwan's independence from the mainland.

Of course, the communiqué caused an immediate, negative reaction in Taiwan. Nixon had not consulted with Chiang Kai-shek prior to his visit to China and the Taiwan government felt betrayed by the apparent sudden change of policy on the part of the United States. Anti-U.S. riots erupted on Taiwan as other nations of the world began to recognize the diplomatic status of the PRC and to sever ties with Taipei.[31] Equally devastating to Taiwan was the loss of its seat at the UN in October 1971.

On December 15, 1978, the United States and China released the second joint communiqué, announcing the "normalization" of relations with the United States in January 1, 1979. A key aspect of the communiqué was the renunciation by the United States of official ties with Taiwan. Diplomatic relations were replaced by "institutes" in Taipei and Washington. Although these institutes were not official diplomatic offices,

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[29] Wortzel, Larry M. Dictionary of Contemporary Chinese Military History. London: Greenwood Press, 1999, p 130.

[30] Roberts. (p 286)

[31] Spence, The Search for Modern China. (p 634)

they were staffed by Foreign Service personnel who were in a leave status during their assignments.[32] Even so, the situation was far from the satisfaction of the official recognition Taiwan had enjoyed for thirty years. Under normalization, Washington had offered to withdraw military personnel from Taiwan, had allowed the U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Security Treaty to expire, and agreed not to supply Taiwan with any new offensive weapons.

Just as U.S.-China relations were apparently taking a definitive shape and beginning to follow a stable course, the influence of domestic politics created a divergence in U.S. policy. On April 10, 1979 Congress responded to pro-Taiwan domestic pressures by enacting the Taiwan Relations Act, reaffirming the U.S. commitment to a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan question. Although PRC policy-makers had come to understand something of the mechanics of U.S. domestic politics, the Act was a direct affront to the Beijing government and seemed completely inconsistent with both the spirit and the letter of the normalization communiqué.[33]

Even as the United States and China continued to develop positive economic and diplomatic relations, the question of Taiwan remained a point of contention. In particular, the continued sale of arms to Taiwan by the United States was a matter of grave concern for Beijing. On August 17, 1982 the third U.S.-China joint communiqué was released after the completion of talks between President Reagan and Premier Zhao Ziyang and between Secretary of State Haig and Foreign Minister Huang Hua.

Among other concessions, the United States agreed to limit in both quality and quantity the sale of arms and agreed to eventually decrease the sale of arms to Taiwan altogether. However, the United States also reiterated its commitment to a peaceful means of reunification. The communiqué did not set forth a specific timeline for the decrease of arms sales, nor did it indicate a firm commitment on the part of the PRC to a non-violent reunification.

While the United States was working with China to develop a constructive relationship, Taiwan was developing both economically and politically. In January 1988, Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, died after serving as president for ten years. Chiang had implemented numerous political reforms during his last year in office and is

[32] Ibid. (p 635)
[33] White Paper: "The Taiwan Question." (Section II)

credited with moving Taiwan toward a more democratic government. Upon Chiang's death, Vice-President Lee Teng-Hui, a native Taiwanese who received his Ph.D. from Cornell, took up office as President of Taiwan.[34]

Almost immediately, Lee enacted policies that were intended in part to improve cross-Strait relations. Lee lifted restrictions on travel to mainland China. Additionally, he continued the reforms that were transforming Taiwan's political landscape. In Taiwan's National Assembly elections of 1991, the Democratic Progressive Party, which openly advocated Taiwan independence, won 20 percent of the assembly seats. The next year, the DPP won 31 percent of the Legislature seats, as well.[35]

Although the changes in Taiwan are generally considered to be a positive thing, the growth of democracy on the island put a strain on cross-Strait relations and, by extension, on mainland China's relations with the United States. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, a major threat to both Chinese and U.S. security suddenly disappeared. Along with the Soviet threat went a strong reason for the two countries to set aside old differences. The end of the Cold War allowed the issue of Taiwan to move back into the limelight of U.S.-China relations.

Within a few years, the PRC's concern over the direction Taiwan was headed culminated in yet another standoff. In late 1995 and early 1996, prior to the ROC National Assembly and presidential elections, the PLA conducted missile tests and military exercises in an effort both to voice its displeasure at Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States and to warn Taiwanese voters against any bold move toward independence. Despite the threats, Lee Teng-hui was elected in March 1996 with a 54 percent majority.[36]

Although there is some disagreement over the level of success of both countries' tactics, the handling of the crisis showed that old modes of policy and behavior were still employed by both the PRC and United States.[37] The question remains why both countries so quickly turned to the strategies and bargaining tactics they chose in dealing with the crisis after decades of apparent rapprochement and cooperation. The answers may lie with the internal logic of deterrence and learning in international relations.

[34] Fairbank et al. (p 904).
[35] Spence, The Search for Modern China (p 715)
[36] Ibid.
[37] Shulsky. (p77-79)

Understanding the behavioral tendencies displayed over the three Taiwan Strait crises may provide a better understanding of how to approach the study of and prospects for U.S.-China relations in the future.

III. THEORY

A. DETERRENCE THEORY

Deterrence theory has been described as one of the most important contributions to the field of international relations in the Twentieth Century.[38] At its theoretical core, deterrence involves preventing opponents from doing something you do not wish them to do by threatening the use of force or other consequences that raise the cost of the deterred behavior beyond acceptable levels.[39] Frequently, this means preventing an aggressor from attacking by instilling a belief that doing so will result in a counterattack by the deterrer that will inflict excessive damage beyond the value of the aggressor's objective.

> Deterrence is essentially a function of the enemy's image of our own estimate of our costs, gains and risks, which would follow from particular responses to the enemy's aggressive acts, and his estimate of his own costs, gains, and risks resulting from the responses. If there are any responses available to us which the enemy thinks would provide us with a net balance of gain over cost and risk, and if such responses would leave the enemy with a net balance of cost and risk over gain, the enemy should be deterred.[40]

Deterrence theory has most famously been applied to the role of nuclear weapons during and after the Cold War. The basic concept of nuclear deterrence was not necessarily to build the ability to stop an enemy's first strike, but to ensure one's own ability to launch a counterattack that would be large enough to inflict unacceptable damage to the aggressor. Thus, despite the fact that an attack could not physically be prevented, it could be *deterred* if the enemy believed that such an attack would mean excessive losses on his part, as well.

As deterrence theory evolved, the concept of conventional deterrence has developed. Under this branch of the theory, the use or threat of nuclear weapons is not required. Instead, the deterrence relies on one's ability to inflict the necessary amount of damage on an opponent using only conventional forces. This aspect of the theory can be

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[38] Zhang, Shu Guang. Deterrence Theory and Strategic Culture. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992, p 2.

[39] Snyder, Deterrence and Defense. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, p 9.

[40] Ibid. (p 241)

carried even farther to encompass the use of economic and diplomatic sanctions that the aggressor may find too costly.[41]

The key aspects of deterrence theory in practice are (1) the ability to predict an opponent's aggressive behavior, (2) determination of the aggressor's objectives and the value he places on them, (3) transmission of one's intent to deter the aggressor, (4) cultivation of credibility and resolve to defend one's interests, and (5) development and demonstration of the ability to carry out the actions indicated as punishment for undesirable actions.

In other words, to employ deterrence, the deterrer must first know, or be able to reasonably assume, that his opponent actually intends to carry out behavior that is contrary to his interests. He must then be able to calculate what price the aggressor is willing to pay for the object of his behavior and what consequences will prevent him from seeking that object. Then, the deterrer must communicate to the aggressor that such actions will not be tolerated and what the consequences of such behavior will likely be. Finally, in order for deterrence to work, the deterrer must be able to convince the aggressor that he is both willing and able to enforce the consequences.

Pure deterrence theory assumes that both the aggressor and the deterrer are able to calculate accurately the probability of each possible response in the range of deterrence options.[42] Of course, in practice, information is incomplete. Incomplete knowledge is due to the inherent inability to know everything about an opponent's intentions, his credibility, and his capabilities. This knowledge is difficult to obtain in the best circumstances, but the situation is always complicated by each side's desire to keep at least some information hidden.

It is in the realm of uncertainty that misperceptions and miscommunications may develop, threatening to derail deterrence efforts. Even worse, misperception of threats and intentions can lead states to assume deterrent postures against behavior that the so-called "aggressor" never intended to carry out. By assuming a deterrent posture, the

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[41] Jervis, Robert. Perception and Misperception in International Politics. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p 58-62.

[42] Snyder, Deterrence. (p 12)

"deterrer" can then take on the appearance of an "aggressor" leading to a mutual deterrent relationship that never needed to exist in the first place.[43]

Obviously, the first difficulty lies in determining whether an opponent actually intends to carry out actions that are counter to the deterrer's interests. Next comes the problem of selecting the appropriate means to deter those actions without unnecessarily escalating the conflict. Even if the appropriate strategy is selected, it must be conveyed to the aggressor in such a way that the deterrent threat is understandable and credible. As will be discussed later, these are the key areas on which some proponents of strategic culture focus their attention.

In terms of U.S. deterrence of China, the principal question is what exactly the United States wishes to deter China from doing.[44] Predictably, the answer to this question has evolved over time. During the early years of the Cold War, the concern was over the spread of Communism in conjunction with the threat of Soviet expansionism. Over time, as China became a nuclear power, the fear of attack on the United States has entered the argument, though not on a large scale. In general, the main issue that has been consistently part of deterrence in regard to China has been territorial expansion– specifically, the issue of Taiwan and the South China Sea. As such, it is not surprising that Taiwan figures so prominently in the deterrence strategies of both the United States and China.

On the other side, China can be said to have developed a deterrent stance against the United States, as well. Again, the question is, "what behavior does China wish to deter?" In the years prior to and shortly after the founding of the PRC, a major fear was of U.S. invasion of China in an imperialist attempt to control all of Asia. This fear and distrust grew out of the historical legacy of Western imperialism, to which the United States as the other superpower became the main heir.

However, as has been mentioned and will be shown in greater detail, this distrust was also influenced by the relationship between the United States and Chiang Kai-shek's regime on Taiwan. Thus, from the very beginning, the question of Taiwan has been wrapped up in the development of a U.S.-China mutual deterrence relationship. Of

[43] Ibid. (p 242)

[44] Shulsky, Abram N. Deterrence Theory and Chinese Behavior. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000, p 19.

course, Taiwan is itself a political entity capable of individual action, which adds another wrinkle in this application of deterrence theory.

Both the United States and China have not only been faced with the task of deterring each other, but also of deterring behavior on the part of Taiwan. This trilateral relationship has rarely worked out in the best interest of either the United States or China. The inability to relate directly with one another has grown out of fear that overt actions in either direction will encourage Taiwan to act out in undesirable ways.

It is largely for this reason that the United States has adopted the concept of strategic ambiguity.[45] Unfortunately, ambiguity of any sort raises the level of uncertainty. As has already been discussed, uncertainty is actually counterproductive in the application of deterrence. Although it may be argued that ambiguity about one's actual response in the face of a crisis may deter the crisis in the first place, it could just as easily be said that such ambiguity might be interpreted as a lack of commitment that would ultimately facilitate the crisis. If both sides of the conflict adopted an ambiguous posture, the potential for misperception and inadvertent escalation increases.

B. STRATEGIC CULTURE

It is precisely because deterrence tends to rely on perception of an enemy's intent and capabilities that many scholars have turned to "strategic culture" or "cultural realism" as a means of explaining the sources of misperception. The hope of strategic culture is that if one can eliminate one's own cultural biases, a key source of misunderstanding can be removed, enabling relations between states to move forward. At the very least, strategic culture is intended to provide a window through which leaders may look to predict an opponent's actions.

The concept of strategic culture takes as its premise that policy-makers' political and strategic perspective, and thus their decision-making, is shaped by aspects of the culture in which they developed.[46] Alastair Johnston is perhaps the best known scholar in this field, responsible for proposing the concept of cultural realism in regard to Chinese grand strategy. Johnston's vision of strategic culture stems from the idea that, regardless of how it is specifically defined, all cultures consist of "shared decision rules,

[45] Shulsky. (p 48)

[46] Wortzel, Larry M. Dictionary of Contemporary Chinese Military History. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999, p 15.

recipes, standard operating procedures, and decision routines that impose a degree of order on individual and group conceptions of their relationship to their environment."[47]

Culture in effect narrows the focus of decision making by automatically filtering out options that are not within the cultural paradigm of the decision maker. It also limits the capability of decision-makers to view events from other perspectives. Basically, the cultural lens through which one develops a view of the world is typically the only lens one can use in assessing a situation faced by other people or states.

Johnston does accept that strategic culture is dynamic, in that perceptions can change over time. But he argues that those changes are affected only by long periods of time or by events of great moment.[48] In effect, history possesses its own inertia that can dramatically affect the ability to learn.

The strategic culture perspective is often applied to China and other Asian countries based on the idea that Western states share a common heritage and culture that is distinctly different from the experiences of Asian states. When applying these principles to Chinese behavior, most scholars refer to instances where policy-makers have chosen a course of action that complies with teachings from Sun Tzu or similar military classics. The argument that Chinese leaders inherently base their strategic decisions on the teachings of Sun Tzu oversimplifies strategic culture and is no more viable than saying that all Western officers follow the teachings of Clausewitz, or even Marcus Aurelius or Julius Caesar. Additionally, those who influence policy frequently take only surface lessons from such theories of international relations.

While cultural differences are important in determining preferences, the value of an objective, and, to a certain extent, the selection of strategy, it is far more likely that a course of action has been chosen because it is deemed the most prudent at the time, rather than whether or not it is recommended by a particular military or IR theorist.

The question then becomes, "Can a leader's cultural perspective affect the lessons that he or she takes from past experiences?" Of course—to a certain extent. Allen Whiting's studies of patterns of Chinese deterrence behavior and decision-making

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[47] Johnston, Alastair I. Cultural Realism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p 35.
[48] Ibid.

provide ample evidence of the effects of culture on Mao's decision making.[49] Mel Gurtov and Byong-Moo Huang also explain how Chinese perceptions affected the perception and subsequent decisions made by the PRC leadership. However, it can be shown that the lessons of interacting with a particular enemy may be far more important in determining the approach to a crisis than the ancient cultural heritage those leaders possessed.

In particular, Shu Guang Zhang's study of Sino-American confrontations from 1949 to 1958 examines U.S.-China relations in the light of both deterrence and cultural realism. His work elucidates certain aspects of the relationship that developed between the United States and China during the decade after the founding of the PRC.[50]

First is the development of a mutual deterrence relationship. Both the United States and China stood as a kind of defender, each seeking to deter the other. This relationship was often based on assumptions of intentions, rather than on firm evidence about what each side wanted to do or expected its opponent to do.

Second is the time period in which the confrontations took place. Rather than focusing on a single instance of deterrence, Zhang's study takes the entire period from 1949 to 1958 as an aggregate. This approach allows him to show how the mutual deterrent relationship developed and how it affected the decision-making process on both sides. As will be shown later, this approach to recurrent crises between states has significant value for the explanation of crisis bargaining behavior.

Zhang, then explains the mixture of deterrence strategies used by both sides. Zhang points out that in the numerous confrontations between the United States and China during the period of his study, the United States employed aspects of strategic deterrence ("massive retaliation"), extended deterrence (consideration of tactical nuclear strikes), and conventional deterrence (the use of conventional military power as a show of force). Similarly, the Chinese made use of conventional military power and the threat of Soviet intervention, which included Soviet nuclear weapons, and the PRC's decision to develop its own nuclear weapons program in its strategies of deterring the United States.

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[49] See Whiting, The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence (Center for Chinese Studies, 2001) and China Crosses the Yalu (RAND, 1960) and Gurtov and Huang, China Under Threat (Johns Hopkins University, 1980).

[50] Zhang. (p 2-12)

Finally, Zhang points out the absence of cross-cultural comparison in the study of this mutual deterrent relationship. He argues that a key weakness of deterrence theory lies in its assumption of universality. Being based as it is on the "rational calculus" of decision-making, deterrence theory tends to ignore the fact that the two sides in a deterrence relationship may not follow the same rationale in decision-making.

> The Chinese and the Americans may well calculate prizes and interests, threats and counterthreats, costs and gains, failures and successes, weaknesses and strengths, declaratory policies and actual behavior differently. Deterrents may not mean the same thing in Beijing and Washington. If this is true, to what extent did such differences shape Sino-American confrontations? Contemporary deterrence literature cannot say.[51]

Zhang correctly points out that deterrence theory assumes that decision makers will correctly perceive a threat, and therefore the bulk of theory is aimed at "formulation and execution of a counter-response."[52] This assumption can be disproved for the cases of both the United States and China. If the basic assumption of accurate threat perception can no longer be taken for granted, then the question of credibility is no longer the sole concern.

For Zhang, what remains is the question of motives behind actions. In his approach, the basic misunderstanding of motive and intent not only created the foundation of the mutual deterrence relationship, but perpetuated it throughout the 1950s and beyond. Additionally, it was "cultural differences concerning national security and, more important, ignorance of cultural differences on the part of each state's policy-makers" that pushed both sides into repeated confrontations that threatened to escalate into general war.[53]

Zhang concludes that, in the end, it was mutual misperception, guided by mutual suspicion, that shaped Sino-American relations during the 1949-58 period. China's policy of leaning toward the Soviet Union seemed to confirm suspicions in Washington, while U.S. policies in Korea, Indochina, and particularly Taiwan had the same effect on

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[51] Ibid. (p 4)
[52] Ibid. (p 5)
[53] Ibid. (p 9)

Beijing. The "remarkable accumulation…of erroneous judgments by each side of the other" Zhang blames on "culture-bound" perceptions.[54]

Bound by its cultural viewpoint, each side was unable to view the situation from the other's perspective and thus made miscalculations that aggravated the already tense situation. For both the PRC and the United States, culture shaped the calculation of security interests, the perception of threats, the means of communication of desire and intent, and the way in which policy and strategy were made.[55]

Zhang's scholarship in this study is exemplary. His research of Sino-American confrontations during the first decades of the Cold War is exhaustive, capitalizing on both U.S. historical records and on recently released documents from the PRC. However, his emphasis on cultural perspectives is insufficient to explain the strategic choices made by both the United States and China regarding Taiwan. In order to explain the behavior of the United States and China in the 1995-96 crisis, a different theoretical framework that relies more heavily on the lessons drawn from previous encounters between the two states is needed.

C. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND RATIONAL POLICY-MAKING IN U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

Russell J. Leng's 1983 study attempts to incorporate experiential learning with a *realpolitik* perspective in order to explain bargaining behavior in recurrent crises.[56] In short, Leng's "hypotheses predict that in crises between states of relatively equal military capabilities, successful outcomes encourage policymakers to repeat the bargaining strategy employed in the previous crisis, while failures lead to more coercive bargaining in the next crisis."[57] Leng's study examines three successive crises among six pairs of states. His attempt was to develop a means of predicting to some degree the bargaining strategies used by both sides involved in the crises.

For his theoretical approach to learning behavior, Leng turns to Jervis' concept of experiential learning. The basic premise here is that states' decision-makers learn from their experiences and from the experiences of their predecessors, particularly those

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[54] Ibid. (p 271)
[55] Ibid. (p 272-282)
[56] Leng, Russel J. "When Will They Ever Learn?" The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 27, Issue 3 (Sep. 1983), p 379-419.
[57] Ibid. (p 379)

involving conflict or crisis. This is also a basic premise of cultural realism, but the experiential learning approach focuses more on the perceived effectiveness of tactics and strategies that were employed in the past, rather than on how a predefined set of culturally acceptable options affects learning.

According to Jervis, states tend to see their own behavior as decisive. Thus, when a deterrent or other strategy has unsuccessful outcomes, the failure is considered one of policy. This perception encourages states to assume a different policy in subsequent confrontation. Similarly, successful outcomes in one crisis would indicate the need to assume similar strategies in the next. Leng's addition to this argument is that, when recurrent crises occur with the same adversary, "the tendency to draw lessons from the outcome of one dispute to guide policymaking in the next is especially strong."[58]

The other aspect of Leng's approach relies on the principle that states' policies are guided by *realpolitik*. There is ample evidence to show that states consider threats of force and demonstrations of resolve to be a necessary component of interstate conflict.[59] Together with experiential learning, Leng's concept of *realpolitik* dictates that the failure of policy in a previous crisis is frequently interpreted as a failure to display sufficient resolve. Thus, in a subsequent crisis, the inclination will be to increase the level of coercion in the bargaining strategy. Leng refers to this behavior as the experiential learning-*realpolitik* (ELR) model of crisis bargaining behavior.[60]

In his study, Leng proposed four hypotheses of a state's behavior in successive crises depending on the outcome for that state of previous crisis bargaining strategies. In order to categorize these outcomes, he developed four possibilities: diplomatic victory, diplomatic defeat, compromise, and war. He worded his hypotheses in terms of two states, A and B, as follows:[61]

> Hypothesis 1 (Diplomatic Victory): If the outcome of the preceding crisis with state B was a diplomatic victory for state A, then A will employ the same degree of coercion in the next crisis with B.
>
> Hypothesis 2 (Diplomatic Defeat): If the outcome of the preceding crisis with state B was a diplomatic defeat for state A, then A will employ a more coercive bargaining strategy in the next crisis with B.

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[58] Ibid. (p 380)
[59] See Snyder and Diesing, Conflict among Nations (Princeton, 1977).
[60] Leng. (p 382)
[61] Ibid. (p 383-385)

Hypothesis 3 (Compromise):

a. If the outcome of the preceding crisis with state B resulted in a compromise that resolved the issue in contention without significant retreat form state A's publicly stated objectives, then A will repeat the same bargaining strategy in the next crisis with B.

b. If the outcome of the preceding crisis with state B resulted in a compromise that caused state A to retreat significantly from its publicly stated objectives, then A will adopt a more coercive bargaining strategy in the next crisis with B.

Hypothesis 4 (War):

a. If the preceding crisis with state B ended in a war that state A wished to avoid, then A will adopt a more coercive bargaining strategy in the next crisis with B.

b. If state A launched a premeditated attack on state B in the preceding crisis, then A will adopt a less coercive bargaining strategy in the next crisis.

Leng utilized statistical methods to quantify the level of coerciveness in each state's bargaining strategies and then calculated the outcomes of the eighteen different crises he studied. As a result of this work, Leng concluded that the above hypotheses hold for the majority of the crises studied. Although this paper will avoid the duplication of Leng's statistical methods, the application of the principle that experiential learning and a *realpolitik* orientation can combine to shape states' strategies in recurrent crises bears further consideration for the cases of the Taiwan Strait crises.

Leng's proposition that states are more likely to base decision-making on the outcomes of previous crises with the same adversary. It seems credible that the tendency will be even stronger when the crises involve the same issue. Although Leng's model was originally tested over three successive crises that occurred within a shorter period of time, application of the model to three Taiwan Strait incidents (1954-55, 1958, and 1995-96) may be more instructive about U.S.-China crisis politics than a strategic culture approach.

As will be shown, the bargaining strategies adopted by the United States and China during the 1954-55 crisis were shaped by the outcomes of the events of the Korean War and within the greater context of the emerging Cold War. The United States' need to show resolve was countered by the Chinese view that it had succeeded in its conflict with the United States. Zhang's argument that both sides perceived a threat that was

probably not real is persuasive, but the cause of that perception lies in the fact that national interests on both sides were distorted (as often happens in deterrence relationships).[62]

The outcome of the first crisis was mainly compromise that included diplomatic failure for China. The PRC gained control of the Dachen Islands, but it failed in its primary objective of preventing the formation of stronger ties between the United States and the Chiang regime.[63] The United States could count the crisis as a compromise with positive outcomes, given that policy-makers assumed China's intent was to invade Quemoy and Matsu in preparation for invasion of Taiwan.

Given these outcomes, Leng's hypotheses indicate that in the subsequent crisis, China would adopt a more coercive strategy, while the U.S. strategy would remain the same. This was, in fact, the initial behavior on both sides. However, China's aggressiveness was eventually met with escalating threats from the United States. Krushchev's refusal to support Mao in the crisis forced him to back down, resulting in diplomatic defeat for the PRC. The results for the United States were mixed, but were not negative enough to be considered a defeat.

Despite the fact that almost forty years passed between the 1958 crisis and 1995 and that the United States had been in a period of rapprochement with the PRC for almost half that time, bargaining behavior during the third Taiwan Strait crisis still seems to have taken at least some of its cues from the crisis of 1958. Arguably, the military exercises and missile tests were not as violent as the bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu. However, in the political and economic context of 1995, these exercises were part of a bargaining strategy that could easily be considered at least as coercive as those used in 1958. Also in agreement with Leng's hypotheses is the fact that the United States adopted a neutralization strategy similar to the strategies it had applied to situations in the Taiwan Strait for more than four decades.

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[62] Jervis. (p 58)
[63] Zhang. (p 212)

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IV. THE QUEMOY CRISIS OF 1954-55

On 3 September, 1954, just over a year after the signing of the Armistice that ended the Korean War, PLA forces in Fujian province commenced bombardment of Quemoy (Jinmen), a small island off the mainland coast. The events of the next nine months brought the United States to the brink of war with China and left an indelible mark on U.S.-China relations. As the first major confrontation between the United States and China over the issue of Taiwan, the situation that ensued is often referred to as the first Taiwan Strait Crisis.

As this study will show, however, U.S. and Chinese views of the reasons for and severity of the crisis were not the same. The 1954-55 crisis had its roots in each side's historical experiences with the issue and with each other. These experiences, both good and bad, shaped the decisions of policy-makers. In the end, neither side fully anticipated the outcomes of the crisis, but the lessons they took away from those outcomes would shaped the way they interacted when tensions rose again in 1958.

A. BACKGROUND

The bombardment of Quemoy in September 1954 was part of a chain of events stretching back to the beginning of the PRC. After Chiang Kai-shek finally relinquished control of the mainland, he fled to Taiwan, where he and hundreds of thousands of Chinese, both those loyal to the KMT and those who simply feared communist rule, had already established a refuge.

After the declaration of the founding of the PRC, Mao and his communist government considered the consolidation of Chinese territory to be a top priority. Though territorial integrity is sometimes discounted as part of the rhetoric of Chinese national pride, Mao absolutely considered recapturing all possible territories not already in PRC hands to be a matter of national security. Certainly, Mao considered Chiang Kai-shek's regime a challenge to CCP legitimacy. However, he believed Taiwan itself was not so much a threat because of Nationalist forces; but rather, it presented a stronghold from which the PRC's foreign enemies could mount campaigns to regain control of China.[64]

[64] Friedman, Edward. "Real Interests of China and America in the Taiwan and America." Taiwan and

For Mao, the chief concern of China's security was the threat of invasion by imperialist, particularly United States, forces.[65] This concern shaped the way he looked at every international situation and crisis from 1949 onward. Although Mao was certainly concerned with stabilizing and developing China's economy, he considered those goals secondary to ensuring that China would not be subject to the predation of Western influences.

At the top of his military priorities, Mao placed the reclamation of Taiwan. He believed the resulting destruction of Chiang Kai-shek's regime would go a long way to reducing the influence of the United States over Chinese politics. Thus, in 1949, despite the economic troubles that required demobilizing millions of PLA troops, Mao ordered that sufficient forces be retained to support the planning and actions associated with the recovery of Taiwan.[66]

A key factor in Mao's calculations was the refusal of the United States to deal with China on a direct, diplomatic level. Washington's decision to diplomatically isolate the PRC was perfectly in line with his perceptions of the pattern of U.S. intervention. In his mind, the evidence clearly indicated that the only step remaining to the United States was blockade of China's coasts and, perhaps, invasion of the mainland. Mao's decision to "lean to one side" and forge an alliance with the USSR was a direct result of the way he perceived U.S. policy toward China in the context of the emerging cold war.[67]

The United States, on the other hand, considered Mao's alliance with Stalin to be a foregone conclusion. The major concern for policy-makers was swiftly becoming containment of communist expansion. With regard to China, hopes were still high that the Nationalist government would eventually be able to regain control of the mainland. The diplomatic and economic sanctions placed on the PRC were directly intended to put China under pressure in the hope of causing an internal collapse.[68]

By extension, the support of Chiang's regime was meant to keep Beijing from eliminating the only opposition to its claims of legitimacy. In a manner of speaking, Mao's concern about the threat posed by the United States did correspond to the facts.

American Policy: The Dilemma in U.S.-China Relations. New York: Praeger, 1971, p. 38-57. (p 39)

[65] Zhang. Deterrence and Strategic Culture. (p 15)

[66] Gurtov. China under Threat. (p 32-33).

[67] Zhang. (p 17-18)

[68] Friedman. "Real Interests" (p 40)

His fear of a U.S.-led invasion may have been overstated, but in 1949, the United States fully supported the development of Chiang Kai-shek's military power such that he might one day defeat the communist government.

Certain that China's best chance to eliminate the KMT on Taiwan would be sooner, rather than later, Mao ordered his forces to attack the remaining KMT forces on the mainland's Offshore Islands as a starting point for the invasion of Taiwan. Despite early successes, the PLA suffered a major defeat on October 24, 1949, when its forces attempted an amphibious assault on Quemoy. The failure caused Mao to rethink his strategy for defeating the Nationalists, which meant that no further attacks would be authorized unless there was absolute confidence in a victorious outcome.[69] Unfortunately, events would soon overtake Mao's hopes for such a victory.

The start of the Korean War in June 1950 introduced a new complication to Mao's plans for the consolidation of PRC territory and power. The quandary for PRC decision-makers and the reasoning employed in choosing to intervene in Korea is amply covered in other works. However, the opening events of the conflict, as well as the way it ended, bear particular interest in the context of the Taiwan question. These events would change Mao's views on U.S. policy with regard to the island and would lead to the full entanglement of the United States in the issue.

Although he knew that the United States strongly supported Chiang Kai-shek's regime, Mao Zedong did not expect the Truman administration to involve itself militarily in the cross-Strait conflict. In January 1950, the administration had made statements that the United States would no longer interfere in the Chinese civil war by providing aid or advice to Chiang Kai-shek.[70] However, President Truman's orders to the U.S. Seventh Fleet on June 27, 1950 sent ships into the waters between Fujian and Taiwan in a move to militarily "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait.

As most historians have pointed out, the planned abandonment of Chiang's regime was with the result of the Truman administration's strategic thinking at the time. Most U.S. officials agreed that Taiwan was probably not defensible and that, even if it was, the island did not provide a significant strategic military advantage, compared with the cost of holding it against a determined communist assault. While making public

[69] Zhang. (p 70)
[70] Whiting, Allen S. China Crosses the Yalu. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 22.

statements about the U.S. commitment to stay out of China's civil war, the administration was privately preparing statements that would be released after the inevitable fall of Taiwan to the PLA.[71] The administration's policy changed abruptly on June 25, 1950.

Truman considered North Korea's behavior evidence that the communists were not content to wait for their world revolution. He became convinced that the attack was part of a larger scheme to spread communism to the rest of the world by armed force. Given that belief, he concluded that the fall of Taiwan into communist hands would present a "direct threat" to U.S. interests in the Pacific.[72] Although "neutralization" implied that U.S. forces would also prevent the KMT from launching an assault on the mainland, the real purpose of the neutralization was to deter an opportunistic attack by the PLA on Taiwan.

In a similar vein, Mao viewed Truman's move as a confirmation of his own views about U.S. policy. Coupled with the apparent reversal of policy over Korea, U.S. behavior had shown Mao that the United States did not intend to give up its imperial aspirations in Asia. His consideration of the United States as an imminent threat to the PRC was one of the main factors in the decision to enter the Korean War.[73] That decision cemented the adversarial relationship that would manifest itself in the Taiwan Strait after the end of the Korean War.

When President Eisenhower took office in January 1953, he was determined to fulfill his election pledge to bring an end to the Korean War. However, despite his promise to bring U.S. troops home, Eisenhower decided that the U.S. policy of achieving an "honorable peace" in the war could only be achieved through forceful action. As part of his effort to convince China to agree to U.S. terms, he chose to "unleash" Chiang Kai-shek. In his State of the Union address, "Eisenhower announced that the Seventh Fleet would no longer shield communist China from nationalist attacks." The announcement was, of course, largely symbolic—especially since the administration quickly secured a pledge from Chiang that he would not launch an attack without first consulting with the United States.[74]

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[71] Zhang. (p 54)
[72] Ibid. (p 55)
[73] Whiting. China Crosses the Yalu.
[74] Zhang. (p 122-23)

Of particular importance is how each side viewed the end of the Korean War. For Mao, the result was considered a victory over the United States and its imperialist policies. Washington, on the other hand, saw the armistice only as a temporary reprieve from hostilities and resolved to resist any further aggression on the part of China and the Soviet Union.[75] These feelings would carry over into the crisis surrounding the fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, just four months before the Quemoy-Matsu crisis erupted.

With respect to the events and environment that shaped decision-making during the crisis, it is necessary to point out another area of concern for Mao and his government. While fighting continued in Korea, the commitment of the United States to contain the spread of Communism had manifested in other ways as well. From January 1953 until September 1954, Secretary of State Dulles was traveling throughout the Asia-Pacific region, trying to build alliances with the various states there. One result of those efforts was the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Mao considered the efforts to form this organization another example of U.S. encirclement of China.[76]

[75] Ibid. (p 149-151)
[76] Ibid. (p 191)

B. INITIAL GOALS AND INTENTIONS

Based on his perceptions of the strategic and political environment, Mao Zedong had very limited and specific goals upon the commencement of operations against Quemoy in 1954. In fact, he had two goals, one political and one of a military nature. As will be shown later, U.S. policy-makers did not discern this fact and thus escalated the crisis unnecessarily.

Simply put, Mao's political objective was to deter the United States from signing a U.S.-Taiwan security alliance. As Chang & He point out, Mao was chiefly concerned that such a treaty would result in a divided China—in a fashion similar to Korea and Vietnam.[77] There is no evidence that Mao ever planned to invade Quemoy and Matsu. In fact, the orders to General Ye Fei, who commanded the Fujian forces in the bombardment, were to conduct the attack in response to the perceived increase in U.S. and KMT aggressive behavior in the area.[78] No mention was ever made of preparing for invasion of the islands—only bombardment of KMT installations there.

The capture of the Dachen Islands was Mao's real military objective, but this objective was separate from the political objectives of the bombardment of Quemoy.[79] Contrary to Eisenhower's own version of strategic culture, in which he referred to Mao's inflexible position as being one of "maintaining face," Mao's decisions with regard to Quemoy and Matsu were based on a rational view that the U.S. posed a credible threat to Chinese security.[80]

It is interesting that, according to both Zhang and Chang, Beijing never really saw the situation in 1954-55 as a crisis. It was neither tense nor dramatic for the PRC. In fact, Chang and He's study indicated that many PRC policy-makers and analysts who were active in government at the time did not even recall that the crisis took place. This is in direct contrast to U.S. officials who "vividly recollected the main events."[81] Such a drastic difference between the two views indicates a high level of misperception between the two sides.

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[77] Chang, Gordon H. & He Di. "The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-55: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?" The American Historical Review, Volume 98, Issue 5 (Dec., 1993), 1500-1524. (p 1509)

[78] Ibid. (p 1505)

[79] Ibid. (p 1510)

[80] Ibid. (p 1517)

[81] Ibid. (p 1502)

Although the Chinese did not initially consider the situation a crisis, they were somewhat surprised by the eventual reactions of the United States. Beijing considered the U.S. policies of non-coercive measures to be an indication that Washington was not willing to fight China again. It is possible that Mao based this perception on the idea that the humiliating defeat of the United States by Chinese forces in Korea would prove to the United States that a fight was unwise.

For the U.S. part, the goal was relatively straightforward. The Eisenhower administration's main purpose in the crisis was to deter the PRC from invading Quemoy and Matsu. The historical evidence is fairly clear that the Eisenhower administration did not interpret the bombardment as a prelude to invasion. Additionally, the defensibility and strategic value of the islands were generally considered very low.

However, the administration very quickly determined that, in the light of communist aggression, the psychological effect of losing the islands would be far more devastating. The resulting U.S. show of force was intended to display commitment to defending Taiwan, and by extension, a commitment on the part of the United States to continue opposing the spread of Communism. It was in this decision that the U.S. began to closely tie the question of Taiwan into its image of national prestige and resolve.

