RECENT RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN AND TAIWAN'S DEFENSE CAPABILITIES
Hungdah Chiu and June Teufel Dreyer

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Hungdah Chiu** and June Teufel Dreyer***

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CHAPTER I:
RECENT RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN
SINCE 1993: TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL
HEARING ON THE GROWTH OF THE CHINESE
MILITARY AND ITS THREAT TO TAIWAN*

Hungdah Chiu

With the relaxation of tensions since the early 1980s, Taiwan and the mainland have moved rapidly toward closer relations in the cultural, social, trade, and investment areas. On April 27-29, 1993, Chairman Koo Chen-fu of the nominally unofficial organization, the Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF) of Taiwan, and Chairman Wang Daohan of the mainland's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), met at Singapore. The talks resulted in the conclusion of four “unofficial” agreements. One of the agreements provides a system of regular contacts between the chairmen, vice-chairmen, and secretaries-general of the SEF and ARATS. The parties also agreed to negotiate to resolve issues growing out of the increased contacts between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan. After the Koo-Wang talks, tensions in the Taiwan Strait were reduced dramatically.

Taiwan's investment in the mainland continued to increase and annual trade between Taiwan and the mainland also increased rapidly. The Chinese mainland is now Taiwan's largest trading partner.

On January 30, 1995, President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China (PRC) delivered a speech concerning Chinese unification. The tone was basically conciliatory; he urged the Taiwan side to engage in negotiation for peaceful unification and, as a first step toward unification, to negotiate a formal cessation of hostilities under the principle of “one China.” Moreover, Jiang held that political differences should not affect or interfere with eco-

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* Testimony of Hungdah Chiu, Professor of Law and Director of the East Asian Legal Studies Program, University of Maryland School of Law, delivered on October 12, 1995, at the hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs.
1. For the English translation of the four agreements, see Hungdah Chiu, “Koo-Wang Talks and the Prospect of Building Constructive and Stable Relations Across the Taiwan Strait,” Issues & Studies, Vol. 29, No. 8 (August 1993), pp. 28-34.
nomic cooperation between the two sides. He also appealed to the Chinese cultural tradition shared by the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait by stating:

The splendid culture of 5,000 years created by the sons and daughters of all ethnic groups of China has become the tie keeping the entire Chinese people close at heart and constitutes an important basis for the peaceful reunification of the motherland. People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait should inherit and carry forward the fine traditions of the Chinese culture.³

On April 8, 1995, President Lee Teng-hui responded to Jiang’s speech in a six-point proposal.⁴ Lee noted that Taiwan formally renounced its use of force against the mainland in 1991, in the expectation that all Chinese people would be relieved from the suffering that resulted from civil war. By the same token, in order to pave the way for peace talks on ending the state of hostility, he hoped that the mainland authorities also would publicly forego any intention of attacking Taiwan by force. Moreover, he urged that trade and economic ties between Taiwan and the mainland should be enhanced and developed into mutually beneficial and complementary relations. He also pointed out that the profound Chinese culture inherited by all Chinese should be a basis for both sides to foster brotherhood and enhance cooperative exchanges in technology and information science, as well as academic studies and sports activities. Furthermore, he said that, faced with the global trend of expending great effort to develop the economy, the Chinese should complement and benefit each other and share experiences.

In late May 1995, the SEF and the ARATS held the first preparatory consultations for the second Koo-Wang Talks to be held in Beijing. They planned the second preparatory consultations for the period between June 27 and July 1, and intended to hold the Talks around July 20, 1995. It was expected that during the second Koo-Wang Talks, both chairmen could privately discuss certain sensitive issues such as how to start the negotiations for the cessation of hostilities and Taiwan’s participation in certain international organizations or conferences. There was no sign of tension in Taiwan-mainland relations at the time.

