

DEFENDING TAIWAN, AND WHY IT MATTERS

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The unresolved political status of Taiwan has over the past decade assumed a renewed urgency, to the extent that conflict across the Taiwan Strait has overtaken that on the Korean Peninsula as the most likely war scenario in East Asia. The Taiwanese democratization process combined with regime weakness and a process of domestic change within China itself to create the conditions for the deterioration of cross-strait relations that led to Beijing's 1995–96 series of military exercises, culminating in the temporary, de facto blockade of Taiwan's two major ports as a result of China's ballistic missile tests in March 1996. Since that time cross-strait tensions have hardly abated, with the election in 2000 of the (at one time) openly pro-independence presidential candidate of the Democratic Progressive Party, Chen Shui-bian. Underlying the pedantry over definitions of "one China" and other impediments to meaningful dialogue between Beijing and Taipei, however, is a more serious problem. The problem, simply stated, is that the future political status of Taiwan itself is growing in significance as a vital national interest for other states in the context of the expansion of China's power and influence throughout maritime East Asia.

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The status of Taiwan has also been the primary irritant affecting Sino-U.S. relations, a point placed in stark relief by the 1996 missile crisis, when the United States deployed two carrier battle groups near the island, and by incessant warnings from Beijing over foreign interference in China's "domestic affairs" ever since. More recently, the 1 April 2001 EP-3 surveillance plane incident prompted repeated Chinese demands for the cessation of U.S. surveillance flights near Chinese territory.¹

The United States has had to balance its relations with China both to avoid actual hostilities on one hand, and to satisfy popular domestic opinion and uphold its obligation to assist Taiwan to defend itself from Chinese aggression, as set out in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, on the other.² In addition to these immediate concerns are a range of factors that further complicate American policy on Taiwan. These include the positions and security interests of America's key regional allies; the responsibility necessarily shouldered by the world's sole superpower to uphold liberal values in the international system; and the uncomfortable possibility that Taiwan's continued geopolitical separation from the Chinese mainland now represents a vital strategic value for U.S. (and allied) interests in the western Pacific.

Taiwanese democratization and the missile crisis have been well documented.³ This article will assess instead the potential geopolitical significance of the island of Taiwan in the new East Asian security environment. Initially, this article will address briefly the question of how Taiwan is important, and might become more so, in wider political, economic, and ethical perspectives, before providing a detailed examination of the island's potential strategic significance in the context of the interests of the three major players in East Asian security—China, Japan, and the United States. Finding that there are genuinely irreconcilable interests at play in maritime East Asia, the article will suggest that Taiwan is becoming an increasingly urgent problem for regional security, not due simply to the potential for near-term armed conflict across the Taiwan Strait but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, to the rather more perplexing (for diplomats and strategists alike) consideration that over the longer term Taiwan will hold ever greater geostrategic value in the unfolding competition over political, economic, strategic, and even moral leadership in East Asia between China and a loose American maritime coalition. This article will also address some of the operational considerations involved in deterring China and defending Taiwan, including potential shortcomings of U.S. strategy and military posture in the region.

WHY TAIWAN MAY MATTER

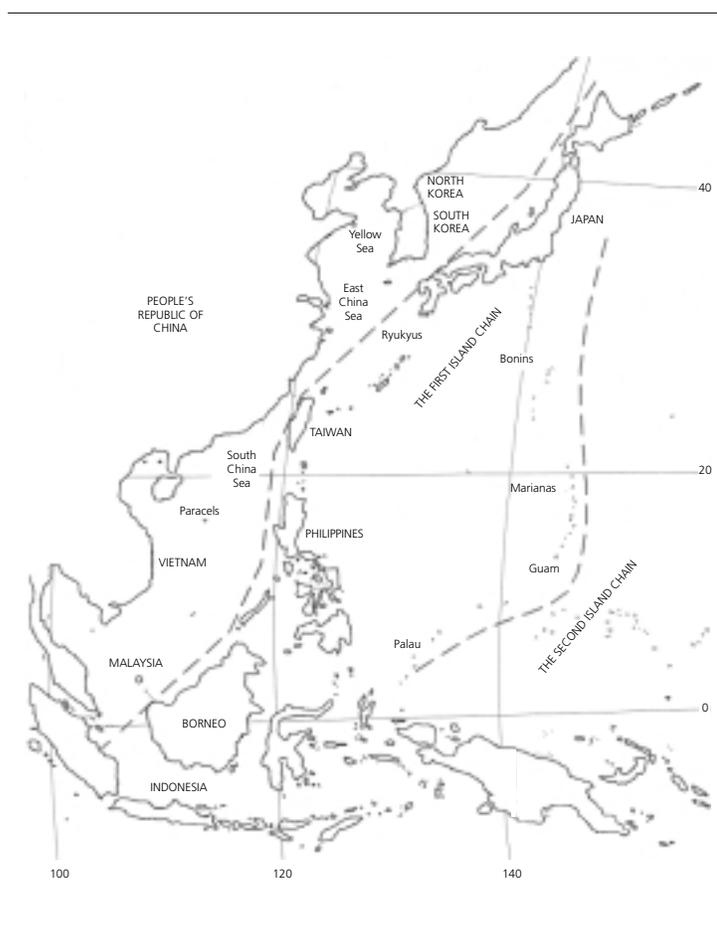
Taiwan's democratization process has produced the world's only Chinese democracy. The legitimacy of Taiwan's bid for international recognition as a sovereign entity was considerably boosted in the eyes of Western popular opinion by its rapid democratization under the presidency of Lee Teng-hui, and democratization has increased the domestic political incentives in many democratic countries (especially in the United States) to protect Taiwan should another crisis erupt across the Taiwan Strait. Although Taiwanese public opinion remains divided over the details of the island's relationship with China—a

fact well understood by President Chen—it is unlikely that the Taiwanese would ever accept unification on China’s terms.⁴ Thus, Taiwan’s successful democratization arguably creates an ethical responsibility for the United States (and to a lesser extent other liberal states) to protect that democracy and its vibrant market economy, a responsibility based less on idealistic grounds than on “enlightened self-interest” in maintaining the U.S.-dominated liberal international political order.⁵ The ethical consideration becomes yet more pronounced if one considers the tenuousness of China’s sovereignty claim. Taiwan’s history is a complex one, in which inhabitants of the island were often ruled by outside powers, yet Taiwan has never been successfully integrated, politically, with mainland China.⁶

Taiwan is also significant for economic and social reasons. Whilst the importance of the China trade for many states has been often overstated—mostly in everlasting anticipation of future profits and markets—China’s major trading partners in fact typically do almost as much business, or even more, by value, with Taiwan.⁷ Moreover, the Taiwanese port of Kaohsiung is one of a small number of regional hub ports that increasingly dominate sea-

borne trade in Asia.⁸ Finally, the Taiwanese people are well educated, with very strong social as well as commercial links to the outside world.

A third reason why Taiwan might be considered important is the political symbolism involved in the Taiwan question. Aside from ethical concerns, a failure by the United States to support Taiwan in a crisis situation with China would symbolize willingness to defer to China in regional matters, amounting to a reordering of great-power influence in East Asia. More importantly in the immediate term, such a failure would demonstrate to Japan, South Korea, and Australia



that Washington is an unreliable ally, and to the Southeast Asians that it is an unreliable protector-stabilizer in the western Pacific. The problem would be most acute for Japan, but even the Koreans, who follow a generally pro-Beijing line over Taiwan, would most likely view American reluctance in a Taiwan Strait conflict as demonstrating U.S. unreliability as a protector. Moreover, the reputation of the United States would suffer the world over, which in turn would adversely affect the working of so-called general deterrence in other conflict-prone regions.⁹

Finally, and most importantly, Taiwan matters strategically. A war over Taiwan would affect all states in the region and many beyond. Even in the absence of conflict, however, Taiwan is taking on increased relevance to the shape of the emerging post-Cold War era. All states that rely upon either Asian sea-lanes or continued U.S. presence in support of strategic order (thus avoiding Chinese regional hegemony) have important interests at stake in the future of Taiwan, even if some do not admit it. This is not an argument that Taiwan represents some magic strategic key to control East Asia. But a change in its geopolitical status, even a peaceful one, in favour of the mainland may be enough to alter the region's correlation of forces, thereby damaging the regional stability underwritten by the United States.