Another interesting fact is that as far as the United States was concerned the Offshore Islands were never in legal dispute. The United States recognized China's claim to the land, itself. The difference between China and the United States was over the status of Taiwan and the Penghus.[82] However, the fact that Nationalist forces were emplaced on Quemoy and Matsu made decision-making difficult for the Eisenhower administration. Eisenhower could not easily abandon the islands without the appearance of abandoning Chiang, which may have encouraged the PRC to push further and invade Taiwan.

The main problem was how to deter any potential assault on Quemoy and Matsu in a manner that committed the United States to the least amount of force necessary. Eisenhower considered the risk of losing the support of allies, which was already in question, should he decide on an all-out defense of the islands. In order to garner that

[82] Chang. (p 100)

support, the first strategic step was to utilize the international system in the hope of turning world opinion against the PRC's aggressive behavior.[83]

Despite this attempt at a purely diplomatic solution, the Eisenhower administration may have already come to a conclusion that military force would be needed. This decision was heavily influenced by Eisenhower's perceived previous failures to deter China. "In the spring and summer of 1954, the United States had twice sent ships of the Seventh Fleet to the Dachens (offshore islands along the Zhejiang coast) in a show of force to impress the communists."[84] The September 3 attack convinced the administration that Mao would need a stronger message if he was to be deterred in his aspirations for conquering Taiwan.

C. STRATEGY AND TACTICS

As has been shown, Mao had two objectives in this crisis, one military and one political. Since Mao did not consider the military objective to be part of his U.S. policy, the strategies he employed in the capture of the Dachens is of limited value for this analysis. Admittedly, Mao's later decision to pause in the bombardment of the islands, allowing Chiang's troops to evacuate, was made in part because of the effect it would have on negotiations with the United States. However, more important in studying this crisis was Mao's strategy for deterring the United States in its ever-increasing closeness with the Chiang regime.

Mao Zedong employed a strategy that utilized short-term, controlled belligerence in an effort to draw attention to the issue and force a political decision by increasing the level of tension. In the case of Quemoy and Matsu, Mao coupled this strategy with efforts to ensure Soviet backing for the PRC.[85] Chang & He point out that Mao's strategy was developed over many years.

Although his intent was to raise tensions, there is ample evidence that Mao specifically wished to avoid escalating the crisis to the point of war with the United States. His strict orders were to avoid conflict with U.S. forces at all costs. This is important because, according Chang & He, had U.S. policy been unambiguous about

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[83] Foyle, Douglas C. "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable." International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 41, Issue 1 (Mar., 1997), p 141-169. (p 160)

[84] Chang & He (p 1505)

[85] Zhang. (p 194)

whether or not it would defend the islands, he would never have agreed to the attack on Yijiangshan.[86]

Also in keeping with his practices over the previous five years and because of the lack of direct diplomatic channels, Mao utilized the Chinese press and propaganda machine to notify Washington and the rest of the world of his intentions. Unfortunately, this method backfired, due to a lack of understanding from Washington. Mao's communication strategy proved confusing for U.S. policymakers, who could not distinguish between propaganda and actual statements of intent.[87]

Initially, the United States followed a dual track strategy of diplomacy with a statement of intent to use force, without actually doing so. When initial diplomatic events failed, the Eisenhower administration began a course of steady escalation in an attempt to impress upon the PRC that the United States was, in fact, committed to the defense of the islands. Simultaneously, the administration was putting pressure on Chiang to give up the islands in order to decrease tensions in the Strait and bring an end to the crisis without damaging U.S. credibility.

When the decision was made to threaten the use of force, Eisenhower chose to be circumspect about the level of U.S. commitment to the Dachens, as well as Quemoy and Matsu. He described this strategy as "deterrence through uncertainty" and intended to deny Mao any clarity on the possibility of U.S. involvement the islands.[88] Unfortunately, this strategy failed to achieve the desired effect.

As early as January 20, 1955, Eisenhower and Dulles were aware that their use of the strategy of uncertainty had backfired. The Eisenhower administration believed correctly that the ambiguity of U.S. commitment had been interpreted as a lack of resolve. This interpretation encouraged China to attack the Dachens. The resulting change of U.S. policy was to increase the level of coercion in order to show intent to defend the remaining islands.[89]

Formation of this policy, which included a demand that Congress grant Eisenhower the power to extend U.S. protection over Quemoy and Matsu, was shaped by

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[86] Chang & He. (p 1512)
[87] Ibid. (p 1517)
[88] Ibid. (p 1511)
[89] Chang, Gordon H. "To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis." International Security, Vol. 12, Issue 4 (Spring, 1988), p 96-123. (p 102)

Eisenhower's experiences in Korea. He was determined to minimize the limitations placed on what he could and could not do to defend the islands.[90] The result of that demand was the Formosa Resolution. In the end however, once he obtained the power to defend the islands, he reversed his position on making U.S. intentions absolutely clear.

Gordon has argued that the Eisenhower administration's policy was part of a continuing effort to avoid the use of force in the Taiwan issue that was continued, in part, because of the administration's impression that the strategy was working. His argument is based on public statements and comments from Eisenhower and others personally involved in the decision-making process. In particular, these sources indicate that the administrations strategy was to take no actions that would provoke China into invading the islands.[91]

Chang disputes Gordon's view, stating that this interpretation is not borne out by subsequent evidence. Namely,

> (1) the Eisenhower administration made a secret commitment to Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) to help defend Jinmen and Mazu (Matsu) in the event of a major communist attack; (2) Eisenhower, despite public ambiguity on the subject, was privately determined to defend the islands, and to use nuclear weapons if necessary; and (3) in April 1955, as the crisis reached its peak, Eisenhower and Dulles proposed to Jiang, if he would withdraw from Jinmen and Mazu, that the United States would establish a 500-mile blockade of China's coastal waters until the communists renounced their intention to liberate Taiwan.[92]

Had Chiang accepted the U.S. proposal, direct conflict between the United States and China would have been practically assured. Fortunately, Chiang refused to evacuate Quemoy and Matsu, forcing the United States to rely on its nuclear threat and make plans to follow through should China call its bluff.

One final observation should be mentioned on the strategy employed by the United States and its relation to the Soviet Union. Contrary to the opinion of some scholars, Chang points out that, in forming their plan to blockade the Chinese coast in exchange for Chiang's withdrawal from Quemoy and Matsu, Eisenhower and Dulles never considered the possibility of Soviet intervention. His analysis indicates that the

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[90] Ibid. (p 103)

[91] Gordon, Leonard H. "United States Opposition to the Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962." The Journal of American History, Volume 72, Issue 3 (Dec., 1985), p 637-660. (p 639)

[92] Chang. (p 97-98)

Eisenhower administration perceived the split between the USSR and China as early as 1954.[93] Thus, although the strategy and tactics employed by the United States was shaped by the impact of the Cold War, they were not necessarily confined by it.

D. OUTCOMES

As tensions reached their peak, a welcome break came in April 1955, when Zhou Enlai announced at the Bandung conference that the PRC was willing to negotiate with the United States to reduce tensions in the Taiwan area.[94] Three days later, Secretary of State Dulles accepted Zhou's proposal for cease-fire talks. Although the arrangement for such talks was somewhat delayed, on July 13, 1955 the Eisenhower administration responded "via the British Embassy in Beijing, that the United States was willing to meet at Geneva."[95] Beijing's acceptance officially ended the crisis.

The result of the crisis was not exactly what either side expected. Mao did manage to achieve his military objective, gaining control of the Dachen Islands. The PLA did not try to take Jinmen and Matsu, because Mao never intended to take the islands. Even the attack on Yijiangshan may have been ruled out under the right circumstance. Evidence has shown that it was precisely Eisenhower's plans of deterrence through uncertainty that confused the PRC leadership and encouraged Mao to order the attack on Yijiangshan.[96]

An interesting fact that would prove important for future generations was a secondary outcome of the crisis for the PRC. The role of nuclear power in the deterrence strategy of the United States, perhaps combined with doubts about the future of the Sino-Soviet alliance, seems to have convinced Mao that it was in China's interest to develop its own nuclear weapons. Zhang discusses this possibility in his analysis, but he also raises the very valid question of why U.S. threats in this crisis had such an impact when previous threats like those used in the Korean War did not. Although the evidence is scarce, the change may have been the result of new information presented to Mao about the capabilities of nuclear weapons.[97]

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[93] Ibid. (p 118)
[94] Zhang. (p 216)
[95] Ibid. (p 217)
[96] Chang & He (p 1511)
[97] Zhang. (p 221)

Most important, however, Mao's strategy to deter the United States from forging a strong alliance with Taiwan backfired as surely as did the U.S. strategy to deter China. On December 2, 1954, three months after the commencement of operations against Quemoy, the United States signed the U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Security Treaty. The decision to do so was based in large part as a deterrent measure against further hostilities from China.

Ultimately, the United States gained very little from the crisis. However, this was not considered a bad thing, necessarily. In this conflict, the United States was a status quo power, seeking only to ensure that Quemoy and Matsu did not fall into PRC hands. Although the administration did not really believe that China intended to invade the islands, it could not say with absolute certainty that Mao had completely ruled out such a possibility. Under the worst case assumption, the administration followed a course designed to prevent a future invasion of Quemoy with a successful display of U.S. resolve.

The final outcome for both states was certainly mixed. Although both gained some of their objectives, in other respects, each side's attempts to counter the possible actions of the other actually caused them to make decisions that the strategies were trying to deter. This confusing situation was the result of misperceived intentions, worst case assumptions, and misunderstanding of the way communication and behavior would be interpreted. Ultimately, Chiang Kai-shek was the only actor in the crisis who came out ahead, securing a diplomatic victory in the form of a treaty that, in theory, committed the United States to support his regime and defend Taiwan. That commitment would soon be tested again over the very same pieces of land.

V. CASE STUDY: THE QUEMOY-MATSU CRISIS OF 1958

Despite the fact that the United States and China had avoided war over the Taiwan issue during the nine-month crisis, the situation remained unresolved in April 1955. Chiang Kai-shek's troops remained on Quemoy and Matsu, posing a threat of trouble, if not representing the ability of the Nationalists to conquer the mainland. The KMT government maintained a bellicose position during the following three years, refusing to give up its public aspirations of retaking control in Beijing.

Chiang's efforts to gain U.S. support for his ambitions may have been unsuccessful, but they posed a significant threat of plunging the region into a war between the United States and China. As a result of the previous crisis, U.S. credibility and prestige had become completely entangled with the Taiwan question in the minds of policy-makers. The problems facing the Eisenhower administration once again revolved around how to handle both the PRC and Chiang Kai-shek during the crisis that erupted on August 23, 1958.

A. BACKGROUND

The end of the crisis in 1955 had come with an agreement between the United States and Chinese ambassadors to meet in Geneva to discuss a ceasefire. By January 1956, it was clear that the talks were not productive, mostly due to the belligerence of Chiang Kai-shek and an inability of the United States and China to reach a consensus. Chiang Kai-shek had increased KMT operations and consistently pressed the United States for support of an attack against the mainland. The U.S. suggestion of a mutual renunciation of force was clearly not achievable, owing to the suspicions shared by all concerned. "By mid-January 1956, the Chinese blamed the United States for causing all the tension, and it was apparent no agreement could be reached."[98]

U.S. policy-makers considered talks with China to be a convenience, particularly in regard to handling POW and other issues remaining from the Korean War. They did not consider them to be a major factor in the Taiwan issue. Rather, the perception was that only the U.S. presence in Taiwan and on the islands was preventing the PRC from

[98] Gordon (p 641)

attacking.[99] Further evidence of this perception came when Ambassador Johnson, the lead negotiator for the United States, was transferred to Bangkok in December 1957 and the State Department failed to appoint a successor of equal diplomatic rank.[100]

In 1957, Chiang increased his preparations to attack the mainland, both rhetorically and militarily. U.S. support for these plans was not vocal, but the Eisenhower administration had already decided to place Matador nuclear missiles on the island, which arrived in May. The United States stated that the decision was a response to Chinese threats of force against Taiwan and a military buildup along the coasts near the island. In other words, the installation of Matador missiles was publicly defined as a purely defensive move.[101]

The Chinese, whose intelligence had reported the plans for the installation of the missiles as early as March, interpreted this action as anything but defensive. They called the decision part of the U.S. intent to raise tensions in the strait. Additionally, the emplacement of the missiles, the test firing in May 1957, and the announced construction of a new airbase on Taiwan were seen as part of the continuing shift by the United States toward the limited use policy with regard to the use of force and of nuclear weapons.[102] Responding to this threat, Mao ordered the deployment of troops to Fujian province in preparation for an attack on Quemoy and Matsu on December 18, 1957.[103]

During the second week of January 1957, Zhou Enlai traveled to Poland, East Germany, and Hungary, in an attempt to mediate internal conflicts in the Soviet Union. The 1957 uprisings in Hungary and Poland were being used as examples of dissent within the Soviet bloc. The United States was encouraging more "Hungary-like" uprisings and it is possible that the Chinese feared the encouragement Chiang Kai-shek was taking from these comments.[104]

In March 1958, Chiang suggested a strategy for attacking the mainland, using guerilla warfare to stimulate such uprisings. (Gordon 643) The U.S. flatly rejected the plan. However, in May, Eisenhower authorized the establishment of the U.S.-Taiwan

[99] Zhang (p 240)

[100] Gurtov, Melvin. "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited: Politics and Foreign Policy in Chinese Motives." Modern China, Vol. 2, Issue 1 (Jan., 1976), p 49-103. (p 76)

[101] Sigal, Leon V. "The 'Rational Policy' Model and the Formosa Straits Crises." International Studies, Vol. 14, Issue 2 (Jun., 1970), p 121-156 (p134)

[102] Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited" (p 68)

[103] Zhang (p 235)

[104] Gordon (p 643)

Defense Command.[105] This command was a consolidation of the Taiwan Defense Command and the Military Assistance Command. The move accompanied the reorganization of KMT forces in the expectation of increasing combat effectiveness. As one might expect, the Chinese press closely watched and reported on the assistance Chiang's military received from the United States.[106]

In May 1958, the United States also became involved in the crisis in Lebanon. Mao saw the crisis as an example of the inherent conflict among imperialist powers. He also saw the situation as an opportunity to use the U.S. policy of "brinkmanship" against itself.[107] Domestically, Mao utilized propaganda to create "mass campaigns" against the perceived imperialist aims of the British and Americans.[108]

In June of 1957, Khrushchev solidly defeated political opponents and sent Mikoyan to Beijing to seek the PRC's acknowledgement. In all, 1956-58 was a period of consolidation among the socialist countries, giving China reason to be optimistic about its future power.[109] However, even at this time, Sino-Soviet relations were under strain. The PRC would later blame the political friction on key factors that emerged during this same period: Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin, the Polish and Hungarian uprisings, and the moves toward a relaxation of tensions with the United States, in particular.[110]

However, during his June 1958 trip, Khrushchev offered to extend Soviet military protection to China's coasts, but Mao refused, preferring to rely on Soviet financial and technical assistance alone. He considered Khrushchev's suggestions to be unreasonable demands that would limit Chinese autonomy and grant too much control to the Soviet Union.[111]

On June 30, 1958, China finally became fed up with waiting for the resumption of talks in Geneva while Chiang and the U.S. continued to build up military forces on Taiwan. The Foreign Minister publicly demanded that the U.S. resume diplomatic talks within 15 days. The United States did not respond for two days, and when it did so, the response came in a press conference with Secretary of State Dulles. Dulles stated that

[105] Zhang (p 227)
[106] Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited" (p 74)
[107] Zhang (p 231)
[108] Whiting, Allen S. "New Light on Mao: Quemoy 1958: Mao's Miscalculations." China Quarterly, Volume 0, Issue 62 (Jun., 1975), p 263-270. (p 266)
[109] Zhang (p 230)
[110] Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited" (p 62)
[111] Ibid (p 84)

"the United States would be proposing resumption of the talks at a new site, Warsaw, with Ambassador Jacob Beam as chief delegate."[112] Unfortunately, the United States did not make the official notification to China until July 28, well past the PRC's stated deadline. Mao used the delay as evidence of U.S. bad faith and gave the order carry out the plans for bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu.[113]

On July 17, 1958, the Nationalist government "announced that Quemoy was being converted into an offensive base preparatory to invading the mainland."[114] The PRC responded with more calls for the liberation of Taiwan. Privately, PRC intelligence reported that KMT forces were on alert. Mao determined that the time for attack had come, and did not expect that the U.S. could or would legitimately intervene in what he considered an internal matter.

The attack was planned for July 25, but a storm postponed the initial bombardment. On July 26th, when the attack should have commenced, Mao postponed the bombardment. In part, he hoped that the Kuomintang troops would initiate an assault on the mainland, which would have given the PRC and excuse for attacking. Unfortunately for him, Chiang did not oblige.[115]

From July 31 to August 3, 1958, Khrushchev met with Mao in Beijing.[116] It is interesting to note that the communiqué that was released after the meeting contained no mention of Taiwan. In fact, the Chinese press issued "veiled criticism" against Khrushchev's failure to adequately respond to the imperialist aggression in Lebanon. Whiting argues that, despite the lack of public pronouncements on the Taiwan question, it is extremely likely that the two leaders held some discussion on Taiwan, given the amount of activity and rising tensions in the area.[117] However, in memoirs and public statements, both leaders denied that there was any discussion of Taiwan.[118]

Before the crisis erupted there were some indications that should have told the United States that real trouble was brewing in the area. Whiting points out that the PLA had placed jet fighters on airfields in Fujian that had been completed for more than a

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112 Ibid (p 76)
113 Zhang (p 228)
114 Snyder and Diesing (p 562)
115 Zhang (p 235-6)
116 Gordon (p 643)
117 Whiting, "Mao's Miscalculations" (p 269)
118 Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited" (p 84)

year. In early August, "American intelligence analysts warned Washington that an assault against the Offshore Islands was imminent."[119] On August 7, KMT and PRC jets engaged in combat over Quemoy, adding to the perception that the Chinese were planning to attack.[120]

The Joint Chiefs responded on August 15 by recommending the limited use of nuclear weapons on select military targets on China's coast. This recommendation was in line with the strategic thinking of the time, which argued that failure to use nuclear weapons would eventually limit their deterrent value. Eisenhower, however, was against the use of nuclear weapons, due to his concern about world opinion. Instead, he made the decision to rely on conventional forces only.