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³. Ibid., pp. 85, 86.
Coincidently, President Lee Teng-hui was invited by Cornell University, his alma mater, to deliver a speech at the Olin lecture. On June 1, 1995, the United States Department of State decided to grant Lee an entry visa for his private visit to Cornell between June 7 and 12, 1995. Before Lee left Taipeh for the United States, the mass media in the Chinese mainland suddenly launched a series of attacks against Lee, accusing him of, among other things, promoting Taiwan independence or "two Chinas," attempting to internationalize the Taiwan question, and departing from the "one China" policy. In his lecture entitled, "Always in My Heart," he described the successful democratic reform in Taiwan, the reliance on public opinion as a basis of formulating government policy, and the sense of sovereignty that belongs to the people in Taiwan and others. With respect to the Chinese unification issue, he said:

I have repeatedly called on the mainland authorities to end ideological confrontation and to open up a new era of peaceful competition across the Taiwan Strait and reunification. Only by following a "win-win" strategy will the best interests of all the Chinese people be served. We believe that mutual respect will gradually lead to the peaceful reunification of China under a system of democracy, freedom and equitable distribution of wealth.

To demonstrate our sincerity and goodwill, I have already indicated on other occasions that I would welcome an opportunity for leaders from the mainland to meet their counterparts from Taiwan during the occasion of some international event, and I would not even rule out the possibility of a meeting between Mr. Jiang Zemin and myself.

Lee's speech drew sharp criticism from the Chinese communist media, which claimed, among other things, that Taiwan was a local government with no sovereignty and that Lee's view promoted "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan," exploiting "public opinion" to oppose the reunification of the motherland. The Chinese communist media also severely criticized the United States for pro-

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motoring “two Chinas” and “Taiwan independence.” In fact, U.S. federal officials neither received Lee nor granted him the honor of a visiting foreign head of state. During this period, the exchange of visits between the SEF and the ARATS continued. However, on June 16, 1995, the ARATS wrote to the SEF, stating that:

In view of a series of actions taken recently by Taiwan which have damaged cross-strait relations and which have seriously affected the convocation of the second Wang-Gu [Koo] meeting and the atmosphere of the preparatory consultations, the meeting will have to be postponed.8

After this decision, the PRC mass media published a series of articles attacking President Lee Teng-hui personally, alleging that he was attempting to split China, seeking independent sovereign status for Taiwan, and resisting reunification under the Chinese communist “one country, two systems” principle. These accusations were followed by a Chinese communist military exercise, dubbed “East Sea No. 5,” held off China’s Zhejiang province, north of Taiwan.9 The PRC then announced that it would conduct surface-to-surface missile tests in the East China Sea between July 21, and 28, 1995, over a circular area of ten square nautical miles, with the central point less than 100 miles northeast of Taiwan.10

On August 24, 1995, the authoritative Renmin Ribao (People’s Daily) published a lengthy article on its front page entitled, “Li Denghui [Lee Teng-hui] the Person,” which engaged in a most vitriolic attack on Lee. The article concluded with an appeal for peace but also with a threat of the use of force as follows:

We must put an end to the tentative separation and hostilities between the two sides, improve cross-strait relations at an early date, and work together for our economic development. People on neither side of the strait want any more social unrest or war. However, everything Li Denghui [Lee Teng-hui] has done goes radically against the will of the people. He has wantonly instigated cross-

7. See Kuo Ch’ung-wu, supra note 5, pp. 104-105.
strait hostilities and wildly attempted to push the mother-land toward the disastrous abyss of division. The policy of "division and separate rule"\textsuperscript{11} and "pragmatic diplomacy"\textsuperscript{12} that he upholds is a policy for creating "two Chin-as,"\textsuperscript{13} or "one China, one Taiwan"—a policy which the Chinese people will never compromise on or tolerate because it is a major issue of principle closely related to the Chinese nation's fundamental interests and state sovereignty. When there are conflicts arising from such a fundamental principle, cross-strait relations can never be peaceful. Currently, the feelings of people on the island are volatile, the stock market has plummeted, and the public lacks a sense of security. The fundamental cause of these problems lies in Li Denghui’s irresponsible line and policy. The Taiwan people’s fortune and misfortune can by no means be controlled by people like Li Denghui. Sweeping Li Denghui into the dustbin of history is the common historical responsibility of Chinese people on the two sides of the strait\textsuperscript{14}