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT: CHINA'S MARITIME EXPANSION

China's push into regional seas provides the strategic context for the increased profile of Taiwan in East Asia. This maritime expansion is taking economic, territorial, and strategic forms. Economically, the coastal cities and provinces dominate the new Chinese economy, providing windows to international markets. There has been a heavy emphasis upon the role of marine industries for continued economic growth; these industries already employ over four million people. According to its marine policy white paper of May 1998, China must "take exploitation and protection of the ocean as a long-term strategic task before it can achieve the sustainable development of its national economy."¹⁰ Amongst the most important of those industries are shipping, shipbuilding, fishing, and offshore oil and gas exploration and exploitation.

Offshore oil production alone was forecast by Western sources to account for 7 percent of the national total in 2000, up from only 0.9 percent in 1990.¹¹ The value of marine industry production has increased 20 percent per annum since 1990, according to a Chinese report, accounting for 4 percent of gross domestic product in both 1996 and 1997, with a targeted increase to 5 percent of GDP sought for 2000 (for which results are not yet available). Beijing aims to double that figure over the next decade, so that marine industry production will account for 10 percent of GDP by 2010, an ambitious goal that will require the

annual growth rate of China's marine economy to continue to exceed the expected high growth rate of GDP.¹²

To fulfil such ambitious production goals, China has placed considerable importance on utilizing the resources of the South China Sea, especially potential oil and gas reserves, thus linking those resources to national economic development.¹³ Oil is a strategic resource of which China has been a net importer since 1993, increasing both the salience of China's territorial claims in the South and East China Seas and the importance of the sea lines of communication that connect the Chinese economy to the oilfields of the Persian Gulf. Disputes over territorial features in the South China Sea, including Chinese occupation of the Paracel Islands and some features (some mere rocky outcrops, not always visible above water) of the Spratly Islands, fuel concerns over China's intentions and ability to project influence throughout Southeast Asia, whilst the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands dispute continues to sour Sino-Japanese relations. Protection of its economic interests and pursuit of its contested territorial claims have nevertheless provided China with rationales for a concerted expansion of its maritime strategic force structure.

Within the overall context of Chinese military modernization, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has received a relative boost in emphasis compared to the historical norm, although the nuclear deterrent, rocket, and air forces still take precedence over naval capabilities.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the new interest in the maritime environment is giving rise to potentially profound changes to Chinese strategic perceptions, with concomitant effects on military strategy, doctrine, and weapon procurement. Those leading the charge into the maritime environment have explicitly promoted, both rhetorically and in practice, the need for imparting "maritime sense" to the Chinese people, thus linking the restoration of China's "honor" and place in the world (that is, Chinese nationalism and, implicitly, irredentism) and its strategic ambitions to the growth of the marine economy and naval expansion.¹⁵

The enhanced relevance of maritime factors for China's national security led during the 1980s, under the patronage of Admiral Liu Huaqing, to the transformation of the existing strategy of "offshore active defense." Originally referring only to the defense of coastal waters, it now envisages an extended defence-in-depth encompassing the entire ocean space within the "first island chain"—running from the Kuriles through Japan, the Ryukyus, Taiwan, and the Philippines to the Indonesian archipelago (thus including the entire expanse of the South and East China Seas). Liu has also used "offshore" to indicate all waters within the "second island chain" (stretching from the Bonins through the Marianas and Guam to the Palau island group).¹⁶ The adoption of an extended area bias for national defence is linked to the evolution of the defence doctrine of

“people’s war under modern conditions” during the Deng era—a doctrine that even in the late 1970s envisaged a major expansion of China’s maritime capabilities, producing by the late 1980s substantial (if not by the standards of oceangoing navies) improvements in China’s naval force structure.¹⁷ The further evolution of post-Deng military doctrine to “modern war under high-tech conditions” places even greater emphasis upon defensive depth. Contemporary doctrine requires the projection of power for offensive operations at ever greater distances from the mainland in order to defend not only the Chinese coast but also its maritime territorial claims and interests.¹⁸ Further, it recognizes that external strategic threats to China’s national interests will almost certainly emanate from across the sea. These factors have only become more prominent in Chinese thinking as the Taiwan issue has assumed greater intensity over the last decade.

If improvements to the Chinese navy have been significant relative to its capabilities less than a decade ago, they have been limited by resource constraints and the large technological hurdles presented by the military standards of potential adversaries. New locally designed and built platforms like the Luhai-class guided missile destroyers (DDGs) and Song-class conventional submarines (SSKs) are being placed in service at a very slow pace. These vessels will probably provide the backbone of the future naval force structure, but they are already outdated compared to Western systems; surface combatants lack such basic capabilities as modern air defense weaponry, for example.¹⁹ To make up the shortfall in capabilities China has imported limited numbers of Russian units, most notably four Kilo-class SSKs and two *Sovremenny*-class DDGs (with another two secondhand ships likely to follow) armed with lethal SS-N-22 Sunburn (Moskit) antiship cruise missiles.²⁰ The Chinese air force has also received Su-27 Flanker combat aircraft from Russia and is currently introducing advanced multirole Su-30MKK (Flanker ground-attack variant) fighters into service, as well as air-to-air refuelling aircraft and, prospectively, A50E airborne early warning aircraft.²¹ Question marks remain, however, over the competence and training of aircrews; the ability to control and support offensive operations;²² and the ability to integrate naval and air force assets and doctrine in joint maritime operations.²³

The much-debated and elusive aircraft carrier has yet to appear, although there is some evidence that construction of the first of a new class of indigenous carriers may soon begin.²⁴ Even so, it will take many years, if not decades, for China to master first the technical and technological prerequisites to designing, constructing, and maintaining such complex and costly platforms, and then the art of operating them, and finally the technique of employing carriers as instruments of military strategy.²⁵ China has purchased several old carriers for

scrapping, including HMAS *Melbourne*; three Russian *Kiev*-class carriers—*Kiev*, *Minsk*, and *Novorossiysk* (the latter two via South Korea); and the unfinished *Varyag* from Ukraine.²⁶ These should provide ample opportunities to study and copy design elements. Logically enough, Beijing seems to favour the Russian template for carrier design and employment, which reflects Chinese interest in the Soviet strategy of sea denial against enemy (U.S.) fleets at considerable distances from territorial waters.²⁷ According to one analysis, a Chinese carrier would likely take the form of a type of heavy through-deck guided missile cruiser in the Russian tradition, incorporating a ski jump and carrying approximately twenty-four combat aircraft.²⁸

Much of the naval and air force expansion during the late 1980s to the early 1990s can be linked to the growth of China's maritime interests and to its territorial disputes in the South China Sea.²⁹ However, since the mid-1990s the immediate driving force behind force structure improvements has been without doubt the Taiwan issue—although, as has often been noted, enhanced capabilities developed initially to bring Taiwan into line will also provide the basis for projecting power into the South China Sea and for contesting sea control within at least the first island chain, if and when that ambition is operationalized. However, perhaps more significant than conventional force improvements has been, in the words of one Pentagon China expert, the strategically calculated development of other, less traditional capabilities and doctrines,

designed to enable targeting of adversarial strategic and operational centers of gravity, and defend its own, in order to pursue limited political objectives with an asymmetrical economy of force. In other words, the [People's Liberation Army], as part of its long-range regional security strategy, is attempting to develop an ability to target an enemy's forward-based command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) nodes, airbases, aircraft carriers and sea-based C2 [command and control] platforms, as well as critical nodes in space.³⁰

The capabilities being developed include ballistic and cruise missiles (both antiship and land attack); information warfare (including land, sea, air, and space-based acquisition capabilities, information attack and countermeasures, and information protection/denial); and integrated air defence (including offensive operational capabilities) and counterspace systems.³¹

Quite clearly, those “limited political objectives” are increasingly Taiwan-centered; the Chinese navy's development into a “formidable cruise missile force” is designed for operations against Taiwan;³² China's deployment of CSS-6 (M-9/DF-15) and CSS-7 (M-11/DF-11) short-range ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan continues apace, with reportedly over 350 missiles already deployed.³³ The Pentagon also estimates that China's missile deployments by 2005 will constitute

a significant strategic advantage against which Taiwan may have little defense.³⁴ China has also mounted a concerted diplomatic attack on America's development of missile defence systems, especially regional systems that might involve either Taiwan or Japan, or a national missile defence system that might negate China's small long-range nuclear deterrent force.³⁵

If Taiwan is indeed the immediate strategic focus of the People's Liberation Army, an important factor arises that is often neglected—the extent to which the fate of the island of Taiwan itself may determine China's future ability to prosecute its regional security and sea control ambitions.