At 5:30pm on August 23, 1958, the Fujian Military Command began bombarding Quemoy. The bombardment constituted an artillery blockade with PLA forces poised to respond to "KMT counterattack and possible U.S. intervention."[121]

B. INTENTIONS AND GOALS

On September 8, at the end of the second week of the crisis, Mao Zedong addressed the Supreme State conference. In his speech, he specifically defined the objective as the removal of the "110,000 Kuomintang troops (95,000 on Kinmen [Quemoy]; 15,000 on Matsu)."[122] However, despite this straightforward pronouncement, Mao's true motives and intentions have continued to be a matter of debate. The reasons for this debate lie within the multitude of interpretations about the influence of domestic and international relationships and situations with which China struggled at the end of the 1950s.

Leon Sigal points out that there are two major schools of thought on Mao's intentions in 1958. The first possibility is that China was probing U.S. intentions, particularly with regard to the defense of the islands and in the use of nuclear weapons. The second possibility is that both Mao and Khrushchev intended to probe the U.S., but only in so far as it did not provoke a counterattack. The second theory is supported

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[119] Whiting, "Mao's Miscalculations" (p 266)
[120] Gordon (p 644)
[121] Zhang (p 237)
[122] Whiting, "Mao's Miscalculations" (p 264-65)

greatly by Mao's orders about not firing on U.S. ships and aircraft and his concern that all attacks be conducted to minimize the risk of U.S. casualties.[123]

Sigal leans toward the concept of PRC reprisal for Chiang Kai-shek's threats and harassment and the U.S. decision to deploy Matador missiles on Taiwan. Of course, a reprisal and an offensive probe appear very similar. The main difference between them is that in the former the attacker's intentions are made clear. The Chinese press made some mention of reprisal against the "Chiang clique," but if these were the messages intended for the United States, the Eisenhower administration clearly did not receive them.[124]

Whatever the proximate motivations behind the attacks, it is apparent that Mao had limited and flexible objectives. Chief among these objectives were KMT troop withdrawals from Jinmen and Matsu and a resumption of diplomatic talks with the United States. Chiang's behavior and the U.S.-Taiwan relationship appeared extremely threatening to Mao. In response to the failure of the Eisenhower to maintain the Geneva talks, Mao determined that it was best to raise tensions again in order to reengage the United States and draw world attention to Chiang's belligerence, even if that meant escalating conflict in the Strait.

In short, Mao considered the situation in the strait to be an increasingly dangerous threat to Chinese national security, of even greater importance than the Great Leap Forward which had recently been launched at his command. He said in his eight-point speech on September 5, 1958 to the Supreme State Conference, "If we must fight then we must fight and afterwards we will build."[125] The essential point made by this quote is that Mao believed that the United States truly intended to engage the PRC in a fight that would lead to war. However, he also felt confident that China would win that conflict, and then return to the task of rebuilding the country's economy.

Mao was convinced that, despite its commitment to the defense of Taiwan and even to the defense of Quemoy and Matsu, the United States was too engaged militarily around the world to pose a significant threat to his operations against the islands.[126] It is also likely that the level of U.S. engagement around the world looked extremely

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[123] Sigal. (p 140-42)
[124] Ibid. (p 143)
[125] Ibid. (p 268)
[126] Zhang (p 234-5)

threatening to Mao, given the development of missile sites in South Korea and the claims of U.S.-KMT support of rebels in Tibet.[127]

As they had in 1954, United States policy-makers found themselves faced with fairly straightforward goals: affecting the cessation of hostilities against the islands and deterring full-scale invasion of Taiwan; displaying resolve against communist expansion; and preventing the crisis from escalating into general war.[128] The U.S. policy was largely founded on the administration's perception of China's intent.

In June 1957, Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning Bowie laid out the U.S. perception of Chinese intent. In four points, he explained that the PRC's past actions indicated hostility to the United States and an intent to continue attempts to thwart the United States in the pursuit of its interests in the Pacific. Despite the growing friction in the Sino-Soviet relationship, Bowie stated that the partnership between the two countries was still strong. Finally, he discounted any attempts at accommodation on the part of the Chinese and argued that any U.S. accommodation would only aid the PRC in its anti-American efforts. Secretary of State Dulles went even farther, referring to relations between the United States and China as "a state of semi-warfare."[129]

The United States perceived the attack as part of a Soviet plan to test U.S. resolve in the Pacific while it was heavily engaged in the crisis in Lebanon. Regardless of the reasoning, U.S. officials did not believe that the PRC intended to invade Taiwan. However, policy-makers also believed that, while the islands were of little strategic value, they still possessed sufficient psychological value that the United States may need to become involved.[130] Eisenhower, therefore, authorized U.S. ships to escort KMT resupply vessels.

Even more so than during the 1954-55 crisis, the administration's task was to balance U.S. credibility and resolve with the desire to prevent full-scale war with China and the Soviet Union. Chiang Kai-shek's repeated calls for counterattacks and assaults on the mainland threatened to drag the United States into a conflict that it did not want, but the Cold War climate forced officials to consider strongly the question of U.S. commitment and give great weight to previous promises of defense against Communism.

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[127] Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited" (p 78)
[128] Gordon (p 645)
[129] Zhang (p 238-9)
[130] Ibid. (p 243-5)

In the main, the policy of the United States in the 1958 crisis was to fulfill as much as possible its commitment to the mutual security treaty with Taiwan (mostly to support U.S. credibility) while mitigating the drift toward war with China, instigated by Chiang's aggressive behavior.[131]

C. STRATEGY AND TACTICS

In the conduct of the attacks, China continued to follow its strategy of "active defense." On July 16, 1958, Peng Dehuai himself pointed out that the objective of the strategy was to "apply [short-term] belligerence to prevent general war."[132] Even as late as 1959, Peng Dehuai truly believed that it was China's pursuit of this policy that kept the United States from invading China.

On 20 August, Mao decided to go ahead with the shelling of Quemoy and Matsu, with the intent of seeing how the enemy would react. However, he specifically intended to keep the United States out of the conflict as much as possible. In a briefing on the operation on August 21, Mao expressed his intent that the PLA should not attack any U.S. forces, directly or by accident, unless they attacked first.[133]

Although Snyder and Diesing stated in their 1977 study that the PRC strategy was unknown, they speculated that the bombardment was either a defensive strategy or a probe to test the island's defenses and logistical support.[134] Zhang argues that Mao employed his typical pattern of short-term, limited belligerence to increase tensions. Whiting's argument supports that of Snyder and Diesing, in that Mao utilized his common strategy of "testing the enemy's intentions and strength before irrevocably committing one's forces."[135]

It is also apparent that, in a fashion similar to that in 1954-55, Mao sought to minimize the risk of direct conflict with the United States by focusing entirely on Quemoy and Matsu. This, in theory, would prevent Eisenhower from invoking the power granted to him in the Formosa Resolution. Mao gravely overestimated the ease with which he could sidestep the Formosa Resolution and the U.S.-ROC Mutual Security treaty.

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[131] Tsou, Tang. "The Quemoy Imbroglio: Chiang Kai-shek and the United States." The Western Political Quarterly, Volume 12, Issue 4 (Dec., 1959), p 1075-1091. (p 1075)

[132] Zhang (p 234)

[133] Zhang (p 237)

[134] Snyder and Diesing (p 562)

[135] Whiting, "Mao's Miscalculations" (p 266)

In formulating his strategy, Mao conducted a very interesting mental exercise in deterrence. He acknowledged that both the United States and the PRC feared war between the two states. However, he reasoned, the more important question for Mao was "who [was] a little more afraid?"[136] He concluded that Dulles feared war with the Chinese more than Mao feared the Americans. Thus assuming that he had the strategic advantage, he ignored the warnings from Washington. As before in 1954-55, Mao was supremely confident in his ability to control the situation and avoid war with the United States. He was similarly convinced that the United States held no such confidence on its part.[137] However, Mao's calculations seem to have gone awry after the initial response from the United States, which was much stronger than he had anticipated.

The U.S. strategy, which evolved quickly over the course of the crisis, was to combine support of Nationalist troops—through the use of supply ship convoys and expert advice—with tough diplomacy, namely refusing to resume talks and continuing to fight PRC access to the UN. Gordon argues that both the 1954-55 crisis and the 1958 crisis show the United States' unswerving commitment to avoid the use of force in resolving the Taiwan Strait question. Although we have already seen that Eisenhower probably was not quite so squeamish about the use of force in 1954-55, this apparent policy is a thread that has seemingly remained intact throughout the history of U.S.-China relations: the U.S. threat to use violence without actually doing so. Adherence to this tactic is largely the result of a desire to avoid war—especially due to the early U.S. reliance on the nuclear threat—rather than lack of will to use conventional force when necessary.

On September 4, 1958, Dulles made public statements during a press briefing indicating that the United States would defend Quemoy. This statement was a public reflection of Eisenhower's assessment that the offshore islands had greater importance in Taiwan's defense. Sigal argues that the subsequent pause in PLA bombardment was interpreted as a signal that China wished to negotiate.[138] Gordon, on the other hand, described Dulles' comments as conciliatory.[139]

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[136] Ibid. (p 266-67)
[137] Ibid.
[138] Sigal (p 137)
[139] Gordon (p 646)

Depending on the characterization of Dulles' comments, one may interpret Zhou Enlai's September 7 called for resumption of negotiations in Geneva as a response to pressure or acceptance of a request. In his statement, however, Zhou leveled the blame for the crisis squarely on the United States and Chiang Kai-shek. Additionally, even if the PRC considered Dulles' request for meetings in Warsaw to be genuine, they were not yet certain that the danger was over. During this period, PRC policy-makers considered that war was still a very likely possibility and began preparing the Chinese people for armed resistance to invasion.[140]

While attempting to control Chiang and prevent inadvertent escalation of the crisis, the United States also assumed that the Soviet Union was exerting some measure of control over Mao in the crisis, as well. In the hope of utilizing some leverage, the administration regularly appealed to Khrushchev for some assistance in guiding Mao Zedong to give up the attack on the islands. On September 12, Eisenhower contacted Khrushchev, complaining about the obstinacy of the Chinese in refusing to renounce the use of force.[141]

As has already been stated, U.S. strategic goals diverged sharply from those of Chiang Kai-shek, who repeatedly called for counterattacks and retaliatory strikes on various mainland targets. As the crisis wore on, fears grew that Chiang might take some action independent of the United States that would cause events to veer out of U.S. control.[142] A particular difficulty for Chiang was the artillery blockade, which prevented him from resupplying his troops.

Chiang argued that the only way to break the blockade of the islands was to attack the gun emplacements on the mainland. However, the United States avoided such provocative actions by devising a different means to break the blockade from the sea. Even though ships were once again able to get through to the islands, Chiang and his generals continued to call for strikes on the mainland. The United States continued to refuse such Chiang's demands from a stronger footing, since his main argument for the air strikes was no longer valid. The breaking of the blockade on September 14 was

[140] Zhang (p 251)
[141] Gordon (p 646)
[142] Ibid. (p 647)

extremely important for the United States, both for keeping Chiang under control and for putting the initiative for escalation of the crisis back on the PRC. [143]

On September 24, 1958, the Nationalists won a major air battle over the Strait.[144] However, shortly after the battle, the PLA commenced bombardment of Da Dan and Er Dan, two smaller islands off of Quemoy that Chiang considered vital to the defense of the island. Faced with the prospect of losing Quemoy, Chiang began comparing the situation with the 1948 Berlin crisis, suggesting that the United States air drop supplies to his troops on the island.[145]

Rather than increase the level of resupply efforts, Secretary of State Dulles followed the attacks on Da Dan and Er Dan with conciliatory statements during meetings in Warsaw and in two other speeches on September 25 and 30. These speeches suggested the removal of some troops from Quemoy, implying that the United States might be moving away from defense of Taiwan or assisting the Nationalists from retaking the mainland.[146] These pronouncements had powerful effects on both sides of the straits.

Perhaps most important to the resolution of the crisis, Chiang began making more moderate statements, indicating the defensive role played by the islands for Taiwan and promising not to risk another world war over them.[147] Chiang reversed his position as a result of pressure from Washington and his growing suspicion that the United States would not support him in an assault on the mainland. The Chinese followed Dulles' statements by announcing the unilateral ceasefire.

Eisenhower took the ceasefire by the PRC as a diplomatic opportunity. He instructed Dulles to encourage Chiang to withdraw some troops from Quemoy and Matsu in exchange for possible support in a future attempt by the KMT to return to the mainland.[148] According to Gordon, this support included the possibility of helping the KMT gain amphibious lift capability.[149] Additionally, the United States ceased convoy activities in the strait.

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[143] Tsou (p 1083)
[144] Snyder and Diesing (p 563)
[145] Ibid. (p 649-50)
[146] Sigal (p 138) and Snyder and Diesing (p 563)
[147] Gordon (p 650)
[148] Zhang (p 263)
[149] Gordon (p 652)

Seeing that events were moving in a somewhat positive direction, the PRC announced on October 13 that the ceasefire would continue for two more weeks. When Dulles announced his intent to visit Taiwan, however, the PLA resumed shelling the islands. The Chinese claimed that the PLA resumed bombardement because they had sighted a U.S. ship in a convoy with Nationalist ships, but the decision was likely a measure to remind Dulles that the crisis was not resolved and he could not yet relax.[150]

During his trip, Dulles managed to convince Chiang to remove about 40,000 troops from Quemoy and Matsu and to renounce the use of violence as a means of reunification.[151] The United States made sure to get public assurance of Chiang's renunciation in the form of a joint communiqué. According to the communiqué, instead of relying on force, Chiang would rely on the collapse of the communist regime from within. Even with the public statement made, there were still differences between the KMT and U.S. interpretations of the statement. Chiang's regime interpreted the communiqué to mean that it had renounced force only as the primary means of reunification.[152] Difficulties such as this were driving the wedge deeper between the United States and the KMT, further increasing U.S. desire to withdraw from the Taiwan issue, despite the difficulty of doing so.

D. OUTCOMES

On October 25, 1958, following a period of reduced tensions with the continuation of the ceasefire and then resumption of bombardment, Beijing marked the official end of the crisis by announcing that the bombing of Quemoy would take place only on even-numbered days.[153] Supposedly, this schedule was meant to allow Chiang to resupply his forces with humanitarian aide and necessities, but limited the capacity to conduct the replenishment of offensive weapons and equipment. For the Chinese, the crisis mainly resulted in the reduction of KMT troops on Quemoy and Matsu—although Chiang maintained a significant force there—and the resumption of diplomatic talks with the United States in Warsaw. These positive results are cold comfort, though, given other results of the 1958 conflict. Perhaps more critical to the PRC were the unintended outcomes of the crisis.

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[150] Sigal (p 139)
[151] Zhang (p 264)
[152] Gordon (p 652)
[153] Gordon (p 651)

First and foremost is the fact that the crisis marks the breaking point of PRC relations with USSR. Sigal points out that, although Krushchev's communication to the United States clearly emphasized the Soviet Union's intention to defend the mainland, he never mentioned the situation on the offshore islands as being considered aggression on the part of Nationalist forces. In other words, he intended to defend the mainland, but would not support China's assault on the islands.[154]

Gurtov argues that Khrushchev did not betray Mao during the crisis. Instead, he asserts, both sides knew what to expect from one another and that criticism of the Soviet failure to support China during this time was merely a tool for waging the war of words that would later erupt between the two states.[155] However, this seems to be a short-sighted analysis. Mao fully expected Soviet support in an action he felt he had to take. The fact that he did not get that support did not mitigate the necessity, but it did reveal motivations on the part of Khrushchev that Mao could not have viewed kindly.

The crisis definitely convinced Mao that the PRC and the Soviet Union were on different paths, or soon would be. Although the Great Leap Forward had already commenced prior to this crisis, it is interesting to note that Mao increased his emphasis on self-reliance in 1958, indicating that China could no longer expect assistance from its socialist camp neighbor to the north.[156]

This perception was particularly true with regard to the Taiwan question. Khrushchev visited Beijing in October of 1959. He and Mao had considerable disagreements on several issues, including the Soviets' refusal to openly and directly support China during the crisis of 1958. Khrushchev even went so far as to demand that the PRC renounce the use of force against Taiwan and recognize its independence.[157]

By his own admission, Mao completely misjudged the reaction of the United States and the rest of the world. However, he also considered that the hostilities did have some positive outcomes. In particular, he felt that the fear of nuclear attack served to unite the people behind a single cause.[158] He would use that inertia in the implementation of the Great Leap Forward.

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154 Sigal (p 137)
155 Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited" (p 89)
156 Gurtov (p 58)
157 Zhang (p 266-67)
158 Whiting, "Mao's Miscalculations" (p 265)

Overall, the question of victory or defeat for Mao during this period is somewhat open. If one accepts that the goal of the action was the removal of the KMT threat from the islands, the outcome of the crisis was a failure. If one views his actions as a response to a perceived U.S. threat, intended to draw attention to the political differences, then he came closer to achieving his aims. However, even in that respect, the outcome was not altogether positive. The open hostility between KMT and PLA forces would go on for several more years, erupting again in 1962. Although the crisis led to the resumption of U.S.-China talks in Warsaw, it widened the split between the PRC and the Soviet Union, leaving China without reliable allies. Given such dramatic results, the crisis as a whole cannot be viewed as a complete success.

In terms of foreign policy, the crisis resulted in two positive outcomes for the United States. The main goal of preserving the status quo was certainly attained. However, the secondary outcome of the crisis was a separation of the United States to a certain extent from Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang's belligerence was a significant problem for the Eisenhower administration. As a result of his actions during the crisis, the United States was forced to withdraw some of their earlier commitments to support the defense of the Offshore Islands, and was able to do so without openly abandoning its support of Taiwan. The trade-off, however, was the increased U.S. commitment to defense of Taiwan and the Penghus. Gordon adds that the U.S. was also committed to restraint from the use of force, though Chang discounts this.[159]

Considering their goal to be ending the crisis without going to war, one can see how U.S. policy-makers considered the outcome a victory. One long-term effect of the crisis was the solidification of the so-called "Dulles Doctrine," which developed from the handling of both the Lebanon crisis and the Quemoy crisis: "This was the doctrine that the use of force for altering the international status quo should be outlawed and that the use of force by the United States to prevent or oppose this method of change was justified in support of an emerging practice of world law and order."[160] This doctrine would carry through the next four decades and would have a significant role to play when the Taiwan question once again pushed to the forefront of U.S.-China relations.