In order not to increase the tension between Taiwan and the mainland, President Lee did not rebut the Chinese communist accusations against him, but on September 3, 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the victory of the Chinese War of Resistance against Japanese aggression, he appealed to the Chinese communist authorities to seek common ground and to resolve differences based on Jiang Zemin's eight points for reunification, announced on January 30, 1995, and his six-part response.\textsuperscript{15}

On September 30, 1995, the eve of the Chinese communist national day, a commentary of the official China News Agency again criticized Lee and insisted that Taiwan accept the "one country, two systems" principle as the basis for unification. Premier Li Peng also

11. The Chinese communist authorities have refused to acknowledge that the present situation in China is "division and separate rule" [Fen-lieh yu fen-chih]. When a Chinese Nationalist official in Taiwan refers to this term, he merely intends to describe the phenomenon of the two areas (Taiwan and the mainland) under separate administration; otherwise, there would be no question of reunification. However, the Chinese communists are very sensitive to this term.

12. The Chinese communist authorities consider Taiwan's contacts with countries without maintaining diplomatic relations as promoting "two Chinas."

13. The Chinese communist authorities consider any of Taiwan's contacts with foreign countries as promoting "two Chinas."


stated that the two military exercises in the Donghai (East China Sea) demonstrated the determination of the Chinese communists to protect national sovereignty and territorial integrity.\textsuperscript{16} There was no softening of the Chinese communist position to use force to achieve reunification on its terms.\textsuperscript{17}

President Lee is in a difficult position. There is not the slightest possibility that the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan of the Republic of China in Taiwan will approve the Chinese communist "one country, two systems" principle for unification. The reason is simple: the Chinese people in Taiwan do not want to give up their sovereignty and place themselves under Chinese communist rule. Moreover, a third of the voters support outright Taiwan independence. Any effort by President Lee to accept the Chinese communist "one country, two systems" principle would only serve to push many of his current supporters to seek independence.\textsuperscript{18}

The present policy of President Lee is to set unification as a long-term goal while continuing to increase contacts with the Chinese mainland in order to influence its adoption of a democratic system. When that day comes, China can be unified peacefully. The Chinese communists, however, have rejected that approach and, thus, tension in the Taiwan Strait will continue to be high in the foreseeable future.

In view of the above circumstances, what should be the U.S. policy toward China (Taiwan and the mainland)?

Different U.S. administrations under the Democratic Party and the Republican Party repeatedly have stated that the United States supports the "one-China" policy as reflected in the three communiqués (the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué,\textsuperscript{19} the 1979 Communiqué on Establishing Diplomatic Relations,\textsuperscript{20} and the 1982 Taiwan Arms Sales Communiqué\textsuperscript{21}) and in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.\textsuperscript{22}

Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord explained the merits of this policy at the September 27, 1994 Senate hearing as follows:


\textsuperscript{17} See "Beijing Media Urge to 'Keep Taiwan' by Force," \textit{FBIS, China}, July 20, 1995, pp. 51-52.


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., Vol. 79, No. 2022 (January 1979), p. 25.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., Vol. 82, No. 2067 (October 1982), p. 20.

The policy has been essential in maintaining peace, stability, and economic development on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and throughout the region. It has buttressed expansion of bilateral contacts between China and Taiwan, including a broadening of social and economic linkages that have improved standards of living both in Taiwan and in the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile, the United States has maintained mutually beneficial ties with both the PRC and Taiwan.\(^23\)

Section 2(b)(3) of the Taiwan Relations Act aims "to make clear that the United States' decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means." Section 2(4) then declares that the United States will "consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means . . . a threat to peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States."