BEAUTIFUL ISLAND, UGLY NEIGHBORHOOD

The Portuguese, who became in 1590 the first European visitors to Taiwan, called it “Ihla Formosa”—the “beautiful island.” The regional strategic issues relating to the island today are considerably less appealing than when the Portuguese made their discovery over four hundred years ago.

Taiwan in China's Strategic Thinking

There is a real, if exaggerated, fear in Beijing that should a formal Taiwanese declaration of independence go unpunished, restive regions of China may also try to break away. Separatist tendencies within China cannot, however, easily be linked to Taiwan; such regions each involve dynamics and circumstances that are unrelated to the Taiwan issue. Taiwan is qualitatively different. Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia are, after all, constituent parts of the People's Republic of China; Taiwan, quite clearly, is not. This is the fundamental reality of cross-strait relations, even if Chinese propaganda and the dissembling habits of international diplomatic practice suggest otherwise.

The latent crisis of political legitimacy within China has been alleviated in part by national economic dynamism and in part by the promotion of Chinese nationalism. Yet relying upon sustained high rates of growth in an economy with significant structural problems is fraught with risk, leading to the conclusion that the encouragement of nationalist sentiment will be increasingly important to the political legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party.³⁶ In this respect Taiwan's democratic evolution, whilst posing a challenge to the mainland regime, paradoxically also provides a focal point for the nationalist propaganda that seeks to prop up the party. Nevertheless, threats issued to deter formal Taiwanese independence not only legitimize the mainland regime but may be vital to the political survival of the regime. Having placed such a premium on unification, to allow Taiwan to break free formally might lead to the downfall of the current Chinese leadership, possibly even the party itself. At the very least, Army support for the regime would waver.³⁷ There is a general

consensus over the Taiwan issue in Beijing, and the domestic political ramifications of “losing” the island in a limited war across the strait could be severe. The question remains: would the Chinese Communist Party allow a conflict in which its survival was at stake to remain limited—or in its terminology, “restricted”?³⁸

The adoption of a nationalist agenda also helps to maintain People’s Liberation Army support for a regime no longer as intimately connected to the armed forces as was the case in the past.³⁹ The ambitions and strategic worldview of the Army thence become fundamental to Taiwan’s newfound geopolitical significance.⁴⁰ If preventing a formal split between the mainland and Taiwan is a primary consideration, there is reason to suggest that China’s military places substantial strategic emphasis on “recovering” the island of Taiwan also to facilitate its own regional (geo)political ambitions, which are expanding as Chinese power itself grows.

Taiwan’s physical position complicates free access to the Pacific from the mainland. The island does not block that access entirely, but its possession by a maritime power inimical to China might threaten both China and China’s sea-lanes, both eastward to the Pacific and down through the South China Sea. On the other hand, should Taiwan fall into Beijing’s hands, China would be better able to prosecute sea-denial operations and sea-lane disruption against the other Northeast Asian states and their American ally, should the need arise. Accordingly, the “recovery” of Taiwan represents part of the rationale for the pursuit of offshore active defense and greater defensive depth; in the longer term, the island would play a leading role in the execution of that very strategy. Chinese strategists well understand the relevance of the island to the accomplishment of China’s wider maritime goals and the development of a successful national maritime strategy, as reflected by the thoughts of two PLAN officers: “China is semiconcealed by the first island chain. If it wants to prosper, it has to advance into the Pacific, in which China’s future lies. Taiwan, facing the Pacific in the east, is the only unobstructed exit for China to move into the ocean. If this gateway is opened for China, then it becomes much easier for China to manoeuvre in the West Pacific.”⁴¹

Implicit in this statement is the problematic role of Japan in Chinese strategy; it is specifically the Japanese home islands, the Ryukyus, and the disputed Senkakus that, together with Taiwan, partly conceal China. Japanese geography and sea power, therefore, collectively pose an inherent obstacle to Chinese expansion into the Pacific as long as Taiwan remains free of mainland control. Further, the U.S. Navy, Taiwan’s “defender of last resort,” continues to represent the greatest medium-term threat to the Chinese navy’s Taiwan-centered ambitions for greater defensive depth and transformation into a major sea power in the western Pacific, perhaps beyond.

Taiwan, therefore, matters a great deal to China, both politically and strategically. But how significant is it for other actors in strategic terms? Any attempt to answer that question must take note of two fundamental aspects of regional security: Taiwan's physical location astride regional sea lines of communication, and the (already documented) growth of China's maritime power. In these contexts, Taiwan matters to Japan.

Japan: The "Third Man" in the Taiwan Dispute

Japan is, like Taiwan, an insular trading democracy with heavy dependence upon imported resources, especially energy, most of which arrive by sea-lanes adjacent to Taiwan; accordingly, Japan feels threatened by Chinese expansionary pressure into East Asian seas. Japan's China problem is exacerbated by an understandable Chinese dismay over the absence of formal contrition by Tokyo for its past aggression against the Asian mainland. The Senkaku Islands dispute has also increased Chinese nationalist and anti-Japanese feeling; some anti-Japanese protests may indeed have been spontaneous, as was reputedly the case during a flare-up of the Senkaku dispute in 1996.⁴² However, it must also be noted that Beijing has attempted to manipulate domestic opinion for its own ends. Also, despite Japan's frustrating attitude toward its past misdeeds, Tokyo has nevertheless effectively been compensating Beijing ever since Deng opened China to the outside world—Japan has provided more than twenty-three billion dollars to China in financial aid and "soft" loans since 1979.⁴³

Japan has become increasingly concerned about China's nationalist rhetoric, military modernization, and related maritime activities. Japan's sensitivities were heightened when the two issues were linked in early August 2000 by the refusal of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to sanction a ¥17.2 billion (\$161 million) low-interest infrastructure loan due to consternation over Chinese research vessels in Japanese-claimed waters. At least seventeen such "intrusions" by Chinese vessels were claimed to have taken place that year, whilst Chinese naval vessels had been sighted in the Tsugaru and Osumi Straits, leading one Tokyo politician to label China's actions as an "apparent provocation."⁴⁴ Another LDP member was quoted as declaring that "those [Chinese] vessels may be searching for places to illegally enter Japanese territory. Japan's sovereignty has been violated."⁴⁵ Such statements reflected both growing concern about China's strategic expansion and Japanese frustration that the Chinese government had kept its public ignorant of Japan's huge contributions to China's infrastructure improvements, castigating Japan in the state-controlled media and taking credit for Japanese-funded projects. The loan package was subsequently released only after Chinese "concessions" relating to "naval incursions."⁴⁶ In February 2001 China and Japan agreed to provide advance notification of marine scientific research

activities, although the ocean areas to be covered have not been defined, due to fundamental disagreement over maritime delimitation.⁴⁷

Chinese marine scientific research in what Japan considers its waters, probably including surveys on marine resources and oceanographic data but also naval intelligence collection, has in fact been carried out continuously over the last several years. Most of the activity seems to take place in areas of disputed jurisdiction—overlapping and unresolved exclusive economic zones, and the waters surrounding the contested Senkakus—thus allowing China to claim that the consent of the coastal state (Japan) is not required.⁴⁸ In the wider strategic context, however, Japan views such activities as the thin end of the Chinese wedge. One quasi-official Japanese analysis notes that similar activities preceded China's occupation of the Paracels and features in the Spratly group, summing up: "Supported by the activities of marine scientific research vessels and naval vessels, combined with its increasingly active fishing industry and marine transportation, China may consolidate its position as a full-fledged sea power in the future."⁴⁹

The statement may seem matter of fact, yet in context it demonstrates Japan's concern with China's burgeoning sea power. More specifically, the same analysis suggests that increased Chinese naval activity around the Senkakus in 1999 may have been linked not only to China's marine scientific research program but also to then-Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui's "state to state" description of China-Taiwan relations, "as moves designed to restrain the passage of bills related to the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation."⁵⁰ Perhaps even more revealing of unfolding difficulties in the Sino-Japanese relationship is the role that Taiwan has played in Japan's strategic thinking—most importantly, Taiwan's place in the new guidelines.