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[159] Gordon (p 642)

[160] McClelland, Charles A. "Decisional Opportunity and Political Controversy: The Quemoy Case" The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Volume 6, Issue 3, Case Studies in Conflict (Sep., 1962), p 203-213. (p 205)

VI. CASE STUDY: THE TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS OF 1995-96

The events that took place in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait in 1995 and 1996 marked the intersection of three states' policies and behavior, founded on nearly forty years of history. While the United States and China were building a better relationship from 1979 onward, Taiwan was building a stronger economy and working its way toward a transition to democratic government. As part of that transition and development, Taiwan's leaders held recognition as a sovereign state to be an important goal that served both the economic and political needs of the people of Taiwan. The crisis that erupted in 1995 and reached its peak in March 1996 was said to have brought U.S.-China relations to their lowest point since the 1958 crisis. The comparison is all the more interesting given the fact that basic strategies used on both sides in 1996 were very similar to those used in previous crises.

A. BACKGROUND

Even from the beginning of the PRC, the United States held the separation of Beijing from the Moscow to be an important policy objective. However, the Truman administration made the calculation that a strategy of putting pressure on Beijing's communist government would be more effective than making any friendly overtures toward them. As a result of that policy, based on the calculation of common interests with other communist powers and on subsequent crises and confrontations, Mao Zedong chose to ally the PRC more closely to the Soviet Union. However, history has shown that Mao never considered the USSR to possess any authority or influence over Chinese policy. As has been shown, one outcome of the crisis of 1958 was a widening of the split between the USSR and China.

During the period immediately after the 1958 Crisis, the United States perceived the growing difficulty between China and the Soviet Union. Mao's domestic policies, not the least of which would develop into the Cultural Revolution, prevented the United States from taking advantage of that division.[161] For the meantime, Washington's China policy-makers were content to let the PRC carry out its propaganda and war of words

[161] Clough, Ralph N. Cooperation or Conflict in the Taiwan Strait? New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999. (p 17)

against the Soviet Union. Of course, Eisenhower and Kennedy would also expend a great deal of energy trying to keep Chiang Kai-shek from dragging the United States into a war with China.

The threat of war with China loomed greater again in the middle of 1962. Chiang Kai-shek had been making military preparations throughout late 1961 and the first half of 1962 for a counterattack on the mainland. The Taiwan press repeatedly announced that 1962 would be the year of successful recovery of the mainland. The tensions increased when intelligence reports revealed that large numbers of PLA troops had moved into Fujian province in preparation to defend against the attack. For its part, the United States consistently pressured Chiang to call off his attack plans and to stop making trouble in the region. Chiang refused and the crisis continued to escalate until June 1962. Eventually, Chiang was forced to back down in the face of building Chinese military readiness and the obvious fact that the United States would not support the KMT in an assault on the mainland. U.S. officials had gone so far as to inform Beijing through diplomatic channels in Moscow that the United States would not support a military assault on the mainland. It had become clear that the United States did not want another war with China.[162]

After the crisis of 1962, Chiang's regime turned away from the immediate goal of retaking the mainland and moved toward developing Taiwan's economy. The island had suffered greatly after the Japanese surrender and during the first decades of KMT rule. For Chiang, the only way to achieve his eventual goal would be to rebuild Taiwan. Despite the United States' refusal to aid him in carrying out an attack in 1962, Chiang still had some level of American military and financial support. Over the next decade very little changed with regard to U.S.-China-Taiwan relations. However, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate and China's economy continued to stagnate in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. By 1970, China was faced with a neighbor to the north whose power was then considered to be even greater than that of the United States.

The break in U.S.-China relations came in 1968, with the election of President Richard Nixon. Shortly before Nixon's inauguration, Zhou Enlai called for the

[162] Gordon (p 657-659)

resumption of talks in Warsaw and for talks between the leadership of the two nations. Internal politics in both countries would prevent those talks, initially, but the subject had been breached. Additionally, the Sino-Soviet border conflicts of 1969 indicated the seriousness of the Soviet threat to China. In July 1969, Nixon began surreptitiously working toward improved relations with the PRC. The Warsaw talks were resumed in 1970.

In 1971, during his "State of the World" speech, President Nixon called for the establishment of a dialogue with China and for a "place for the People's Republic in the United Nations—without sacrificing the position of the Republic of China."[163] In response to the difficulty associated with such a policy, the Nixon administration developed the "one China, but not now" approach, indicating that unification should and would take place, but at a later, undetermined date, and without resort to violence. This proposal and the subsequent lifting of the U.S. ban on travel to China resulted in development of the now-famous "ping-pong diplomacy."

Then came Henry Kissinger's secret mission to Beijing in 1971. Although Kissinger claimed that the Taiwan issue was secondary to the strategic concerns about the USSR, Beijing consistently referred to it during negotiations that led to the 1972 communiqué as the single most-important issue in U.S.-China relations. During the 1971 visit to China, Kissinger agreed to a limited withdrawal of troops from Taiwan, stated that the United States acknowledged that Taiwan was a part of China, and agreed that the PRC would be allowed to take Taiwan's seat in the UN, so long as Taiwan's representatives were not expelled.[164] Unfortunately for Taiwan, the United States' motion to allow a seat for both the PRC and ROC delegation was voted down, in favor of Albania's recommendation that Beijing take over Taipei's seat. With that vote, the PRC won a major victory.

On February 27, 1972, after President Nixon's historic week-long visit to China, the United States and the People's Republic of China issued the first U.S.-China joint communiqué, also known as the Shanghai Communiqué. The communiqué made a clear statement of each side's positions, underlining the critical importance of the Taiwan issue

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[163] Cohen, Warren I. America's Response to China, 4th Ed. New York: Columbia Univesity Press, 1990. (p 197)

[164] Harding, Harry. A Fragile Relationship. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1992. (p 41-2)

as the number one obstacle to the development of normalized relations. The communiqué restated the U.S. commitment to developing a peaceful solution to the Taiwan question and went further, indicating that the United States would withdraw troops from the island and reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan. Although Nixon promised the Chinese that he would not support Taiwan's independence, he could not withdraw recognition of Chiang Kai-shek's regime, because the 1954 U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Security treaty was still in effect. Nixon's promise to abrogate the treaty led to the establishment of liaison offices in Beijing and Washington as precursors to official embassies.[165]

For the Chinese part, the communiqué marked the beginning of China's policy of patience, under which the PRC recognized that reunification need not come by force. However, Beijing also believed that in order for such a policy to be successful, Taiwan must be diplomatically isolated, or at least mostly so, from the rest of the world.[166] The removal of Taiwan from its seat in the United Nations and went a long way toward achieving that diplomatic isolation. However, the PRC would have to wait seven years, until after the death of Mao Zedong and the rise of Deng Xiaoping, before the Carter administration would agree to the subsequent severing of diplomatic relations between the United States and Taiwan, the abrogation of the U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Security Treaty and the full withdrawal of troops from Taiwan.

The December 15, 1979 joint communiqué marked the normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. President Carter had proposed the establishment of official diplomatic relations with Beijing with certain conditions to which Beijing later objected. First, the United States would continue to provide military equipment to Taiwan for the island's defense. Second, it would make a unilateral statement on the U.S. desire for a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan question, which PRC leadership would not denounce publicly. Third, the mutual security treaty would be terminated after one year, while all other treaties and agreements with Taiwan would remain in effect.[167] Despite these conditions, some of which were reflected in the resulting communiqué, Congress still considered the Carter administration to be too conciliatory toward China.

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[165] Cohen. America's Response to China. (p199)

[166] Nathan, Andrew J. "China's Goals in the Taiwan Strait" The China Journal. Vol. 0, Issue 36 (Jul., 1996), 87-93. (p 89)

[167] Harding (p 77)

Following the communiqué by a short four months, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) on April 10, 1979. The act was dated retroactively to January 1, 1979, indicating that it should be considered in conjunction with the second joint communiqué. Although the act was, in part, designed as the implementation of the policies indicated in the communiqué, pro-Taiwan forces in Congress added certain clauses that reaffirmed the U.S. defense of Taiwan against any attempts at forceful reunification. The TRA, coupled with campaigns to gain the favor of U.S. officials outside of the executive branch, enabled Taiwan to maintain influence with the United States, despite the lack of official diplomatic relations.

During the presidential election of 1980, Ronald Reagan made the issue of relations with Taiwan a part of his platform. On more than one occasion, Reagan stated that he wished to return some degree of officiality to relations with Taiwan.[168] After winning the election, Reagan showed his strong support for Taiwan by inviting Taipei to send a representative to his inauguration in an official capacity.[169]

Fortunately for the stability of U.S.-China relations, Vice President G. H. W. Bush was able to convince President Reagan of China's value as a strategic partner and of the importance of conforming to the requirements of the two joint communiqués. However, Reagan was determined to continue the sale of arms, which conformed with the Taiwan Relations Act. This determination led to another political confrontation with Beijing. The negotiations over the sale of arms to Taipei eventually resulted in the release of a third joint communiqué on August 17, 1982, in which the United States indicated its intent to "reduce gradually" the sale of arms to Taiwan and that the sale of arms would level off in both "qualitative or quantitative terms." In return, for this concession, the United States was able to consider the issue of arms sales to Taiwan settled between Washington and Beijing.

Despite the August 17, 1982 communiqué, the United States continued relations with Taiwan, following a "two-track" policy by working with both Beijing and Taipei and refusing to choose sides on the timeline for reunification. Washington maintained its previous policy that the United States was interested only in the principle that

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[168] Ibid. (p 109-111)
[169] Cohen, America's Response to China. (p 205)

reunification take place peacefully.[170] Additionally, the United States backed Taiwan in some of its efforts to prevent its diplomatic isolation. Citing the economic importance of Taiwan, Washington stated a clear position on Taiwan's continued membership in the Asian Development back and also supported its admission into GATT in 1983.[171]

Meanwhile, following the route laid out with the implementation of "smiling diplomacy," Beijing released its nine-point proposal in September 1981. This proposal called for increased cultural and economic exchanges with Taipei and for negotiations between the CCP and the KMT. These overtures were followed in 1984 with Deng Xiaoping's announcement of the "one country, two systems" concept. Throughout the 1980s, while working to bring Taipei closer to Beijing, China worked hard to gain support for its assertion "that Taiwan was not entitled to the legal protection of sovereignty."[172] However, the growth of indirect economic and other relations across the strait allowed the PRC to ignore the fact that the United States remained committed to the defense of Taiwan.[173]

In Taiwan, the process of democratic transformation was well underway. The death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975 led to the rise of his son Chiang Ching-kuo to the presidency. Under Chiang Ching-kuo, the Taiwan government had shifted toward "soft authoritarianism" and continued its transition to democracy through elections, although the top positions of leadership were still not subject to election by the masses.[174] In 1986, Chiang legalized the formation of opposition parties.

In that same year, the hijacking of a Taiwan-based China Airlines cargo plane and its subsequent landing in Canton highlighted the desire by some Taiwanese citizens to return to the mainland. At the time, such travel was still prohibited by the KMT government. The incident forced negotiations between the mainland and the island and led to some conciliation on cross-Strait travel from Taiwan. After the rescinding of martial law on Taiwan by Chiang Ching-kuo, there followed a gradual relaxation of restriction on cross-Strait trade, increases contacts between mainland and Taiwan.[175] The

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[170] Clough (p 18-19)
[171] Harding (p 160)
[172] Garver, John W. Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. (p16)
[173] Harding (p 216)
[174] Garver (p 22)
[175] Garver (p 14-15)

development of democracy, along with the island's growing economic power, further increased its influence and popularity among U.S. officials.[176]

In January 1988, after the death of Chiang Ching-kuo, Lee Teng-hui ascended to the position as president of Taiwan. Although Lee was a member of the KMT, ensuring the continued control of the ruling party, the fact that he was a native Taiwanese, rather than a mainlander, was extremely important for Taiwan's political development. This was a significant step in the history of Taiwan and all sides of the Taiwan question watched carefully to determine what role he would play in the issue of reunification.

For the United States and China, the question of Taiwan had not been a central issue of relations for several years. By 1988, "the two countries seemed to have worked out a modus operandi for dealing with it."[177] In February 1989, President G. H. W. Bush made a trip to Beijing, during which he even cited the handling of the Taiwan question as evidence of both countries' ability to "manage controversial issues successfully."[178] Unfortunately, U.S.-China relations would soon take a turn for the worse, but the cause of that shift would have little to do with Taiwan.

In June 1989, the world's image of a liberalizing China was shattered during the infamous Tiananmen incident. Although determining the causes and effects of that incident is a study in and of itself, some scholars have indicated that the incident "wiped out nearly two decades of gains in positive sentiments" toward the PRC.[179] Although the effect on actual diplomatic relations was short-lived, the incident's effect on public opinion toward China was profound. The United States suspended many diplomatic ties with Beijing and policy-makers began to wonder if perhaps China might be more of a threat than had previously been thought.

The collapse of the Soviet Union followed closely on the heels of Tiananmen and "eliminated the principal rationale for promoting strategic cooperation with the PRC." [180] Additionally, the incident brought the question of human rights in China to the forefront of the United States' China policy. The confluence of these two forces threatened to undermine U.S.-China relations as the world entered the last decade of the millennium.

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[176] Clough (p 23)
[177] Harding (p 155)
[178] Ibid. (p 162)
[179] Garver (p 38)
[180] Clough (p 19-20)

Even while perceptions of China were changing in Washington, similar shifts were occurring among policy-makers in Beijing.

During the 1990s, a perception developed among PRC strategists that the United States sought hegemony in the Pacific and considered China a threat to that hegemony. The result was a tendency to view U.S. behavior in terms of this hegemonic ambition and its need to prevent Chinese development and economic success.[181] Simultaneously, the U.S. focus in negotiations over trade and other interests with the PRC began to shift toward China's human rights record, a topic that had been conveniently ignored when the Soviet threat dominated strategic thought. At the time, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Act required that the President annually review China's "most-favored nation" (MFN) status for any communist state. Under pressure from a Republican congress, President Clinton would eventually be forced to delink the question of human rights from MFN status in 1994 and order a full review of U.S. Taiwan policy.

Although relations between the United States and China were somewhat strained over these issues, cross-Strait relations were continuing to develop in a positive direction. In 1991, the PRC created the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), and Taiwan created the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF). These semi-official organizations were designed to facilitate exchange and "deal with practical problems" between the two sides. Although the organizations were not permitted to discuss political issues, the organization's activities were definitely not apolitical. Eventually, the meetings between ARATS and SEF would become a bargaining tool in times of crisis.[182]

On Taiwan, certain developments were taking place that would become a source of concern for Beijing. In March 1991, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council issued new "Guidelines for National Unification," which in part renounced the Republic of China's claim to be the government of all China. Although the move was a positive one, it was followed in April by Lee Teng-hui's decision to rescind the 1948 National Mobilization for the Suppression of communist Rebellion law, officially ending the Chinese civil war from Taiwan's perspective.[183]

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[181] Ibid. (p 13)
[182] Ibid. (p 34)
[183] Garver (p 26)

In 1992, Taiwan conducted its first general elections in which all legislative offices were elected by the voters. The elections were hailed as an example of democracy's triumph over authoritarianism and Taiwan was held up as an example to the world. The positive attention directed to Taiwan's political development was not something that Beijing wanted to see. Of equal significance during that year, Peng Ming-min, who had advocated independence during the late 1950s and early 1960s and was subsequently arrested and exiled, returned to Taiwan and was warmly welcomed by Premier Lien Chan, who had once been a student of Peng. Beijing considered the return of an outspoken independence advocate at the behest of the Taiwanese government nothing short of outrageous.[184]

Even worse, the event was followed that same year by President G. H. W. Bush's decision to sell 150 F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan.[185] Beijing responded to what it viewed as a dangerous trend toward Taiwanese independence by issuing a white paper, "The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China," in August 1993. The white paper reemphasized China's position with regard to both cross-Strait relations and to the role of the United States in the Taiwan question. Finally, it restated what Beijing considered the current policy of the United Nations with regard to Taiwan. This last section was extremely important, given the announcement in the following month from Taipei.

In September 1993, Taipei announced its goal of joining the General Assembly of the UN "as the 'Republic of China' under the 'divided state' formula that had allowed the two Germanys and the two Koreas to join." The measure was supported by seven Latin American countries.[186] Lee Teng-hui began the campaign for UN recognition in response to domestic pressure, as Taiwanese began to see a need for greater diplomatic recognition. In particular, many of Taiwan's business community engaged in overseas business and trade began clamoring for the kind of protection that full sovereign status can provide. In 1994, twelve UN members submitted a second request for debate on the issue of Taiwan's status. Lee's diplomatic recognition campaign signaled a major

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[184] Ibid. (p 25)

[185] Ross, Robert S. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." International Security, Vol. 25, Issue 2, (Fall 2000), 87-123. (p 87)

[186] Garver (p 31)

problem for the PRC, and Beijing policy-makers became increasingly concerned about Taiwan's "drift" toward independence.[187]

In January 1994, Taiwan's Premier undertook a "vacation trip" to the Philippines and Singapore. The trip and its inclusive meetings with officials from those states were dubbed unofficial by the Taiwan government. It became clear to Beijing, however, that this trip was part of a program to shift Taiwanese investment to Southeast Asia and away from the mainland to decrease Taiwan's vulnerability to PRC pressure. These activities, associated with what would come to be known as "vacation diplomacy," supported Taiwan's "go south" investment policy. Initially, the tactic did not receive significant responses—other than the typical press statements—from the PRC.[188] Of course, the PRC has a long history of utilizing its press to make real statements of intent. Lee was taking a dangerous gamble by ignoring the protests from Chinese press and continuing his campaign for increased economic strength and diplomatic recognition.