The August 17, 1982 U.S.-China joint communiqué contains a provision in which the United States agreed to gradually reduce arms sales to Taiwan. This policy was contingent, however, on China continuing its "fundamental policy of pursuing peaceful means to resolve the long-standing dispute between Taiwan and the Mainland," as stated by then Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, John H. Holdridge, at the August 18, 1982 House Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing.\(^24\) At that time, Mr. Holdridge said:

Let me summarize the essence of our understanding on this point: China has announced a fundamental policy of pursuing peaceful means to resolve the long-standing dispute between Taiwan and the Mainland. Having in mind this policy and the consequent reduction in the military threat to Taiwan, we have stated our intention to reduce arms sales to Taiwan gradually, and said that in quantity and quality we would not go beyond levels established since normalization. This follows from a literal reading of the communiqué. While we have no reason to believe that China's policy will change, an inescapable corollary to these mutually interdependent policies is that

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23. Statement made at hearing.
should that happen, we will reassess ours. Our guiding principle is now and will continue to be that embodied in the Taiwan Relations Act; the maintenance of a self-defense capability sufficient to meet the military needs of Taiwan, but with the understanding that China's maintenance of a peaceful approach to the Taiwan question will permit gradual reductions in arms sales.  

Therefore, the United States should remind the PRC of its above stated position that any attempt to use military force in the Taiwan Strait will prompt the United States to reassess its policy toward China and undermine the basis of U.S.-PRC relations. In this connection, we should well remember the lesson learned by former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, as a result of his unfortunate speech delivered at the National Press Club on January 23, 1950. In his speech, Acheson pointed out that the American defense perimeter in the Western Pacific ran along the Aleutians through Japan and the Ryukyus to the Philippines. South Korea was left out of this defense line. Apparently, the North Korean communists thought that the United States was not interested in protecting South Korea. Therefore, on June 25, 1950, the North Korean communists invaded South Korea.

Finally, in the U.S.-China Joint Communiqué of August 17, 1982, the United States "reiterates that it has no intention of infringing on Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, or interfering in China's internal affairs, or pursuing a policy of 'two Chinas,' or 'one China, one Taiwan.' " Therefore, it is important for the United States to make clear to all groups in Taiwan that this remains the established policy of the United States. To give advocates of Taiwan "independence" or "self-determination" a false expectation that the United States would intervene to support their cause in the event of Chinese Communist intervention will encourage them to move Taiwan on a course of military confrontation with the Chinese Communists that can only bring disaster to all the people of Taiwan.

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27. Ibid., p. 116.
CHAPTER II:
THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S NATIONAL DEFENSE

June Teufel Dreyer

1. Introduction

The search for a more secure international persona for the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC) begun under the leadership of Lee Teng-hui has on occasion heightened tensions with the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. Fearing that greater global recognition of the ROC's sovereignty weakens its claim that Taiwan is simply a rebellious province, the mainland has frequently responded to the ROC's diplomatic démarches with military threats. It has consistently refused to foreswear the use of force against Taiwan.

Preparing for the eventuality of an attack from the mainland has been a major preoccupation of Taiwan strategists since U.S. President Jimmy Carter abrogated the two countries' mutual security treaty in 1979. The ROC's most recent White Paper, published in March 1994, listed its planners' estimate of the six most likely ways that the PRC might attack as:

1. an airstrike across the Taiwan Strait
2. a sudden missile attack on Taiwan's west coast
3. contriving or taking advantage of a fishing dispute to confront the ROC navy
4. luring ROC air and sea vessels into battle after first attacking ROC-held offshore islands or supply vessels plying the Taiwan Strait
5. rapid invasion and takeover of ROC-held islands using a small combat force
6. a conventional, full-scale assault on Taiwan, using a combination of strategies and forces

Another commonly-predicted scenario posits the PRC announcing and enforcing a blockade around Taiwan in an attempt to starve the island into capitulation.