The revised Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation agreed upon in September 1997 were designed to enhance the relevance of the alliance by subtly adapting to the new regional security conditions of the post-Cold War period. The most significant revision to the 1978 guidelines was the provision—passed into law, partially amended, in May 1999—for "cooperation in situations in areas surrounding Japan that will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security."⁵¹ Enhanced cooperation and expanded roles for Japan within the existing alliance framework envisaged by the term "situations in areas surrounding Japan" include humanitarian relief, noncombatant, and search and rescue operations; the provision of facilities and rear area support for U.S. forces; and operational cooperation, to include surveillance and minesweeping support both "in Japanese territory and on the high seas around Japan," and sea and airspace management.⁵² Although opinion is divided, it seems likely that the new guidelines represent a significant, if limited, shift in Japanese defence

policy from an orientation purely of self-defense to one that shows an intent to play a greater role in assisting the United States to underpin regional security.⁵³ Implementation of the guidelines, however, has been tardy, and American moves to strengthen the alliance seemed by the close of the Clinton era to have lost impetus.⁵⁴ The Bush administration has attempted to reinvigorate the U.S. relationship with Japan as part of its renewed strategic emphasis on Asia; the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, Peter Rodman, has publicly encouraged Japan to exercise its right of collective defence within the framework of the alliance. Also, the Japan Defense Agency has reportedly created an “action plan” for cooperation with U.S. forces under the guidelines, although its contents remain classified.⁵⁵

The geographically undefined reference to “areas surrounding Japan” is not only the most important revision but the most controversial. China, which objects generally to the revised guidelines as one of several “new negative developments in the security of the Asia-Pacific region,” claims that such a loose geographical definition might include Taiwan. The new guidelines, in China’s view, have

failed to explicitly undertake to exclude Taiwan from the scope of “the areas surrounding Japan” referred to in the Japanese security bill that could involve military intervention. These actions have inflated the arrogance of the separatist forces in Taiwan, seriously undermined China’s sovereignty and security and imperiled the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region.⁵⁶

Tensions across the East China Sea were heightened when Japan’s chief cabinet secretary publicly stated that the guidelines were relevant for the Taiwan Strait area.⁵⁷ That view had been prefigured by other Japanese officials in 1997; one former Japanese foreign ministry official had declared, for example, that “no one has denied that the Taiwan Strait is included. Japan has a great interest in stability and peace in the Taiwan Strait.”⁵⁸ Japan has since attempted to explain its way out of this controversy by stating that the term is “not geographic but situational,” but such diplomatic creativity has failed to mollify China.⁵⁹ In any case, the difficulty lies primarily not in vague definitions or (mis)perceptions over whether “areas surrounding Japan” include Taiwan but in a fundamental clash of interests between Japan and China over Taiwan’s future.

Most interpretations of the political and strategic rationale behind the guidelines focus on the need, from a U.S. perspective, to rejuvenate the alliance relationship in the absence of any Russian threat and to bolster regional stability against North Korea’s ballistic missile and nuclear weapon programs. Although the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security, which set forth the case for revising the original defence cooperation guidelines, appeared only a month (in April 1996)

after the Taiwan Strait missile crisis, analysts maintain that the guidelines envisioned primarily a Korean scenario;⁶⁰ the revised plans for operational cooperation “were almost certainly created with Korean scenarios, not Taiwan, in mind.”⁶¹ However, it is likely that Taiwan played a larger role in the Japanese decision to adopt them than is commonly believed. Backing up the statements from officials, one senior analyst at Japan’s National Institute of Defense Studies has suggested that from Tokyo’s perspective, the guidelines were aimed primarily at a Taiwan contingency.⁶² Japanese defence analysts with a maritime focus often relegate the Korean Peninsula to a subsidiary status in Japan’s defence priorities and strategic concerns; for them, China is increasingly the primary threat, and Taiwan a more pressing interest.⁶³

Tokyo’s close, if unofficial, political and economic ties to Taiwan (its colony from 1895 to 1945) may grow yet stronger as China continues its maritime expansion; Taiwan’s continued separation from the mainland is, therefore, a strategic interest for Japan. In a cross-strait conflict Tokyo is unlikely to get involved in a direct military sense, but it might do so indirectly, by assisting the United States in accordance with the new guidelines.

U.S. Strategic Interests and Taiwan

The announced Chinese unification formula, which would bar PLA forces from Taiwan and allow the island to maintain its own armed forces, should be viewed as a ploy. China’s 2000 white paper on Taiwan, after reiterating that upon “reunification” Beijing would “not send troops or administrative personnel to be stationed in Taiwan,” declared that other states should “refrain from providing arms to Taiwan or helping Taiwan produce arms in any form or under any pretext.”⁶⁴ If Taiwan ceded its sovereignty it would no longer be able to purchase weapons, spare parts, or related technologies from abroad; the capabilities of the Taiwanese armed forces would slowly wither. There could be no further prospect of U.S. intervention on behalf of Taiwan. Even without People’s Liberation Army forces on Taiwan, unification would remove a barrier to the Navy’s access to the Pacific Ocean, and it is barely credible to suggest that China would desist from utilizing Taiwan as a strategic asset for long, particularly if Japan reacts to Chinese maritime advances in some tangible manner.

Therefore, in the context of its alliance relationship with Japan, Taiwan matters *strategically* to the United States. Although the United States itself would not be directly endangered in any immediate, military sense by China-Taiwan unification, it could not ignore the adverse geostrategic consequences for security in East Asia. China would not only be able to take advantage of Taiwan’s wealth, advanced technology (including U.S.-transferred military technology), and (possibly) its highly educated workforce but would also pose a direct challenge

to Japanese security by dominating its energy lifelines and depriving Tokyo of a close (if informal) political friend.⁶⁵ The ability of China's improving navy to sever Japan's maritime lifelines and to prosecute effective sea denial against the U.S. Navy (potentially even local sea control within the semi-enclosed East China and South China Seas) would be greatly improved if the Chinese army controlled Taiwan.

Unless the security of Japan ceases to be a vital national interest of the United States, the maintenance of the geopolitical status quo in Taiwan is a balance-of-power and shipping interest for the United States.⁶⁶ The future of Taiwan has become linked to Japanese security, therefore, and the future health of the Washington-Tokyo alliance, the possible alternatives to which hardly inspire confidence: a strategically assertive Japan left to protect its own interests might make a regional conflict with China more likely; an introspective Japan preoccupied by domestic concerns could remove an obstacle to Chinese expansion; and in the worst case, a weakened Japan that tied itself to China would instantly create a geopolitical rupture with genuinely global implications. However speculative, these alternatives demonstrate that it is difficult to imagine a positive regional security architecture in the absence of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty and a constant American presence.

In any case, the George W. Bush administration has called China a "strategic competitor of the United States, not a strategic partner";⁶⁷ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has reportedly identified China as the primary future strategic threat;⁶⁸ it is therefore in the American interest to ensure that China is "constrained," by safeguarding Taiwan's freedom.⁶⁹ Thus, it seems prudent to suggest that America's strategy for East Asia include the strategic *denial* of the island of Taiwan to mainland China. The Taiwanese for their part seek to take advantage of the island's newfound strategic significance to America's Asian interests; President Chen has stated that "the crescent-shaped American defenses against China in the Pacific, without Taiwan, would be forced back to Saipan and Guam, even Hawaii."⁷⁰ A peaceful Taiwanese capitulation, then, is most unlikely; U.S. intervention in response to attempted coercion is not.⁷¹

DETERRENCE AND OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

There is no way of knowing with certainty whether Chinese threats to use force to recover Taiwan are genuine or merely attempts to deter a Taiwanese declaration of independence. Perhaps China's increased deployments of ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan and Taiwan-focused military modernization simply represent a stratagem.⁷² However, China deliberately disguises real capabilities as "a fundamental approach to deterrence";⁷³ the same forces employed to deter

formal independence may be used in anger. Therefore, the mainland itself needs to be effectively deterred and, if that fails, denied its objective.