By this time, in the United States, President Clinton had taken office and was under considerable pressure from Congress. Facing political opposition to his domestic agenda and under pressure from groups with significant interests in China, Clinton had already been forced to delink the question of human rights from the issue of most favored nation trading status for China. In April 1994, Congress passed the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for 1994 and 1995 by a significant margin, effectively forcing Clinton to sign it. The act, in part, called for the "upgrading of U.S. relations with Taiwan" including raising the level of protocol between U.S. and Taiwanese officials.[189] The act also allowed U.S. citizens born in Taiwan to list "Taiwan" as their country of birth, rather than "China." The passage of the act was another mark in the growing trend of domestic politics driving the decision-making on a key foreign policy issue.[190]

During the Taiwan policy review Congress had made it clear that "the Taiwan Relations Act took precedence over the August 17, 1982 communiqué."[191] As a whole the policy review was counted as further evidence in Beijing of the U.S. policy of

[187] Swaine, Michael D. "Chinese Decision-Making Regarding Taiwan, 1979-2000." The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform. Lampton, David M., ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

[188] Garver (p 31-33)

[189] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 92)

[190] Garver (p 39)

[191] Yu, Taifa. "Taiwanese Democracy Under Threat: Impact and Limit of Chinese Military Coercion." Pacific Affairs, Volume 70, Issue 1 (Spring, 1997), 7-36. (p 13)

containing China. PRC press ran reports citing numerous examples of how U.S. policy was aimed at limiting China's economic and military power. Not only was Beijing faced with the problem of fending off U.S. hegemony in 1994, but Taiwan also stepped up its campaign for diplomatic recognition.

In June 1994, Lee Teng-hui conducted an interview with a Japanese reporter in which he referred to the need to make the KMT into a Taiwanese entity, rather than an "alien" power that came to Taiwan from the mainland.[192] Such worrisome (for China) statements were followed by even more dangerous statements. In 1994, Taipei released its white paper on cross-Strait relations. The white paper utilized phrases like "sovereign independence" with regard to Taiwan and asserted that Taiwan has never been a part of the PRC. Such direct enunciations caused problems for Jiang Zemin, who frequently faced criticism from hardliners just as Deng Xiaoping had. Beijing, of course, rejected the assertions in Taiwan's white paper and accused Taipei of attempting to create "two Chinas."[193]

Taiwan refused to heed the rumbling warnings from China, and in 1995, Taipei orchestrated yet another bid for UN membership, suggesting that it might make a US$1 billion donation to the United Nations in return for membership. During this attempt, Taiwan gained support from twenty-nine countries.[194] This was the largest showing of support from the international community that Taiwan had yet seen. Beijing had reason to be concerned that Taiwan was slipping out of its grasp.

Paralleling its bid for UN membership, Taiwan was also conducting a campaign to diversify its economy. Some people in Taiwan were concerned by the high level of interdependence developing between the island and the mainland, considering the connection to be a possible means of PRC leverage over Taiwan's policies. Others considered the relationship a means of minimizing the risk of political conflict.[195] To provide some economic protection from undue influence from the mainland, Lee and other leaders worked to build stronger economic ties with the countries of Southeast Asia. This too spelled trouble for the PRC.

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[192] Clough (p 80)
[193] Garver (p 29)
[194] Ibid. (p 31)
[195] Clough (p 26)

In January 1995, Jiang Zemin delivered his eight-point speech on "Continuing to Promote the Reunification of the Motherland." In this speech, he responded to the "drifting away" of Taiwan during the preceding years. Jiang's proposal was criticized by officials in Beijing as being too conciliatory. To make matters worse, the proposals Jiang put forth in the "eight points" evoked little enthusiasm in Taipei. In fact, Lee Teng-hui did not actually respond to the proposal until April, when he proposed his own "six points." Lee's speech marked the first time a Taiwanese leader had responded directly to a proposal by the PRC.[196] "Taiwan's tepid response to the proposal was an important factor in the subsequent PRC decision to apply coercive military pressure."[197]

By May 1995, the tension across the Strait was not the only problem facing Beijing. Relations with Washington were strained over the issue, especially since the House Foreign Relations Committee had recommended amending the Taiwan Relations Act in order to allow the United States to sell more advanced weapon systems to Taiwan. Additionally, public pressure had led the committee to "endorse legislation declaring Tibet to be an occupied sovereign country."[198] Such an endorsement was contrary to U.S. policy and the policy of every other nation. It indicated a harsh struggle between the Clinton administration and Congress, but its implications in the foreign policy arena were hard to ignore, despite its genesis in domestic politics.

Added to this trouble was the growing sense of regional concern among the other powers of the Asia-Pacific region. Despite the repeated assurances from Beijing that it does not seek regional hegemony, other countries were growing unsure of China's intentions, given the looming dispute over such issues as the Spratly Islands and similar territories. This concern gave rise to the development of such relationships as the December 1995 Australia-Indonesia Security Treaty and, later, the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Philippines and Great Britain.[199]

For China, the breaking point over Taiwan came on May 22, 1995, when the U.S. State Department announced that Lee would be granted a private visa to give a speech at the commencement ceremony of his alma mater, Cornell University, where he had

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[196] Garver (p 45)
[197] Clough (p 41)
[198] Lampton, David M. Same Bed, Different Dreams. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. (p 49)
[199] Garver (p 9-10)

received his doctorate in agricultural economics. For the United States, the decision was purely based on domestic politics and, in part, reversed the humiliation Lee had suffered when he was denied a transit visa during a stop-over in Honolulu in May of 1994.[200] For Beijing, the incident was nothing less that an outright defiance of China's Taiwan policy and a violation of the three U.S.-China joint communiqués.

Beijing vehemently protested the decision on May 23, stating that the decision not only violated agreements between the United States and China, but also marked a reversal of assurances given to Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials as late as May 11. In protest, Beijing cancelled a visit to the United States by a PLA air force delegation on May 23 and three days later announced that the scheduled visit by Defense Minister Chi Haotian would have to be postponed. On May 28, China withdrew from arms control and nuclear energy cooperation talks, and refused a visit by Deputy Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff, who was to explain the U.S. visa decision to Chinese officials.[201]

Surprisingly, despite the announced decision, Beijing allowed a visit to Taiwan by ARATS Vice Chairman Tang Shubei, scheduled for May 27, to continue as planned. Tang characterized the two-day talks between ARATS and SEF as successful. Both officials of both organizations agreed to meet in Beijing in July. Unfortunately, the results of Lee's visit in June would cause Beijing to choose a course that would prevent those meetings.

For its part, Washington attempted to keep Lee's visit as unofficial and low-key as possible. Lee had originally scheduled a press conference at Cornell on the day of his speech, but that event was cancelled. He did meet with three Republican senators, however. Despite the low level of attention the visit got in the United States, the Taiwanese press hailed the visit as the "highlight of 'pragmatic diplomacy'" and a significant diplomatic victory.[202]

The handling of the visit by Taiwan threatened to derail all of China's efforts to isolate Taiwan diplomatically. Beijing realized that actions had to be taken before other countries followed the the United States's example. The nine months that followed would be the tensest moments in U.S.-China relations since the crisis of 1958. Despite

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[200] Ibid. (p 37)
[201] Ibid (p 72)
[202] Ibid. (p 73)

the almost forty years of improved relations, the behavior of both sides would revert to bargaining strategies very similar to those used during that crisis. Such consistent behavior is all the more interesting, due to the fact that the forces at work on the policy-making in Beijing and Washington were very different. The outcomes of the crisis are still discussed and interpreted differently by both sides. In David Lampton's words:

> This is a story of face lost in both Beijing and Taipei at the Clinton administration's hands, mutual misjudgment about reactions in Beijing, Taipei, and Washington, and divergent domestic politics and core interests in the three capitals.[203]

B. INTENTIONS AND GOALS

In conducting the series of military and missile exercises in the vicinity of Taiwan during the 1995-96 crisis, Beijing was actually aiming at two sets of objectives for distinctly different purposes. One set of objectives was directed at Taiwan; the other, at the United States. Each set contained a minimum and a maximum acceptable outcome. In the case of Taiwan, the PRC hoped to force full acceptance of the "one country, two systems" model that had been Beijing's policy since the Deng era. At minimum, the strategy was intended to convince Taiwan to renounce Lee's "pragmatic diplomacy" activities. Against the United States, the PRC had more modest goals. At best, Beijing hoped to get a full recognition of Taiwan as being a part of the PRC. Failing that, it hoped at least to restore its credibility and image of resolve to prevent any state, even the United States, from interfering and pulling Taiwan away from China.[204]

The obvious and most direct target of China's intimidation tactics was, of course, Taiwan. As far as Beijing was concerned, the years of "pragmatic diplomacy," in which Taipei had urged the development of ever-increasing ties with other governments, and the apparent rise in popularity of the independence movement had to be stopped or the PRC's hopes of a reunification under any circumstances would be ended.

> In the free marketplace of ideas that Taiwan became in the 1990s, the idea of unification with the PRC as a subordinate special administrative region under a central government in Beijing (i.e., 'one country, two systems') had very little appeal. This was the fundamental genesis of Beijing's decision to resort to military coercion in 1995-96.[205]

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[203] Lampton. Same Bed, Different Dreams. (p 46)
[204] Garver (p 119)
[205] Garver (p 23)

PRC officials considered the granting of Lee Teng-hui's visa as the final straw, a most dangerous move in his campaign for Taiwanese independence. According to Beijing's analysis, despite his claims that he supported the "one China" principle and that his trip to Cornell was a purely private venture, Lee's speech made reference to "the Republic of Taiwan" seventeen times. The PRC was getting fed up with what it perceived as Lee's duplicity in cross-Strait relations.[206]

While publicly speaking of support for Beijing, Lee Teng-hui continued to carry out "vacation" trips to and seek "unofficial" arrangements with countries to which China already had diplomatic ties. The intent was to achieve the maximum level of diplomatic recognition while attracting the minimum amount of ire from Beijing. The best example of this was in Taipei's tactics in its early 1995 bid to join the UN. The selection of the name on the application, "Republic of China," rather than "Taiwan" or "Republic of Taiwan," was directly intended to prevent a PRC military response, based on the grounds that "Republic of China" paid lip service to the "one China" principle. Since it was obvious to Beijing that Taiwan sought to avoid a military reaction that was precisely the response Beijing chose.[207]

But China did not intend for Taiwan to be its only audience during the latter half of 1995. With regard to the United States, the PRC saw Taipei's "splittist" policies and Washington's support of them as part of U.S. hegemonic ambitions.[208] Additionally, it viewed the actions of the United States as "futile" and indicated that the historical record showed that the use of force against China would result in failure.[209] Beijing recognized early on that President Clinton's visa decision was the result of intense domestic pressure, but even so, the implications of the decision could not be ignored.[210]

Most important to its initial strategy against the United States was the fact that Beijing did not really expect the United States to get involved directly in the situation developing in the strait. Lampton points out that PRC officials viewed U.S. behavior in 1954 and 1958, as well as its behavior at the time regarding Bosnia, as evidence that U.S.

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[206] Clough (p 3)
[207] Garver (p 25)
[208] Ibid (p 35)
[209] Garver (p 35)
[210] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 93)

statements were nothing but rhetoric.[211] PRC officials consistently stated that the United States would have neither the right nor the inclination to intervene. It was under this kind of thinking that Beijing discounted the passage of the USS *Nimitz* through the Strait in mid-December as nothing more than a weak, symbolic gesture.

Later, as events made the U.S. position somewhat clearer, Beijing revised its estimate, concluding that it was possible, but not likely, that the United States would become directly involved. However, policy-makers still misjudged, assuming that even if the United States did take action, the response would only be symbolic and that China could successfully deter escalation if necessary.

Ross argues that China's actions, including the missile exercises, were aimed at both the United States and Taiwan, with the intent to reverse what Beijing saw as a trend toward increased support for Taiwan independence.[212] Nathan concurs with this analysis, emphasizing that Taiwan has strategic value to China that is nearly equal to the importance of reunification to Chinese national pride. In fact, his analysis of the 1995-96 crisis indicates that the PRC's goals with regard to Taiwan are largely aimed at preventing its use by a foreign power against the mainland.[213] Regardless of the ultimate purpose of the island for the PRC, however, the key point is that Beijing considered the events leading up to the May visa decision to indicate a trend of Taiwan's drifting away.

Ultimately, the root cause of the crisis was that "Taipei's 'pragmatic diplomacy' [had] steadily improved its international status and threatened to undermine Beijing's efforts to isolate and delegitimize the ROC in the international community."[214] Under this analysis, the goal of Beijing was to force the ROC to abandon pragmatic diplomacy. China's decision to use coercive measures was based on four main factors: (1) the need to demonstrate resolve in the face of perceived U.S. efforts to contain China (by granting Lee a visa), (2) the need to prevent other countries from following the U.S. example, (3) Lee's failure to respond positively to Jiang's "eight points," and (4) the consideration that, in the light of the "smiling diplomacy" and other conciliatory diplomatic measures,

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[211] Lampton. Same Bed, Different Dreams. (p 87)
[212] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 104)
[213] Nathan. "China's Goals in the Taiwan Strait" (p 87)
[214] Chou, David S. "Cross-Strait Relations and U.S. Roles in the Taiwan Strait Crisis." Issues & Studies, Vol. 32, Issue 10 (Oct., 1996), 1-25. (p 4)

previous military exercises and statements had been insufficient to display PRC resolve against Taiwanese independence.

According to Taipei, Beijing had three objectives:

> (1) creating a crisis that might prompt the government to cancel the forthcoming presidential election as it suspended a major election in 1979 when the U.S. suspended diplomatic relations with Taiwan; (2) intimidating the KMT to nominate a candidate other than Lee; and (3) causing Lee to win a lackluster electoral victory if the other two goals failed to materialize.[215]

The objectives of the United States, on the other hand, were extremely limited throughout the course of the crisis. Washington did not consider Lee's visit to have any official connotation and, therefore, did not see Beijing's protests toward the United States as valid. Additionally, none of the key policy-makers really expected the PLA to attack Taiwan directly. However, the challenge presented by PLA military exercises again raised the question of U.S. resolve to defend its allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world. Faced with such a challenge, the United States could not help but respond. This was especially true considering the fact that the crisis arose while the United States was in negotiations with Japan over the U.S.-Japan security alliance. Thus, "Washington used force not to defend its Taiwan policy, but to defend its strategic reputation by influencing perceptions of U.S. resolve."[216]

C. STRATEGY AND TACTICS

In response to the challenge represented by Taipei's campaign for recognition and the May 22 announcement, the PRC chose to employ a strategy that combined the use of military exercises and economic and diplomatic pressure to influence the choices of both Taiwan and the United States. The exercises were the most provocative actions China had taken against Taiwan in decades and the added leverage of the China-Taiwan economic interdependence indicated an even higher level of coercion. However, the strategy was also chosen to minimize the risk of escalation and to prevent, as much as possible, the legitimate intervention of the United States into cross-Strait affairs.

In particular, the PRC saw the military exercises as a "bloodless" display and therefore argued that they were a "peaceful" means of moving toward reunification. Under such a definition, Beijing believed that it could argue against U.S. intervention,

[215] Yu (p 17)
[216] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 88)

since the frequently stated policy of the United States was merely that reunification should not be attempted by force on the part of either party. The choice of tactics would hopefully enable the PRC to achieve its goals without embarrassing the United States or drawing unwanted attention to the Taiwan issue by other international parties.[217]

The PRC's initial action was the severing of certain diplomatic interactions, including the cancellation of a visit by Defense Minister Chi Haotian and other high-level exchanges. China also suspended the bilateral arms proliferation and human rights talks.[218] The initial actions seemed to indicate that Chinese anger was greater toward the United States than Taiwan, given the continuation of talks between ARATS and SEF, while diplomatic ties were drastically reduced between Washington and Beijing. However, subsequent actions would indicate that a stronger stance had been taken with regard to influencing Taipei.

The PRC began its coercive measures by probing U.S. intentions with the conduct of live-fire and missile tests in the waters adjacent to Taiwan. The first such exercises took place between July 21 and July 28, in a splash zone approximately 100 miles northeast of Taiwan. The lack of a definitive response from the United States encouraged PRC leaders to increase the stakes by exerting more coercive pressure directly on Taiwan.[219]

The next step was a demand for a "fourth communiqué" seeking clarification and a concrete statement of U.S. policy on Taiwan. Although it had initially refused in May, Beijing accepted the request for Under Secretary of State Tarnoff to visit China in August, after a month of informal negotiations between Secretary of State Christopher and Foreign Minister Qian in Brunei. However, the visit by Under Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Wiederman to Taipei indicated to the PRC that the United States was disregarding the Chinese position in the crisis. Therefore, Beijing hoped the communiqué would address the issue of future visits to the United States by officials of Taiwan. Beijing also demanded that the United States make an open statement that it did not support Taiwan's independence.[220]

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[217] Garver (p 121)
[218] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 94)
[219] Garver (p 74-76)
[220] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 97)

The PRC strategy was designed to show the United States that it never intended to invade Taiwan:

> In Beijing some people believed there was no reason for the United States to be uncertain of what China intended to do. Through its limited force deployments to the Strait region, China had signaled that it did not intend to actually attack Taiwan.[221]

As in 1958, the goal was to provide a show of force that would not provoke the United States. The PLA exercises were designed to show the capability and willingness to exact military consequences on Taiwan, not to display military superiority in the Taiwan Strait. Garver points out that the PLA did not employ its air superiority fighters or simulate large-scale air strikes of any kind.[222] Again, China relied on a minimal show of force combined with heated rhetoric and propaganda. The decision was made in July and August 1995 to shift focus almost entirely on Taiwan, while attempting to ease tensions with the United States.[223] When the United States responded with not one but two aircraft carriers, many in Beijing considered the move as further proof of U.S. intent to contain China.