2. ROC Modernization Efforts

Assembling and equipping a force that is capable of dealing with these and other, perhaps unforeseen, scenarios has been inhib-
ited in a number of ways. One major constraint is size. The PRC's more than 1.2 billion people are sixty times as numerous as the ROC's 21 million, and the disparities in land area and natural resources between the two countries are even greater. A second problem for the ROC is political: the PRC has put pressure on foreign countries not to sell military weapons to Taiwan. For example, when in the early 1980s the Netherlands agreed to sell two diesel-electric submarines to the ROC, China recalled its ambassador to the Hague. A decade later, it reacted to France selling Mirage 2000-5s to Taiwan by ordering the French consulate in Guangdong to close. China also excluded a French company from consideration for a construction contract it had been bidding for.

The ROC has sought to counter the size disadvantage through creating military training programs far superior to those of the mainland so as to maximize the potential of its smaller numbers. Cognizant that the confrontation, if it comes, will have its most crucial aspects in the air and at sea, Taiwan’s defense ministry has cut the size of its largest service, the army, by one-third: from 300,000 to 200,000. The navy has been increased slightly, to 100,000, or 25 percent of total military strength. The air force has also been increased to 100,000, or 25 percent of total strength. The combined force of 400,000 men represents 1.7 percent of the ROC's population.

Taiwan has also sought to reduce the numerical disparity between it and the mainland through technology, deploying weapons with better capabilities than those of the PRC. Due to the limited size of the domestic market for such weapons, it is most efficient to purchase these weapons from abroad. When the objections of the PRC preclude foreign purchases, Taiwan has sought to develop weapons indigenously. Such indigenous research and development is the responsibility of the Chung-shan Institute of Science and Technology (CIST), which may rely exclusively on local sources or work in cooperation with foreign partners, as seems appropriate to a given project.

In recent years, partly because defense production lines in developed capitalist countries received sharply fewer orders after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western defense-production industries have been increasingly interested in selling weapons to Taiwan. The United States has since the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979 been obliged to provide the ROC with such defensive weapons as necessary to maintain a "sufficient self-de-
fense capability.” The language of the act is of necessity vague, and there is room for different interpretations of what weapons should be made available and in what numbers to constitute self-sufficiency. The impact of this provision was also blunted for a time by a communiqué signed in 1982 between the United States and China. In this communiqué, which came to be known as Shanghai II, the U.S. stated that it did not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, and that its arms sales to the ROC would not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years. As an executive agreement, Shanghai II did not have the force of an act of Congress. Moreover, it did not preclude the sale of military technology as distinct from actual weapons. And, by indexing the cost of weapons to the inflation rate, the dollar amounts of arms sold could be kept within the limits of the 1982 communiqué while continuing substantial arms exports to the ROC. Nonetheless, the supply of certain military items was adversely affected. In May 1994, the U.S. Congress voted to give President Clinton authority to increase arms sales to Taiwan, thus effectively removing the restrictions of Shanghai II.

a. Air Force

The real breakthrough for the ROC, however, was made in the previous administration. President Bush, concerned with a backlash from idled aerospace workers in the electorally crucial states of Texas and California, agreed to sell 140 F-16 fighter planes to Taiwan for $5.95 billion. France soon followed suit, announcing that the ROC had ordered 60 Mirage 2000-5 fighters and 1000 air-to-air missiles for $6.6 billion. Other orders quickly followed. The F-16s were supposed to be the older A/B model, but Taiwan was able to take advantage of a mid-life update (MLU) program. Jointly financed by Belgium, Denmark, Norway, the ROC, and the U.S., the MLU program provides a modified modular mission computer and improved electronics systems to the earlier models. Taiwan also

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4. Bush had another motive as well: the PRC had, over U.S. objections, agreed to purchase Sukhoi-27 fighter planes from Russia.
leased forty T-38 jet trainers from the U.S. It purchased four E-2T *Hawkeye* early warning planes, renowned for their superb air-surveillance and combat command capabilities. These were joined by twelve *Seahawk* anti-submarine helicopters, OH-58D observation helicopters, and AH-1W *Super Cobra* attack helicopters.° Taiwan and Israel agreed to form a joint company to upgrade aircraft,° and CIST, with assistance from an unspecified foreign power, adapted a C-130 transport plane for electronic warfare.° Some C-110 transport planes were overhauled to become bombers.°