Initial consideration needs to be given to Taiwan's own ability to defend itself. The United States acknowledges and has begun an attempt to remedy some of Taiwan's deficiencies in such "functional nonhardware" areas of concern as "defense planning, C4I, air defense, maritime capability, anti-submarine warfare, logistics, joint force integration, and training."⁷⁴ It has nevertheless failed to provide sufficient military means for self-defence. In this regard, there is a particular requirement for improved antisubmarine weapons (including modern submarines and maritime patrol aircraft), mine countermeasures, strike capabilities (to counter-deter those of China), and air defences.⁷⁵ American reluctance to supply (tactically) "offensive" weapons has unnecessarily restricted Taiwan's defence capabilities.⁷⁶ Holding off from selling sea-based theater missile defence systems, at least while they remain technologically immature, is politically sound, however.⁷⁷

A new arms package for Taiwan announced in April 2001 set out to resolve some of Taiwan's force structure shortcomings, including, inter alia, twelve maritime patrol aircraft, four elderly yet still capable *Kidd*-class guided missile destroyers, MH-53E minesweeping helicopters, and most significantly, eight submarines.⁷⁸ It is unclear, however, whether the submarines can be delivered, as the United States (as Taiwan's only reliable source of arms and military technology) does not build nonnuclear boats, and other potential suppliers have thus far deferred to China.⁷⁹ Time may not be on Taipei's side; it seems to be whittling away Taiwan's ability to defend itself.⁸⁰

Taiwan suffers from small size, lack of strategic depth, and proximity to the threat; Japan labors under constitutional and psychological constraints. Accordingly, responsibility for safeguarding Taiwan and the region's sea-lanes falls inevitably upon the shoulders of the United States. The administration seems increasingly aware of this; President Bush has declared that America "would do everything it took to help Taiwan defend itself."⁸¹ The forthrightness of Bush's statement may well have reduced the diluting effects of strategic ambiguity upon deterrence. Nevertheless, the ability of the United States to deter or defend against mainland aggression ought not be taken for granted; it is clear neither what would deter the Beijing leadership if it felt its own domestic control was at stake, nor whether U.S. naval forces are prepared to operate against a geographically advantaged enemy with forces and doctrine increasingly designed to repulse them.⁸²

Much of the literature on China's strategic challenge reflects an assumption that deterrence by the conventional military superiority of U.S. forces is easy.⁸³ More perceptive analyses of both the theory and the (American) "practice" of

deterrence suggest that Cold War deterrence experience is not necessarily applicable to new “regional” adversaries.⁸⁴ If it is not, the ability of the United States to deter threats to far-flung regional friends and allies becomes tenuous; “The real problem for deterrence arises when the deterrent effect needs to be extended from a distant protecting power.”⁸⁵ To be effective, deterrence policy needs to be tailored to “the given opponent and context.” An urgent need exists, then, for improved understanding and intelligence about regional rivals.⁸⁶

Any deterrence policy “tailored” for the Taiwan Strait will need to take account of the ways in which China might combine “asymmetric” strategies with more conventional measures.⁸⁷ Asymmetries—in geography, interests, capabilities, and doctrine—further complicate the operation of deterrence over long distances. The Pentagon now recognizes that such factors must be accounted for when assessing correlations of forces between such pairs of “dissimilar actors” as China-Taiwan and China–United States.⁸⁸ “The root of effective tactical action,” advises Wayne Hughes, “is an appreciation that force estimation is a two-sided business and that not all elements of force are found in the orders of battle.”⁸⁹

An effective amphibious invasion of Taiwan seems beyond China at present;⁹⁰ at the same time, the U.S. ability to counter a concerted attempt at military coercion is less than certain.⁹¹ From a purely operational perspective there is cause to question the American predominance at sea. A Taiwan conflict is less likely to be fought in the open ocean, where the U.S. Navy possesses its greatest operational advantages, than in the strait itself, China’s coastal zone, and the East China and northern South China Seas. The problems facing maritime powers in an unfriendly and confined littoral environment are both severe and well known.⁹²

American and Taiwanese forces would be faced with an unfavourable geographic position—the defence of a small island only a hundred nautical miles away from a hostile continental power in possession of a long coastline and significant strategic depth, including active defence far out to sea. U.S. naval forces at sea would have to sustain themselves from a small number of bases in the Northeast Asian theater, vulnerable to political unreliability among host nations and to ballistic missile attack.⁹³ Furthermore, China’s land-based airpower, missiles, and surveillance assets would contest any response from the sea. The problems will be exacerbated if the United States attempts to defend Taiwan under restrictive rules of engagement.

A recent RAND report has identified ways to enhance the American force posture in Asia and, for a Taiwan contingency specifically, to overcome some of these concerns: development of Guam as a power-projection hub (from which to fly B-52s armed with Harpoon antiship cruise missiles for long-range conventional strikes); new concepts for joint operations by carrier aviation and Air Force combat support elements; new bases in the southern Ryukyus (only

150–250 nautical miles from Taipei) and, possibly, on northern Luzon and Batan Island (between Luzon and Taiwan).⁹⁴ The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review also reflects such considerations, stating in less specific terms that the United States will: maintain U.S. bases in Northeast Asia and improve Air Force “contingency basing”; increase the presence of aircraft carrier battle groups and numbers of surface warships and submarines based in the western Pacific; and conduct Marine Corps littoral warfare training in the region.⁹⁵ A former American defence and naval attaché to China has clearly stated that by these measures the Bush administration “is attempting to deter any possible Chinese adventure against Taiwan.”⁹⁶

Secondly, forces operating in or near the littoral must cope with electronic clutter, making it harder to identify targets and threats accurately and rapidly. The presence of commercial shipping, fishing vessels, and other civilian coastal craft adds to the threat identification problem—all the more if they have been sent to sea for that very purpose. Civilian vessels may also be surreptitious weapon or sensor platforms. The many islands along the central Chinese coastline add to the physical clutter and provide hiding places for naval units and screens for aircraft.⁹⁷

In a third consideration, oceanographic features, particularly water depth, and such factors as currents, seabed composition, and coastline configuration may favour diesel-electric submarines, missile-armed fast patrol boats, and mine warfare.⁹⁸ The Taiwan Strait, specifically, is difficult for antisubmarine operations, due to its shallow, rough seas and the influx of rivers.⁹⁹

Finally, the missile problem becomes particularly complicated in confined waters. “The strictures of littoral warfare threaten to cramp movement and compress inshore operations into an explosive mixture of air, land, sea, and undersea launched missiles.”¹⁰⁰ Combat in semienclosed waters is likely to be compressed in time as well as in space, placing a premium upon reconnaissance and tactical intelligence.¹⁰¹ Clausewitzian friction, instability, and unpredictability would reign in any exchange of missiles. “A small change in the hit probabilities, the distribution of fire, defensive effectiveness, or the thwarted detection and tracking of all the enemy will create wide swings in the resulting damage.”¹⁰² The rules of engagement under which U.S. forces would be likely to operate would not permit them to reduce the instability and uncertainty by attacking first.¹⁰³ U.S. forces will therefore need defensive superiority, particularly integrated shipboard theater-missile and antiship-cruise-missile defences, and related doctrine.¹⁰⁴

The U.S. Navy is supremely confident of its own ability to secure “battlespace dominance in the littoral.”¹⁰⁵ Area-denial threats, it is sure, might slow a response to aggression and increase its costs but could not defeat it.¹⁰⁶ Such a characterization

is not only removed from the strategic reality of political contexts and constraints but ignores the inherent difficulties of modern warfare in the maritime backyard of a continental adversary like China.

A variety of analyses have pointed out these difficulties and capability shortfalls, and have made such recommendations as the development of small, more expendable craft for the littoral and adjacent narrow seas.¹⁰⁷ However, platform preferences aside, the essential point is the need to develop, in an integrated fashion, strategy, forces, operational and tactical plans, and doctrine *specifically* to deter and, if necessary, combat Chinese aggression in the Taiwan Strait. General-purpose U.S. capabilities may in time not be enough—perhaps even now.

REFOCUSING U.S. TAIWAN POLICY

Taiwan has increased in strategic importance for China, the United States, and Japan, and not merely because of its own internal democratic or economic development. There is more to Taiwan's new role than simply the negative effects of cross-strait tension and conflict upon stability and confidence, and upon U.S. credibility as regional stabilizer. Underlying these issues is a real and unfolding battle over Taiwan's geopolitical future in the new Asian strategic context, inexorably affecting the interplay of great power relations in the new century. That new context—the political, economic, and strategic advance of China from its continental haven into the surrounding seas—places Taiwan on the front line of strategic developments in East Asia.