Garver and others make good arguments that Beijing was genuinely surprised by Washington's strong military response to the crisis. Over the course of four decades, many Chinese officials had managed to convince themselves that the United States would simply not intervene in a cross-Strait conflict. There were many courses of logic that led to that conclusion. One school of thought—one that is raised prior to nearly every action by U.S. troops—indicated that the American public had no stomach for casualties and that the sudden loss of an asset like an aircraft carrier and crew would destroy U.S. resolve. Military and other leaders in Beijing focused on recent military actions by the United States as predictions of U.S. behavior. However, other experts have pointed out that operations like Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti could not be used as references because they did not reflect what U.S. policy-makers considered to be vital interests. The case of Taiwan was entirely different.[224]

Although it was ultimately considered unlikely, the PRC did raise the specter of nuclear confrontation during this crisis. The infamous calculation that the United States

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[221] Garver (p 104)
[222] Ibid. (p 107)
[223] Swaine (p 325)
[224] Garver (p 113-14)

would not trade Los Angeles for Taiwan was a subtle reference to China's ability to strike the U.S. West Coast with its nuclear missiles. Later references by a Politburo Standing committee member were not quite as sinister, but did indicate a risk of nuclear escalation should the United States overstep what China believed to be its boundaries in an internal affair.[225]

By the end of February 1996, Beijing reevaluated its policy. Officials were convinced that any intervention by the United States would be largely symbolic. Any action by Washington would be neither rapid nor decisive.[226] Based on that conclusion and on the perceived success of their strategy in influencing the Legislative Yuan elections, Beijing decided to move forward with its coercion strategy, aimed at influencing the March presidential elections on Taiwan. The response by the United States would catch Beijing by surprise, both with its speed and resolve, and would be viewed as a betrayal threatening to reverse almost thirty years of improvements in U.S.-China relations.

Toward Taiwan the PRC utilized a coercive diplomacy strategy that combined military and economic pressure. In some ways, it is evident that China wanted Taiwan to veer away from its perceived course toward independence, but there is also a possibility that Beijing hoped the military threat, combined with fear of economic instability, would lead to large-scale upheaval in Taiwan, giving the PRC a chance to move in and accomplish a quicker reunification. At the very least, the instability was designed to turn Taiwan's voters against those who advocated independence. In the end, the Taiwanese economy suffered more than Lee Teng-hui's election campaign.[227]

After the Lee's visit to the United States, his "inflammatory" speech, and the subsequent media campaign that lauded Taiwan's government for the achievement, Beijing retaliated by postponing the meeting in Beijing between ARATS and SEF officials scheduled for July 20, 1995. The details of the meeting had been worked out on May 28, six days after the announcement of the visa decision. Initially, the ARATS-SEF meeting was unaffected by the announcement, indicating a positive move and a continuation of the agreement that the two organizations were not intended as political

[225] Ibid. (p 129)
[226] Ibid. (p 117)
[227] Wu, Jaushieh Joseph. "Beijing's Action and Taipei's Reaction" Issues & Studies, Vol. 32, Issue 3. (March, 1996), 121-123. (p 121)

negotiation mechanisms. However, the Beijing meeting was postponed by ARATS on June 16. The organization maintained some open channels, which were used only for passing messages.[228]

Eventually, the PRC would make resumption of the ARATS-SEF talks conditional upon certain criteria related to its strategy in the crisis. Taiwan would be required to halt its efforts at joining the United Nations, "stop seeking dual recognition, and…stop sending its leaders on visits to countries that have diplomatic relations with the PRC."[229] More importantly, however, Beijing demanded that Taiwan cease its purchase of advanced weapon systems from the United States and other coutnries. Taipei refused these demands and the talks remained suspended indefinitely.

The initial PLA exercises were aimed at influencing the December Legislative Yuan elections. This strategy appeared to have some positive effects for Beijing. The KMT lost seven seats in the Yuan, maintaining a bare majority, while the DPP, which had been projecting a major victory, gained only five seats. The New Party increased its showing from seven to twenty-one seats in the Yuan. The losses by the KMT and the poor showing by the DPP were blamed squarely on the military threat and economic pressure coming from Beijing.[230] Under this framework, Beijing had reason to believe that its efforts were paying off. After all, the New Party advocated reunification and stood firmly against Lee's "pragmatic diplomacy" and the DPP's calls for immediate independence.[231] Given such positive results, policy-makers decided to move forward with the next round of exercises aimed at the presidential elections in March.[232]

For the United States, the initial strategy was to attempt to avoid the crisis altogether. Because the controversial visa decision was the result of domestic politics, rather than a purposeful statement of U.S. policy, State Department officials first attempted to head off a surprise for Beijing by indicating subtly that the State Department and the President may not be able to meet China's demands with regard to Lee's visa application. However, Foreign Minister Qian never received that message. The result was China's perception of a sudden reversal of U.S. position that looked even worse in

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228 Clough (p 35)
229 Ibid. (p 36)
230 Garver (p 95)
231 Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 101)
232 Clough (p 4)

the context of the changes resulting from the Taiwan Policy review in 1994—another example of miscommunication between the United States and China over the Taiwan issue.[233]

Unable to head off a crisis in the strait, U.S. officials initially relied on the long-standing U.S. policy, citing "security commitments to Taiwan under the TRA, but [refusing] to say what specific actions the United States would take should Beijing attack Taiwan."[234] Washington made no overt response to the missile exercises in July, waiting almost six months to announce the transit of the USS *Nimitz* through the strait in mid-December. Such a minimal reaction at such a late date gave Beijing the impression that its calculations about U.S. involvement were correct.

The United States responded to Chinese demands for a "fourth communiqué"—or at least an assurance that the United States would never again issue a visa to Taiwanese senior officials—by referring to human rights, economic, and arms proliferation issues of importance to U.S. policy.[235] This tack failed, however, and Clinton apparently made new concessions in a letter to Jiang Zemin, delivered via Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Foreign Minister Qian during a meeting in Brunei. The Chinese released the text of the letter, in which Clinton stated the United States' "respect" for the "One China" principle and that the United States "is against" Taiwan's independence. The use of these words was important, because until that time, the U.S. policy had stressed only "acknowledgement" of China's position and a commitment not to support Taiwan's independence. The new verbiage was stronger, indicating to China that the United States would actively oppose any bid for Taiwan independence. Of equal importance was the assertion that the United States does not support Taiwan's admission to the United Nations.[236]

Beijing was encouraged by these assurances despite the continual warnings that an attack on Taiwan would have "grave consequences", whether such and attack was intentional or the result of an accident during the exercises. The successes it achieved during the legislative Yuan elections further encouraged the PRC to move forward with

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[233] Garver (p 68-70)
[234] Chou (p 20)
[235] Garver (p 78)
[236] Ibid (p 79-80)

its plans to influence the presidential elections in March 1996. However, the U.S. response to these later moves was swift and unexpected.

As a show of force and a stronger warning to Beijing, the United States stationed the USS *Independence*, home ported in Yokosuka, Japan, about 160 miles off the northern coast of Taiwan to observe the Chinese missile and other exercises. To further show its support for the defense of Taiwan, President Clinton ordered the USS *Nimitz* east to join the *Independence*. The presence of two carrier battle groups was more than a symbolic gesture to Beijing.

> The U.S. dispatch of two carrier battle groups helped quell fear and apprehension [on Taiwan]. Beijing's strategy to target Taiwan's mass psychology was vulnerable to countermeasures designed to reassure citizens. The speed and forcefulness of U.S. action was crucial. Had actions been delayed by several weeks, or been less forceful, it might have been too late or too little.[237]

D. OUTCOMES

The effects of China's strategy on the March presidential elections were not as positive as they had been during the December elections. Lee Teng-hui was elected with a landslide 54 percent of the vote. Particularly striking was the fact that Peng Ming-ming, the DPP candidate drew 21 percent of the vote.[238] This result is telling, considering the fact that Peng was a strong advocate for the very policy that Beijing's coercion attempted to dissuade.

The majority of the evidence seems to indicate that the crisis did have a significant, short-term impact on the Taiwanese economy and there was a measure of fear and instability on the island. However, the legislative and especially the presidential elections were not influenced in the direction that the PRC intended and public opinion did not shift closer to reunification as it had hoped. Of equal importance is the assertion through Taiwanese polling data that, if given the opportunity, the people of Taiwan would support a second presidential visit to the United States.[239] In short, the coercive strategy did not achieve the desired results.

Contrary to the outcome indicated by vote counts and polling data, some perceptions in the PRC are very different. In Shao Weizhong and Zhang Shan's 1996

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[237] Garver (p 126)
[238] Yu (p 24)
[239] Ibid. (p 18-20)

book on the crisis, the outcome was described as a clear success for the PRC.[240] Although the influence of that book is unknown, it can be concluded that the outcome was positive enough to allow for such an analysis. Often the way a state perceives the success of its own strategy is just as important as an outside, objective view of the results. It is, therefore, possible to understand that Chinese policy-makers might convince themselves that the use of force in the Taiwan Strait resulted in a victory for the PRC and base their future decisions on that perception, rather than on the opinions of other observers.

As an ancillary outcome of the crisis, Lampton points out that the crisis led to an increased understanding in Beijing of the U.S. political process. Prior to President Clinton's decision to grant Lee a visa, Beijing had come to consider Congress to be of minimal importance in U.S. policy-making, serving only to draw attention to or to cover up the president's actions as necessary. The power of Congress in affecting the visa decision forced Beijing to recognize that the legislative branch in the United States can have influence over the executive.[241]

For the United States, the strategy seems to have been relatively effective. This is not surprising, given the fact that U.S. aims were somewhat limited. The main goal was to show that the United States is committed to its strategic partners in the Pacific and that U.S. leaders will not hesitate to protect its interests in the region. By maintaining diplomatic communication with Beijing during the crisis, both sides were able to make the majority of their intentions clear, despite the fact that the PRC was somewhat surprised by the level of U.S. commitment.

In sum, the evolution of Taiwan's pragmatic diplomacy and its effects on Taiwan's relations with the rest of the world and its perceptions of itself brought core interests of the United States and China into conflict in 1995. The crisis has increased the popularity of the "China threat" perception in U.S. policy-making circles.[242] Additionally, the U.S. response to the crisis clarified the U.S. position on the situation in the Taiwan Strait.

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[240] Garver (p 132)

[241] Lampton, David M. "China and Clinton's America: Have They Learned Anything?" Asian Survey, Vol. 37, Issue 12 (Dec., 1997), 1099-1118. (p 1106)

[242] Garver (p 5)

Since the crisis, the United States has, in fact, shifted away from a policy of open support for Taiwan's "pragmatic diplomacy." In January 1997, Lee Teng-hui was granted a transit visa during a stop-over in Honolulu (unlike his stop-over in May of 1994). However, he was told not to schedule any meetings with U.S. officials in Hawaii. Beijing has had little or no response to subsequent issuance of such visas, indicating that U.S. policy decisions in that regard have satisfied PRC officials.[243]

The precipitation of the crisis has been blamed by some on a failure of "strategic ambiguity" and the U.S. reaction viewed as evidence of Washington's "real" intent. However, it is also important to remember that the actions in the United States did not display a wide divergence from its long-standing policy. Washington chose what it considered to be the minimum effective response, in part because the United States did not wish to encourage Taiwan to push things too far.[244] Thus, U.S. policy during the 1995-96 Crisis represents only one possible response to a particular set of circumstances.

In the eyes of many in the Pacific, the U.S. has also shown that it is, in fact, committed to the defense of Taiwan from forceful unification.[245] More important than that, however, is the fact that China obtained public announcements from the Clinton administration that the United States does not support Taiwan's independence. That concession may be far more valuable to Beijing than any effect it may have had on Taiwan's election process or outcome. The implications of the crisis for U.S. commitment to the defense of Taiwan are, however, still open for interpretation.

Just as the PRC's actions cannot be viewed as evidence of its absolute commitment to achieve reunification at all costs, U.S. actions cannot be viewed as a definitive measure of U.S. commitment to Taiwan in all circumstances. In the end, both sides are still left with uncertainty. At the same time, because the strategy of both sides achieved a measure of success, one may conclude that the same or similar strategies, including the continuation of diplomatic communication with the United States, may be employed if (or when) a new crisis erupts in the Taiwan Strait.

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[243] Ross. "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation." (p 112-113)
[244] Garver (p 149-150)
[245] Yu (p 30)

Nathan concluded in 1996 that China's actions were part of a general shift away from "a policy of patience" to the application of coercion.[246] More recent evidence has shown that both the United States and China may have come to different conclusions in the period after the immediate crisis was over. Both sides seem more intent on making sure that another crisis does not develop. Both sides have been far less reactionary to statements from Taiwan's leadership similar to those made during the escalation of the crisis in late 1995 and early 1996. Nathan's assessment that "China no longer readily has the option to return to a policy of patience and positive incentives" and that Beijing "has burned its bridges" seems a bit hasty in light of the improving relations with the United States and the cooling of tensions in the Strait itself.[247]

[246] Nathan (p 89)
[247] Ibid. (p 90)

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The preceding case studies have provided a look at the three Taiwan Strait crises in the context of the historical events that led up to each of them. Within each case study, discussion focused on the background of the crisis, the goals of both the United States and China and the strategies used by both sides to attain those goals. Additionally, each case study concluded with a brief discussion of the outcome of each crisis. With this data in mind, we may return to Leng's ELR hypotheses and compare the chain of recurrent crises with the model's predictions.

Under the framework of Leng's hypotheses, the outcomes of this crisis and every other crisis, in fact, can be placed in the category of compromises. Under this category, it is often difficult to determine success or failure, since in one respect, the outcome is positive for both sides: the end result of the conflict was not war. Given the commitment of both China and the United States to avoiding war and the willingness in the end to negotiate some settlement, the solutions to all three crises were examples of compromise, placing them within the realm of Leng's third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 is repeated here for ease of reference:

> Hypothesis 3 (Compromise):
>
> a. If the outcome of the preceding crisis with state B resulted in a compromise that resolved the issue in contention without significant retreat form state A's publicly stated objectives, then A will repeat the same bargaining strategy in the next crisis with B.
>
> b. If the outcome of the preceding crisis with state B resulted in a compromise that caused state A to retreat significantly from its publicly stated objectives, then A will adopt a more coercive bargaining strategy in the next crisis with B.[248]

With this model in mind, we may return to the three crises and look at the interactive trends represented by each side's goals, strategies and outcomes.

[248] Leng. (p 384)

A. OF MEANS AND ENDS

In the 1954-55 crisis, the main U.S. goal was to prevent an invasion of Taiwan. In achieving that goal the Eisenhower administration adopted a strategy to provide a limited amount of assistance in the form of advisors to KMT troops, combined with diplomatic coercion in the form of threats to use force while remaining ambiguous about the conditions that would precipitate a U.S. counterattack. The outcome was somewhat mixed, but an overall success. The Eisenhower administration's early attempts at deterrence had failed, indicating a need for a higher level of coercion. However, the administration also realized that Mao probably did not intend to attack Taiwan. In the end, the administration counted its strategy as successful, because the United States had shown resolve in the face of Mao's attacks on the Offshore Islands while maintaining the status quo.

The PRC's primary goal, on the other hand, was not to attack Taiwan, but rather to deter the United States from forging closer ties with Chiang Kai-shek's regime. (Although he had a secondary objective of taking the Dachen Islands, Mao might have been deterred from that objective if the United States had shown sufficient resolve to defend them.) Beijing's strategy involved the use of controlled belligerence to raise tensions in the hope of achieving a favorable political outcome. The U.S. assessment was correct, in that Mao did not intend to attack Taiwan or the Penghu Islands, largely because the United States had clearly stated its intent to defend them. Mao's strategy focused on using violence directly against the KMT, while avoiding attacks on U.S. forces. The intent was to show the risk of war with China, should the United States form a security alliance with Taiwan.

In general, Mao's strategy failed to achieve the desired results. Although he managed to gain control of the Dachens, his attacks on the Quemoy and Matsu had no appreciable military success. Even worse, the strategy actually convinced the Eisenhower administration that a mutual security alliance with Taiwan was necessary to defend U.S. interests in the Pacific. Therefore, for the PRC, the compromise ended with China's failure to achieve the intended outcome—a retreat from Mao's desired policy objective.

By Leng's model, the outcome was a compromise in which the United States maintained its policy, while the PRC was forced to retreat from its objective. The next encounter between the United States and China should have resulted in the use of a similar strategy by the United States and a higher level of coercion on the part of the PRC. As we have seen, that is generally what happened.

The goal of the United States in the 1958 crisis was nearly identical to its goals three years prior. Although policy-makers had calculated that, once again, Mao probably did not intend to attack Taiwan, the vital interests of the United States in the Pacific were bound up in the need to demonstrate resolve whenever challenged. In order to achieve this goal, the United States resorted to its previous policy of providing assistance to the KMT while threatening Beijing of severe consequences should it attack Taiwan. However, the amount of assistance provided to Chiang's forces might be said to show an increased level of coercion in the bargaining process.

Although Leng's hypothesis would indicate that Eisenhower's bargaining strategy should remain the same, the increase of coercion can be understood and does not deviate significantly from the ELR model. The Eisenhower administration saw the attack as an example of the failure of deterrence during previous crises and concluded that greater measures were required to ensure that the PRC understood the level of commitment U.S. policy placed on the defense of Taiwan.

Also, it is important to remember that Beijing's measures against Quemoy in 1958 were more severe than they had been in 1954-55. Thus, any increase in the coerciveness of U.S. actions was a response deemed required by the level of force employed by the PLA. Regardless of the fact that the 1954-55 crisis resulted in a positive outcome for the United States, the eruption of a second crisis demanded an escalation. Thus, the administration raised the stakes with more direct involvement in the form of convoys and more advisors. Additionally, the threat of force was increased by increased references to the use of nuclear weapons and the placement of 8-inch guns on Quemoy.

The outcome for the United States was, predictably, similar to that of the 1954-55 crisis. Unwilling to escalate to war, the administration took the first opportunity to negotiate the crisis to its benefit. The reduction of troops on Quemoy allowed for decreased tensions across the strait while preserving the status quo, which was always the

main objective for the United States in these crises. In the end, the U.S. policy of defending Taiwan was maintained, indicating a successful compromise from the crisis.

As they were for the United States, the PRC's goals in 1958 were very similar to those in 1954. Beijing's failure in the previous crisis to prevent the U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Security Alliance required that Mao increase the danger to demonstrate China's displeasure at U.S. involvement in Taiwan. The primary objective of the bombing of Quemoy, then, was to deter the United States from strengthening its ties to Chiang Kai-shek.