For China's regional ambitions, the successful swallowing of Taiwan would be a genuine "great leap forward" that would remove geographical restrictions to the growth of Chinese power and influence across Asian seas. Many analysts reduce the Taiwan issue to the future of Sino-American relations. However the Taiwanese may have exacerbated matters in the recent past, the underlying problems are deeper than the progress of Taiwanese democracy and national identity. The real strategic picture encompasses major-power relations in Asia; the future of the U.S. presence in, and commitment to, the region; and perhaps even the future ability of American seapower to influence events there. The island of Taiwan will be, as it has been for much of its post-Portuguese history, a pawn in the competitive relations of regional great powers.

It is hardly a happy situation; strategic competition already makes a difficult situation even less tractable. Certainly, it is not foreordained that China will become an enemy of the United States and the democratic states of Asia and the Pacific, or even a global power. Yet the portents are not positive; China seems intent on overturning the status quo.

What is required of the United States is not a wholesale change of Asian policy but a refocusing on long-term strategic interests—protecting regional allies and

maintaining American maritime preponderance, thus allowing regional sea-based trade to flourish unhindered. The Chinese threat to Taiwan is the primary near-term challenge to the regional order. As the Taiwanese are most unlikely to surrender willingly, and as the United States has a vital national interest in maintaining order in maritime East Asia and its own position against challengers to that order, a strong case can be made on *strategic* grounds for defending Taiwan's de facto independent status, should the need arise. If Taiwan were to be abandoned, the entire U.S. policy and strategy framework for Asia would become defunct and relationships would be redefined in ways as yet unknowable, bringing into play further unwanted, unpredictable, nonlinear consequences.¹⁰⁸ Such a loss would at the least accelerate regional instability and animosity, and create a greater likelihood of a genuinely adversarial relationship between China and the United States, one in which China would enjoy a more advantageous correlation of forces than at present.

The United States, therefore, needs to recognize that the significance of Taiwan lies beyond managing its relationship with Beijing. If the Japanese alliance is to remain the linchpin of U.S. strategy in East Asia, it must be reinvigorated politically; if at the same time Japan's strategic development is to be constrained, the United States must maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. It makes sense for the United States to develop closer links with its friends throughout maritime East Asia in the fields of reconnaissance, surveillance, intelligence, basing, and logistics; however, the United States must have the full range of military capabilities necessary for near-independent operations in littoral Northeast Asia. These capabilities include both mine warfare and other coastal combat forces, and sea-based theater missile defence.¹⁰⁹

Any strategy should include detailed operational plans and doctrine specifically designed for a Taiwan contingency. Efforts already under way to improve operational effectiveness in littoral waters against a continental power armed with modern missiles and asymmetric capabilities and tactics must be continued. Indeed, the Bush administration seems to recognize the significance of Taiwan in the new Asian security environment; however, success in deterrence or actual conflict should not be taken for granted. Still, an understanding of how such a strategy, and related operational plans, tactics, capabilities, and doctrine can combine to support American Asian policy will represent a sound basis for future action and the continued stability of the regional order.

NOTES

1. On the incident, see "Trapped behind the Lines," *The Australian*, 3 April 2001, p. 1. On Chinese demands to end surveillance flights, see "No One's Backing Down in Beijing," *The Australian*, 19 April 2001, p. 10.
2. *Taiwan Relations Act*, Public Law 96-8 96th Congress, 10 April 1979, secs. 2 and 3.
3. See John W. Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1997); Suisheng Zhao, ed., *Across the Taiwan Strait: Mainland China, Taiwan, and the 1995-1996 Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 1999); James R. Lilley and Chuck Downs, eds., *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense Univ. Press, 1997); Greg Austin, ed., *Missile Diplomacy and Taiwan's Future: Innovations in Politics and Military Power*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence 122 (Canberra: Australian National Univ., 1997); Douglas Porch, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996: Strategic Implications for the United States Navy," *Naval War College Review*, Summer 1999; and Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force," *International Security*, Fall 2000.
4. See "Chen Puts Focus on Consensus," *Taipei Times*, 29 August 2000, p. 1.
5. On the need for the United States to maintain a principled basis for the exercise of its preponderant power, see Robert G. Kaufman, "E. H. Carr, Winston Churchill, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Us: The Case for Principled, Prudential, Democratic Realism," in *Roots of Realism*, ed. Benjamin Frankel (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 351-3.
6. A useful historical overview is Simon Long, *Taiwan: China's Last Frontier* (London: Macmillan, 1991); see also Robert Dujarric, "Taiwan and East Asian Security," Hudson Briefing Paper, February 1996, pp. 1-4.
7. A point well made in Gerald Segal, "Does China Matter?" *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 1999, pp. 26-7.
8. Peter J. Rimmer, "Shipping Patterns in the Western Pacific: The China Factor," *Maritime Studies*, May-June 1997, pp. 5-6.
9. Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis*, 2d ed. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1983), pp. 42-6.
10. Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "The Development of China's Marine Programs," Beijing, May 1998, reproduced in *Beijing Review*, 15-21 June 1998, p. 13.
11. Mamdouh G. Salameh, "China, Oil and the Risk of Regional Conflict," *Survival*, Winter 1995-96, table 2, p. 135. Chinese projections, however, were more conservative, predicting that offshore oil production would reach 5 percent and offshore gas 16 percent of total respective national outputs by 2000. See State Oceanic Administration, *China Ocean Agenda 21* (Beijing: China Ocean Press, 1996), p. 17.
12. "Marine Economy: New Economic Growth Point," *Beijing Review*, 30 November-6 December 1998, pp. 12-3.
13. See, for example, Michael Leifer, "Chinese Economic Reform and Security Policy: The South China Sea Connection," *Survival*, Summer 1995; Salameh, "China, Oil and the Risk of Regional Conflict"; and Mark J. Valencia, *China and the South China Sea Disputes*, Adelphi Paper 298 (London: Oxford Univ. Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995). Chinese sources have estimated that the potential hydrocarbon resources of the Spratly and Paracel Islands could amount to at least 105 billion barrels (bb) of oil and up to 900 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of gas, whilst the seabed of the entire South China Sea might hold up to 213 bb of oil and more than 2000 Tcf of gas. However, such figures are both disputed and unproven; the U.S. Geological Survey and other Western sources estimate oil and gas resources to be in the vicinity of 10 bb and 35 Tcf in the Spratlys, and 28 bb and 266 Tcf in the entire South China Sea, respectively. See U.S. Energy Information Administration, "South China Sea Region," January 2000, on the World Wide Web: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/schinafull.html> (3 May 2000), pp. 2-3.
14. You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China* (St. Leonards, New South Wales, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1999), pp. 85-6, 230.

15. See Liu Huaqing, "Defense Modernization in Historical Perspective," in *Chinese Views of Future Warfare*, ed. Michael Pillsbury, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Defense Univ. Press, 1998), pp. 115–8.
16. Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang, "The Chinese Navy's Offshore Active Defense Strategy: Conceptualization and Implications," *Naval War College Review*, Summer 1994, pp. 16–8; Jun Zhan, "China Goes to the Blue Waters: The Navy, Seapower Mentality and the South China Sea," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, September 1994, pp. 189–90; and You, *The Armed Forces of China*, pp. 166–7.
17. Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army after Mao* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), pp. 89–91, 109–11.
18. You, *The Armed Forces of China*, pp. 8–9.
19. Eric McVadon, "PRC Exercises, Doctrine and Tactics toward Taiwan: The Naval Dimension," in *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait*, ed. Lilley and Downs, pp. 259–60.
20. Malcolm R. Davis, "Back on Course," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 24 January 2001, pp. 22–4; and "Two More *Sovremennys* for China," *The Navy: The Magazine of the Navy League of Australia*, July–September 2000, p. 14. On the Moskit, see Steven J. Zaloga, "Russia's Moskit Anti-ship Missile," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 1996, pp. 155–8.
21. Stephen Blank, "Sino-Russian Relations Threaten U.S. Interests," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2001, p. 54. It is difficult to find precise, verifiable data on Russia's arms transfers. However, one recent report suggests that Russia has thus far delivered fifty-eight Su-27s and some twenty single-seat Su-30s, with China to assemble up to two hundred Su-27s domestically. A new two-billion-dollar deal has been struck for thirty-eight twin-seat Su-30MKKs. See "Russian Fighter Jet Sale Awaits Final Seal," *South China Morning Post*, 20 September 2001, at: <http://china.scmp.com/cgi-agenname=SCMP/Printacopy&aid=ZZZID4RWJRC> (20 September 2001).
22. John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, "China's Search for a Modern Air Force," *International Security*, Summer 1999, pp. 87–8.
23. See, for example, Jianxiang Bi, "Managing Taiwan Operations in the Twenty-first Century: Issues and Options," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 1999, p. 37.
24. Construction will reportedly take place in new facilities at Shanghai's Jiangnan Shipyard. John Downing, "China Equips Itself for Power Projection," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2000, p. 43.
25. For a historical perspective on the difficulties, see Geoffrey Till, "Adopting the Aircraft Carrier: The British, American, and Japanese Case Studies," in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, ed. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996). Also instructive is Ken E. Gause, "Considerations for 21st Century Carrier Navies," in *Maritime Aviation: Light and Medium Aircraft Carriers into the Twenty First Century*, ed. Thomas J. Hirschfeld and Peter Hore (Hull, U.K.: Univ. of Hull Press, 1999); and Gene I. Rochlin, Todd R. La Porte, and Karlene H. Roberts, "The Self-Designing, High-Reliability Organization: Aircraft Carrier Flight Operations at Sea," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 1987, pp. 76–90, repr. Summer 1998, pp. 97–113.
26. "Kiev and *Varyag* Towed to China," *Jane's Navy International*, September 2000, p. 7; and "Mystery Surrounds Chinese Carrier 'Deal,'" *Jane's Navy International*, June 2000, p. 9. As of January 2001, Turkey was still denying the *Varyag* permission to transit from the Black Sea through the Bosphorus Straits; see Davis, "Back on Course," p. 23.
27. "Mystery Surrounds Chinese Carrier 'Deal,'" p. 9.
28. Ibid.
29. John W. Garver, "China's Push through the South China Sea: The Interaction of Bureaucratic and National Interests," *China Quarterly*, December 1992; and Leifer, "Chinese Economic Reform and Security Policy."
30. Mark A. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization: Implications for the United States* (Carlisle, Penna.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1999), pp. 1–2.
31. Ibid., chaps. 3, 4, and 5. See also Dept. of Defense, "Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China," Report to Congress Pursuant to the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, June 2000.

32. McVadon, "PRC Exercises, Doctrine and Tactics toward Taiwan," pp. 256–9.
33. Bill Gertz, "China Increases Missile Threat," *Washington Times*, 28 August 2001, at: <http://asp.washtimes.com/printarticle.action=print&ArticleID=20010828-25165936> (29 August 2001).
34. Dept. of Defense, "The Security Situation in the Taiwan Strait," Report to Congress Pursuant to the FY99 Appropriations Bill, February 1999. See also "Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China."
35. See, for example, Gu Ping, "Japan: Find a New Excuse to Participate in Constructing TMD," *Beijing Review*, 21 August 2000, pp. 10–1; and Sha Zukang, "International Arms Control and Disarmament: Retrospect and Prospect," *Beijing Review*, 4 January 2001, pp. 8–10.
36. See, for example, Maria Hsia Chang, "Chinese Irredentist Nationalism: The Magician's Last Trick," *Comparative Strategy*, January–March 1998, esp. pp. 84–5.
37. Nationalism is particularly strong within the PLA. See Maria Hsia Chang and Xiaoyu Chen, "The Nationalist Ideology of the Chinese Military," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, March 1998.
38. On the Chinese concept of "unrestricted war," see Ehsan Ahrari, "Unrestricted War: The Leveller," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2000.
39. See, for example, David Shambaugh, "China's Post-Deng Military Leadership," in *China's Military Faces the Future*, ed. James R. Lilley and David Shambaugh (Armonk, N.Y.: American Enterprise Institute/M. E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 14–5; and Ellis Joffe, *Taiwan and the Chinese Military* (Taipei: Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, July 2000), pp. 2–3.
40. See, for example, Allen S. Whiting, "The PLA and China's Threat Perceptions," *China Quarterly*, June 1996; and David Shambaugh, "China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security," *International Security*, Winter 1999–2000.
41. Jiang Minfang and Duan Zhaoxian, "The Analysis of Taiwan's Strategic Position," *Haijun Zazhi*, no. 8, 1995, quoted in You, *The Armed Forces of China*, pp. 212–3. The same view was proffered by a middle-ranking Chinese naval officer (a commander) in an interview with the author, Shanghai, July 2000. See also, Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang, "Taiwan's View of Military Balance and the Challenge It Presents," in *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait*, ed. Lilley and Downs, p. 282.
42. Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders, "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands," *International Security*, Winter 1998/99, pp. 137–9.
43. "Japan and China Eye Each Other Warily—As Usual," *The Economist*, 2 September 2000, p. 27.
44. "China Yen Loans at Risk, Says LDP," *Asahi Evening News*, 10 August 2000, p. 2.
45. "LDP Members Want Government to Shelve ¥17.2 Bil. in Infrastructure Loans to China," *Daily Yomiuri*, 9 August 2000, p. 2.
46. "China Shows Belated Gratitude to Japan for \$46 Billion in Aid," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 October 2000, p. 24; and "Friends Indeed," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 October 2000, p. 21.
47. "Japan, China Agree to Swap Ship Info," *Daily Yomiuri Online*, 9 February 2001, on the World Wide Web: <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20010209wo42.htm> (12 February 2001).
48. Maritime delimitation between China and Japan involves disputes over seabed boundaries, overlapping exclusive economic zones, and the Senkakus, as well as agreements on fishing and joint development zones. See Greg Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier: International Law, Military Force and National Development* (St. Leonards, New South Wales, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1998), pp. 193–205.
49. The National Institute for Defense Studies [NIDS], Japan, *East Asia Strategic Review 2000* (Tokyo: NIDS, 2000), pp. 105–6.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
52. Japan Defense Agency [JDA], *The New Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation* (Tokyo: JDA, n.d.).
53. (As was to be shown by the JMSDF deployment of November 2001.) Aurelia George Mulgan, "Beyond Self-Defence? Evaluating Japan's Regional Security Role under the New

- Defence Cooperation Guidelines,” *Pacifica Review*, October 2000.
54. Kurt M. Campbell, “Energizing the U.S.-Japan Security Partnership,” *Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2000; and Michael J. Green, “The Forgotten Player,” *National Interest*, Summer 2000.
55. “Pentagon Official Says He Hopes Japan Will Exercise Right to Collective Defense,” *Japan Times*, 23 August 2001, on the World Wide Web: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.p15?nn20010823a2.htm> (23 August 2001); and “Defense Agency Outlines Emergency Plans with U.S.,” *Japan Times*, 3 September 2001, on the World Wide Web: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.p15?nn20010903b3.htm> (3 September 2001).
56. See Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, “China’s National Defense in 2000,” Beijing, October 2000, supplement to *Beijing Review*, 23 October 2000, p. ii; and see also, Ni Feng, “Enhanced U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance: Cause for Concern,” *Beijing Review*, 16–22 June 1997.
57. See Rex Li, “Partners or Rivals? Chinese Perceptions of Japan’s Security Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, December 1999, p. 11.
58. Yukio Okamoto, quoted in “Menage à Trois?” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 October 1997, p. 24.
59. JDA, “The New Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation,” p. 21.
60. See, for example, Mulgan, “Beyond Self-Defence?” p. 245. Mulgan accepts, however, that Taiwan was also a factor behind the drafting of the new guidelines (p. 236).
61. Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security*, Spring 1999, p. 68.
62. Interview at NIDS, Tokyo, August 2000.
63. Several influential retired Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force admirals interviewed in Tokyo in August 2000 were almost dismissive of the Korean Peninsula as a security concern. See Mohan Malik, “Japan Wary of Assertive China,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, December 2000; and Gary Klintworth, “Taiwan Replaces North Korea as Japan’s Prime Concern,” *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, August–September 2000, pp. 16–8.
64. The Taiwan Affairs Office and Information Office of the State Council, People’s Republic of China, “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue,” Beijing, February 2000, reproduced in *Beijing Review*, 6 March 2000, pp. 18 and 23.
65. Chinese analysts have similar conceptions; see Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” p. 63, n. 41; and Li, “Partners or Rivals?” pp. 11–2.
66. Robert Ross suggests to the contrary that despite “ideological affinity,” American strategic interests are limited: “Neither U.S.-Taiwan cooperation nor denial of Taiwan to mainland military presence is a U.S. balance-of-power or shipping interest.” Ross reminds us that the United States “at no cost to its security . . . ended military cooperation with Taiwan in the early 1970s.” The idea is based, first, on a flawed neorealist assumption that a (supposedly existing) bipolar power structure in East Asia creates conditions for stability, and further on the mistaken assumption that geopolitical conditions have not changed since the 1970s. (Robert S. Ross, “The Geography of Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century,” *International Security*, Spring 1999, pp. 96–111, 113.) Similarly, Andrew Nathan, assuming U.S. naval and technological superiority, rejects the notion that the loss of Taiwan would endanger Japanese security, U.S. strategic interests, or regional sea-lanes. Andrew J. Nathan, “What’s Wrong with American Taiwan Policy,” *Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2000, pp. 99–100.
67. George W. Bush, quoted in “The Bush Family in China,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 October 2000, p. 30.
68. “U.S. Identifies Beijing as Its Enemy Number One,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 March 2001, p. 8; and Bill Gertz, “Rumsfeld Says Missiles Proof of China’s Global Ambitions,” *Washington Times*, 7 September 2001, at: <http://asp.washtimes.com/printarticle.asp?action=print&ArticleID=20010907-2129994> (7 September 2001).
69. The term “constraintment” was coined by Gerald Segal in “East Asia and the ‘Constraintment’ of China,” *International Security*, Spring 1996.