Toward the United States, Mao chose a strategy to escalate the danger, as well. The severity of the bombardment of Quemoy was certainly more coercive than the strategy employed in the 1954-55 crisis. However, to add an element of even greater danger, Mao attempted to raise the specter of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. In the end, Khrushchev was unwilling to commit Soviet military power in the crisis, adding to the widening gap between Beijing and Moscow. Additionally, the Eisenhower administration never took such a threat seriously, but it did counter with its only nuclear deterrence approach.

Initially, the outcome of the 1958 crisis appeared to be a failure for the PRC. Militarily, Mao had failed to convince Chiang to remove all of his troops from Quemoy and Matsu. Additionally, the crisis had apparently increased the cooperation between the United States and Taiwan in thwarting the artillery blockade. However, despite the initial appearance of failure, the crisis, and especially Chiang's behavior during the crisis, had caused the United States to withdraw its support for a counterattack by the KMT. The crisis of 1962, in which Washington refused to back Chiang's gambit and forced him to retreat from a counterattack plan, indicated to Beijing that its strategy in 1958 actually did have some positive effects. As Garver puts it, "In politics, self-perception is often as important as the view of others."[249] Thus, China's perception of success in 1958 is more important than the fact that the United States succeeded in maintaining the status quo.

Thus, returning to the ELR model, the crisis of 1958 resulted in a "Hypothesis 3a" compromise for both sides. Both the United States and China eventually came to consider the outcome of the crisis as being beneficial. Leng's model predicts that, should

[249] Garver (p 44)

a third crisis erupt, the strategies employed by both sides would be similar to those employed in 1958. However, almost forty years would pass before such a crisis developed in which to test the model. Remarkably, even across eight presidential administrations and four changes of PRC leadership, this model seems to hold some validity.

In 1995 and 1996, the United States again returned to its goals of maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. Simultaneously, the U.S. response was intended to display resolve to both its allies and opponents in the Pacific. The negotiations for the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance, in particular, required that the United States demonstrate its willingness to defend its strategic partners and to live up to its stated commitments.

Initially, the United States attempted to use a minimal level of coercion by making statements indicating U.S. concern over the situation. When words alone failed to achieve a desired result, Washington backed them up with the passage of the USS *Nimitz* through the Taiwan Strait. However, the message intended by the *Nimitz* seems to have been too subtle and easily ignored, in addition to the fact that it was delivered far too late to have a significant impact. Thus, the application of greater levels of coercion became necessary later in the crisis. Policy-makers achieved this by deploying two carrier battle groups in the area, demonstrating a level of resolve that surprised leaders in Beijing.

Overall, the United States succeeded in achieving its objectives. The status quo was never actually challenged, but perceptions of U.S. resolve in the Pacific were raised significantly. During the years leading up to 1996, Beijing had come to believe that the United States would not become involved in a cross-Strait crisis, and was willing to take greater risks in influencing Taiwan policy. U.S. behavior in the crisis taught China's leaders that there was still risk involved in threatening force against Taipei.

For China, the goals in 1995 and 1996 were limited, as well. To a certain extent, China's actions during the crisis were aimed at Washington. As had been the case in the previous two crises, China wished to prevent the United States from forming stronger ties to Taiwan that might prevent reunification or encourage a declaration of independence. However, for Beijing, the primary intent was to dissuade Taiwan from continuing its policy of "pragmatic diplomacy" and from seeking greater diplomatic recognition from

the international community. This simultaneous pursuit of two goals has had a significant impact on the assessment of outcomes.

In order to achieve its goals, China attempted to utilize military and economic coercion against Taiwan, which demonstrated danger to Washington, as well. The use of belligerence was in keeping with strategies that had worked in the past. The military threat was necessary because Beijing calculated that Taipei had come to discount the threat of force from the mainland. Additionally, the interdependence that had developed between Taiwan and the mainland became a source of leverage in the crisis and enabled China to minimize the amount of military power it applied. Overall, the level of coercion the PRC used against Taiwan in 1995 and 1996 was equal to, if not greater than, that used in 1958, even though there was never any actual bloodshed.

The outcomes of this strategy were two-fold. Against the United States, China can claim a level of victory. The compromise that resulted from the crisis included a public statement of U.S. policy against Taiwan independence and against Taiwan's membership in the UN. This was not a reversal for the United States, however—merely a public statement of the policies that had been quietly followed for thirty years. On this count, the crisis ended in a compromise satisfactory to both sides.

Against Taiwan, China's strategy cannot be said to have achieved the desired results. The 1995 and 1996 elections were affected mainly in their processes, rather than in their results. The Legislative Yuan elections were more greatly affected, with the increasing level of support shown for the New Party and the relatively poor showing for the DPP. However, the presidential elections were widely viewed by Taiwanese as a referendum for the leadership of Lee Teng-hui. The polls taken after the crisis indicate that, if anything, China's coercion solidified the resolve of Taiwanese not to be intimidated again. Thus, the negotiated ending of the crisis cannot be considered a victory for Beijing with regard to Taipei's policies.

Table 1: Goals, Strategies and Outcomes in the Three Taiwan Strait Crises

Crisis	Goals (U.S.)	Goals (PRC)	Strategy (U.S.)	Strategy (PRC)	Outcome (U.S.)/ ELR Hypothesis	Outcome (PRC)/ ELR Hypothesis
1954-55	Deter invasion of Taiwan; Maintain Status quo	Deter U.S.-Taiwan Security Alliance; (Take Dachens)	Limited support for KMT forces, threat of force	Bombardment, preparations for assault; verbal threats: (Invasion of Dachens)	Success/**3a**	Failure/**3b** **(**Despite .success in taking Dachens)
1958	Deter invasion of Taiwan; Maintain Status quo	Deter upgrade of U.S.-Taiwan relations	**More coercion**: Higher-level of support, nuclear threat	**More coercion**: Bombardment; Attempt at Soviet involvement	Success/**3a**	Initial Failure, but eventual success/**3a**
1995-96	Show resolve; Deter invasion of Taiwan	Deter Taiwan independence movement; Deter upgrade of U.S.-Taiwan relations	**Same or Less Coercion**: Warnings, Show of force (2 carriers)	**Vs Taiwan: Same or More Coercion**: Direct threat to the island and economic impact. **Vs U.S.: Same or Less Coercion**: Minimal threat to U.S.	Success/**3a**	Mixed Outcome (Failure against Taiwan, Success against U.S.)/**3a & 3b**

B. WHERE WAS THE LEARNING?

It is relatively easy to discern the reasons for the similarity of strategies and tactics used between the 1954-55 and the 1958 crises. The proximity in time of the two crises and the fact that the leaders involved in them were the same naturally lends itself to a kind of cognitive consistency. Even so, there is ample scholarship that points to the fact that the lessons of previous crises were applied in forming approaches on both sides.

For example, Bobrow's 1964 article, "Peking's Military Calculus," attempted to derive Beijing's foreign policy objectives at the time and the logic through which they were developed. Bobrow concluded that "the Chinese elite naturally tends to judge present military policy alternatives in the light of previous success and failure."[250] Similarly, as early as 1958, analysts in the United States were pointing out that the decisions made in the second crisis were merely reiterations and modifications of the decisions made in the 1954-55 crisis.[251] The interaction between policy and behavior and the lessons of past conflicts becomes much more difficult to discern when approaching the 1995-96 crisis.

Given the history of conflict and the later rapprochement and engagement policies between the United States and China during the forty years between the 1958 and 1995-96 crises, one would expect a certain level of learning to have taken place. An optimistic

[250] Bobrow, David S. "Peking's Military Calculus." World Politics, Vol. 16, Issue 2 (Jan., 1964), 287-301. (p 299)

[251] McClelland. (p 203)

view would have indicated that in the light of such improved relations, the threat of a confrontation between the United States and China would have been greatly reduced. If not that, at least one would have expected the states to adopt different strategies toward one another. However, despite all of the programs, cultural exchanges, bilateral agreements, and summitry that had been conducted between the two states in late 1995 and early 1996, the United States and the PRC once again found themselves in a stand-off over the Taiwan issue. The important question, then, is why.

The central answer lies in the fact that the majority of U.S. and PRC policies between 1971 and 1995 had specifically avoided the Taiwan issue. Both sides saw it in their strategic and economic interests to move the question of Taiwan's status out of the center of negotiations and find common themes on which some agreement could be reached. However, while this cooperation made advances in the political arena possible, sidestepping the Taiwan question allowed both states to leave their policies largely intact. Additionally, the lack of confrontation over the issue allowed each side to form misperceptions about the intentions and views of the other. Just as China developed the perception that the United States would no longer intervene in what it had always considered an internal affair, the United States had grown comfortable with the idea that China would not actually use force against Taiwan. In reality, neither side had made any real changes or modification with regard to policy or intent.

China's strategy of "active defense," which employs the use of short-term, controlled belligerence, is intended to prevent war by convincing an enemy of China's willingness to use force. The PRC has continued to use this strategy, particularly against the U.S. throughout its history, despite the fact that the strategy has failed to result in the desired outcome on more than one occasion. One reason for this consistency may be that, although the "active defense" policy does not always achieve all of the desired results, it has never failed so miserably that policy-makers have been forced to come up with new strategies.

Under the influence of *realpolitik* the perception is that any failure would be the result of showing insufficient resolve, leading to increased use of force in subsequent encounters. Andrew Scobell has argued that, in light of its long-standing strategy, China has actually maintained a level of consistency in its use of force. This contradicts the

assumption that China has become more aggressive in the last decade and instead considers the perception to be the result of the PLA's increased capabilities.[252] However, it also indicates that one cannot assume that engagement policies or other confidence-building measures will have a significant amount of influence where vital national interests are concerned.

It is tempting to assume that the interaction of states after a crisis has a profound impact on the way states handle subsequent crises. After all, "one may regard the further development of skills in the handling and demobilization of acute crises as an important means of strengthening prospects for peace."[253] However, this study has shown that such assumptions may not be valid. Unless a state's policy and behavior change so radically after a crisis or the interaction is so intense that a one-time adversary perceives a complete shift in a state's objectives and their value, the strategies and outcomes of the previous crisis are likely to guide the behavior of both sides in whatever crises develop, no matter how far in the future that may be.

It is possible that the reason for such rigid behavior in recurrent crises lies within the combination of policy objectives, with regard to both the specific issues of the crisis and to the country in general. Given the massive amounts of information available and the inherent intensity of a crisis, crisis decision-making frequently follows the concept of "bounded rationality" by which a decision-maker chooses the best possible option out of all available options he is able to perceive. It is more likely that the most recent crisis with the same country over the same issue serves as a more stringent filter than does culture.

After all, when a crisis erupts, is it not likely that a leader's first action is to ask, "What is our policy on this issue?" If that policy has been shaped by previous crises and has not undergone significant changes in the intervening period, then the appropriate actions will likely be determined by (and may closely resemble) the ones that were applied to resolve the previous crisis. Adding the *realpolitik* rationale of deterrence to the equation yields the principle that previous failures were caused by the inability to

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[252] Scobell, Andrew. "The Chinese Cult of Defense." Issues & Studies, Vol. 37, Issue 5 (Sept./Oct., 2001), 100-127.

[253] McClelland (p 201)

convince the adversary of one's resolve, thus increasing the required level of coercion used in the bargaining strategy.

Deterrence and other strategic policy decisions are often made based on a calculation of the minimum force required to thwart maximum actions by the enemy. In developing such a min-max behavioral pattern, policy-makers assume that the enemy's reaction to the deterrence will be minimal. For example, a leader may decide that a show of force is necessary to deter an enemy from attacking an objective (expected maximum action) and will select a minimal force that he thinks will accomplish the task. In doing so, he assumes that his adversary will respond by backing down (minimum action). On the contrary, the adversary often responds by conducting an all-out assault (a greater escalation that the deterrer did not expect).

All too often, we find leaders surprised that the adversary responds as vociferously as he does. It is truly amazing that leaders can assume his adversary's initial actions would be maximal, but simultaneously conclude that reactions to the deterrent policy would be minimal. Theorists have explained this behavior with the assertion that in a deterrence relationship, the deterrer assumes that the deterred is aware of his intent. However, as the preceding case studies and numerous other historical examples have shown, actors in an adversarial relationship are rarely aware of intentions, even when both sides try to make their intentions clear. Despite the fact that leaders realize they may not have full knowledge of their opponents' intentions, they tend to assume they understand the rules of the game. More importantly, "when national leaders find themselves embroiled in interstate crises where vital interests are at stake, the similarities in their behavior are more striking than the differences, and these similarities are a reflection of a *realpolitik* tradition that stresses the importance of demonstrating resolve."[254]

[254] Leng (p 383)

C. LOOKING AHEAD

What, then, are the prospects for U.S.-China relations? The preceding analysis does not present an extremely optimistic outlook. In sum, the improvement of relations since 1996 cannot rule out the possibility of another crisis in the Taiwan Strait. Most important in this calculation is the one lesson that both sides learned from the crisis: Taiwan is now a free actor. Unlike the crises of 1954-55 and 1958, the Taiwanese government of 1995 was subject to democratic political forces. Unlike the authoritarian regimes of the past, Taiwan's leaders can no longer make deals and conduct negotiations that disregard the will of the people. It was precisely this kind of problem that Beijing had hoped to avoid. But the problem exists for both China and the United States.

In the years since 1996 both the United States and the PRC seem to be showing some signs of learning from the 1995-96 crisis. The election of Chen Shui-bian as president of Taiwan in March 2000 marked a powerful turning point in Taiwan's political history. As a member of the DPP and the first non-KMT candidate to win election, Chen's victory indicated a change in the political climate and democratic aspirations for the people of Taiwan. Since his election, Chen has made statements very similar to those made by Lee Teng-hui that precipitated the 1995-96 crisis. Those comments have been met with protests from Beijing, but have not received menacing responses equal to those issued in March 1996.

Similarly, the United States has continued to assert its position that it does not support Taiwan's independence and has tried to indicate that the United States will not defend Taiwan should it, by its own actions, precipitate another crisis in the Strait. This position is, of course, debated on all sides. The problem in determining the most likely course for the United States lies in weighing the vital interests of the United States in the Pacific. The United States has both economic and strategic interests in the region, and the relative strength of those interests is frequently the focus of discussion. However, the ELR model and the findings of this paper indicate that, should a new crisis erupt in the Strait, these interests will find a secondary or tertiary position, with the need to display resolve rising to the surface as the primary interest of the United States.

It is reasonable to assume that both the PRC and the United States have come to recognize the danger inherent in another Taiwan Strait crisis. Both sides appear to be

working to minimize the possibility of such a crisis actually developing. For its part, as has been stated, the United States has worked to emphasize the need for negotiation toward a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan question by both Beijing and Taipei, with a focus on minimizing U.S. involvement in the process. This policy has been carried out and enforced despite the occasional movement by political leaders toward strengthening Taiwan's defenses or taking a stronger stand on either side of the issue. In general, stability in the region is still far more important to U.S. global strategy.

Beijing is also seeking to minimize the danger of inadvertent escalation in the Taiwan Strait. Scholars like Xia Liping[255], Ding Xinghao, and Yang Jiemian[256] are looking at U.S.-China relations and seeking effective crisis management mechanisms to mitigate the possible dangers associated with developing crises. By developing a better understanding of how U.S. policy-makers respond and make decisions in a crisis, these scholars hope to develop a means to eliminate the miscommunications and misinterpretations that lead to unwanted surprises should a crisis develop.

The mid-air collision in 2001 between U.S. and PLA aircraft is often cited as an example of how U.S.-China relations have learned from crises in the years since 1996. However, it is important that the so-called EP-3 crisis did not bring into question the fundamental interests of the United States or China. Although both sides had interests in resolving the crisis to their advantage—in keeping with the Chinese perception of a "crisis" as both "danger" and "opportunity"—the Taiwan question was not an aspect of negotiations and, therefore, Chinese territorial integrity and U.S. resolve were not seriously questioned during the crisis. Although the handling of the crisis indicates some positive movement toward effective negotiation mechanisms and channels for diplomacy, the crisis itself cannot be applied directly to predictions about how either side would handle a fourth Taiwan Strait crisis.

Ultimately, the development and maintenance of such lines of communication are extremely important for both sides. One of the key elements contributing to the risk of war in the crises of 1954-55 and 1958 was the lack of effective means of direct

[255] Xia Liping, "Theory and Practice of Crisis Management in the United States—Sino-US Relations as Example." Beijing Meiguo Yanjiu in Chinese. June 5,2003. FBIS-CHI CPP20030715000184.

[256] Chen Maosheng. "Tenacity and Fragility Coexist in Sino-US Relations – Scholars Comment on Bush's Visit to China and Sino-US Cooperation." Hong Kong Ta Kung Pao in Chinese. February 24, 2002. FBIS-CHI CPP20020225000027.

communication between Washington and Beijing. Even in 1995, the subtle use of military force failed in indicating to China the willingness of the United States to defend what it perceived as its interests in the Pacific.

It is reasonable to assume that Taiwan's status as a free actor in the international political system will not change in the next several years or even decades. Given the fact that the people of Taiwan now have the ability to choose their leadership and thus have considerable say in the policies of their government, one cannot assume that future actions on the part of Taipei will not precipitate another cross-Strait crisis. Should such an event occur, it is imperative to both U.S. and PRC interests that effective lines of communication be established and that they remain open as the crisis evolves. Although the value of concepts like strategic ambiguity in deterring a crisis can be debated, history has shown that policy-makers cannot rely on ambiguity once a crisis actually erupts. Only by maintaining the ability to clearly and directly state intentions to the people who make and enforce policy decisions can the risk of escalation be mitigated.

Concepts like strategic culture and other social approaches to the formation of policy decisions are helpful in understanding how states prioritize their interests and what strategies they are likely to use in achieving them. However, even by developing a sense of understanding between two sides, one cannot rule out the possibility of miscommunication and misperception. More importantly, understanding the vital interests of another state may not be useful in a crisis if that state's vital interest is in direct conflict with one's own. Under those conditions, it can be seen that *realpolitik* is a powerful influence on decision-making. Since the United States and China are not likely reach a consensus on the particulars of the Taiwan question due to individual perceptions of vital national interest, it is on the ability to maintain lines of communication during a crisis of any kind that U.S.-China relations are now and should continue to be focused.

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