70. Chen Shui-bian, quoted in Nathan, "What's Wrong with American Taiwan Policy," p. 98.
71. Nathan, "What's Wrong with American Taiwan Policy," p. 103.
72. For insights into the traditional Chinese use of stratagems, see Sun Haichen, comp. and trans., *The Wiles of War: 36 Military Strategies from Ancient China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993).
73. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, p. 145.
74. Dept. of Defense, "Executive Summary of Report to Congress on Implementation of the Taiwan Relations Act," Report to Congress Pursuant to Public Law 106-113, 18 December 2000, on the World Wide Web: http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/twstrait_12182000.html (21 February 2001), p. 2.
75. See, for example, Michael O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," *International Security*, Fall 2000, pp. 84–6.
76. The dubious distinction between "offensive" and "defensive" weapons is dismantled by Colin S. Gray, *Weapons Don't Make War: Policy, Strategy, and Military Technology* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1993), chap. 2.
77. See, for example, Thomas J. Christensen, "Theater Missile Defense and Taiwan's Security," *Orbis*, Winter 2000; and O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," p. 85.
78. "China Condemns U.S. Weapons Sales to Taiwan," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 2001, p. 10. After a long internal debate, Taiwan's military agreed to buy the *Kidd*-class guided missile destroyers, despite their preference for new Aegis-equipped ships. See "Military Approves Destroyer Purchase," *Taipei Times*, 2 October 2001, available on the World Wide Web: <http://www.taipetimes.com/news/2001/10/02/print/0000105360> (2 October 2001).
79. "Diving for Cover Costs Billions," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 May 2001, p. 18.
80. David Shambaugh, "A Matter of Time: Taiwan's Eroding Military Advantage," *Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2000.
81. Quoted in "Arms and Studied Ambiguity," *The Economist*, 28 April 2001, p. 30.
82. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, pp. 141–3; and Porch, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996," esp. pp. 23 and 37.
83. Ross, for example, asserts that the U.S. superiority in maritime forces is all that is required to defend Taiwan from China's "land-based forces." His contraposition of U.S. maritime power against Chinese land power assumes that deterrence of Chinese operations against the island of Taiwan is simply a function of the obvious paper advantage of U.S. forces in the maritime sphere. See Ross, "The Geography of the Peace," p. 113. For a more pessimistic view, however, see Porch, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996," p. 37.
84. Keith B. Payne, "Post-Cold War Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Policy," *Comparative Strategy*, July–September 1998, esp. pp. 231–7; and Colin S. Gray, "Deterrence and Regional Conflict: Hopes, Fallacies, and 'Fixes,'" *Comparative Strategy*, January–March 1998, pp. 52–5.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
86. Payne, "Post-Cold War Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Policy," p. 237. For this reason it seems important that U.S. surveillance efforts, such as the EP-3 flights, be continued.
87. An excellent conceptual treatment of the problems and opportunities presented by strategic asymmetry is Steven Metz and Douglas V. Johnson, *Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts* (Carlisle, Penna.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, January 2001).
88. Dept. of Defense, "Executive Summary of Report to Congress," pp. 3–5.
89. Wayne P. Hughes, *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, 2d ed. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2000), p. 259.
90. See, for example, McVadon, "PRC Exercises, Doctrine and Tactics toward Taiwan," pp. 251–6; and O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan."
91. Porch, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996," pp. 37 and 43.
92. For a generic survey of the characteristics of operating in confined waters, see Milan N. Vejo, *Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).
93. For a critique of America's continued dependence upon forward basing in Asia, see Paul

- Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), pp. 58–63 and 162–6. Chinese analysts also recognize and plan to exploit these potential vulnerabilities in any conflict; see Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, pp. 141–2.
94. Zalmay Khalilzad, et al., *The United States and Asia: Toward a New U.S. Strategy and Force Posture* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001), pp. 71–4.
95. Dept. of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: 30 September 2001), p. 27.
96. Eric A. McVadon, quoted in “U.S. Military Presence in Asia to Grow,” *Taipei Times*, 3 October 2001, available on the World Wide Web: <http://www.taipetimes.com/news/2001/10.03/print/0000105487> (3 October 2001).
97. On the problems the U.S. Navy may face in the littorals, see Hughes, *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, pp. 165–7; and Tim Sloth Joergensen [Cdr., RDN], “U.S. Navy Operations in Littoral Waters: 2000 and Beyond,” *Naval War College Review*, Spring 1998.
98. Vego, *Naval Strategy*, pp. 34–7; and Joergensen, “U.S. Navy Operations in Littoral Waters.”
99. Mark Farrer, “China and Taiwan: An Opening Capability Gap Underwater,” *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, February 2001, p. 74. See also Göran Larsbrink, “Anti Submarine Warfare in Shallow Waters,” *Naval Forces*, no. 1, 2000. It should be noted that submarine operations also can be restricted by shallow waters.
100. Hughes, *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, p. 311.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 198–202.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 346, and chaps. 11 and 12. On the concept of friction see Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), book 1, chap. 7, pp. 119–21.
103. If any conflict broke out and the United States became directly involved, there would be strong political pressure to avoid striking the Chinese mainland, for example. For a hypothetical case involving similar constraints, see Hughes, *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, pp. 321–47.
104. *Ibid.*, pp. 306–9 and 346.
105. U.S. Navy, “Forward . . . From the Sea: The Navy Operational Concept,” March 1997, on the World Wide Web: www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/policy/fromsea/ffseanoc.html, p. 6, (22 February 2001).
106. *Ibid.*, p. 5. The new Quadrennial Defense Review recognizes that America’s ability to operate in “distant anti-access or area-denial environments” should be enhanced, however, as one of six new operational goals identified as “the focus for DoD’s transformation efforts.” Dept. of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, pp. 30–1.
107. Vego, *Naval Strategy*, pp. 292–300; Joergensen, “U.S. Navy Operations in Littoral Waters,” pp. 26–27; and Hughes, *Fleet Tactics*, chap. 12, esp. p. 347. See also, however, Stephen C. Audrand, “Blue-Water Power,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, September 2001, pp. 42–3.
108. On nonlinearity, see Alan Beyerchen, “Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War,” *International Security*, Winter 1992–93.
109. See Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” pp. 74 and 78. On U.S. vulnerabilities to mine warfare, see Anthony E. Mitchell, “Power Projection and Countermine Operations,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn–Winter 1998–99; and on America’s mine warfare programs, see Thomas Schoene, “Mine Warfare in the New Millennium,” *Naval Forces*, no. 1, 2000.