Air defense was upgraded with the introduction of the *Chiang Wang* (Strong Net) system in mid-1994, culminating an eight-year research and development project. Strong Net is also sometimes referred to as MADS, an acronym for modified air defense system. It involved establishing an underground air operations control center using advanced computers to link up with various radar positions, air bases, army surface-to-air missile bases, and the air defense command center of the air force. A massive undertaking, the creation of Strong Net involved updating the military's central computer system and its associated equipment; increasing systematic recording and reproduction capabilities; connecting fixed and mobile radars; linking the army's improved Hawk (and, later, upgraded Patriot) surface-to-air missile systems with the navy's war operations center, the air force's air defense command center, the automatic control system of the civil aeronautics administration; and including a system for distinguishing enemy planes from non-enemy planes.

Advanced computer data processing enables information gathered by radar to be quickly assessed, allowing much faster assessment of intruders within the ROC's defense zone. The memory capacity of the system's new computers was said to be 500 times that of the *Tien Wang* (Sky Net) system it replaced, and their processing speed was estimated as 60 times faster.° The new system is said to have increased the warning time of an attack by the mainland from five minutes to 25 minutes. Strong Net was a joint pro-

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ject of America's Hughes Corporation and CIST; it covers the western half of Taiwan, i.e. that coast nearest the PRC, while Sky Net was moved to the less vulnerable eastern coast of the ROC.  

b. Maritime Defense

As for maritime defense, the *Kuang Hua* class of frigates, based on the U.S. Oliver Hazard Perry model but with significant modifications and upgrades, began to enter service in the early 1990s. The lead ship of the class, the *Ch'eng Kung*, was, with exquisite symbolism, named for Koxinga (Cheng Ch'eng-kung), the Ming dynasty loyalist who fled from the mainland to Taiwan in the fourteenth century to avoid being ruled by what he regarded illegitimate usurpers. Equipped with Phalanx missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes, anti-submarine helicopters, and indigenously-produced *Hsiung Feng* ship-to-ship missiles, the ship is well regarded by international naval experts.

In 1991, France agreed to risk the PRC's displeasure by selling the ROC six *Lafayette* class guided-missile frigates, for a total cost of $4.8 billion. To be used in anti-submarine warfare (ASW), they have been designated the *Kang Ting* class. Each ship will be equipped with a 16-unit set of modified *Sidewinder* missiles, a helicopter, and eight *Exocet* 40 millimeter missiles. The United States then agreed to lease six *Knox* class frigates to Taiwan for five years for a total cost of $10.9 billion. The *Knox* ships, designated the *Chin Yang* class in the ROC, were originally designed for use against the Soviet Union's submarine fleet, and are equipped with three kinds of sonar systems. Each carries a helicopter plus M-16 missile launchers and the above-mentioned indigenously-produced *Hsiung Feng* ship-to-ship missiles. Eight hundred ROC naval officers subsequently underwent operations and maintenance training at the naval base in Long Beach, California.  

The lease of these ships enabled the ROC to cancel the last ship of its original eight-ship order of *Kuang Hua*-class vessels, thus saving many millions of dollars. *Newport*-class tank landing ships were also leased to the ROC following a favorable vote by the U.S. Congress. The American navy has declined to reveal the costs involved. Each ship can carry

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700 fully-equipped soldiers and 500 tons of military equipment. The navy's strength was further enhanced by the commissioning in December 1994 of the ROC's first missile patrol vessel, the Ching Chiang. Equipped with a night-vision system, the vessels can be used for coastal patrol, escorting fishing ships, or supporting larger ships in battle. Other coastal patrol boats were being purchased as well.

The navy increased its minesweeping capability in 1995 with the purchase of four U.S. minesweeping vessels. Originally manufactured in the 1950s, the ships came equipped with two cannons and recently updated state-of-the-art radar and sonar systems. The navy's anti-submarine and mine countermeasures capabilities were further strengthened by the commission of the Ta Kuan naval ocean survey vessel in September 1995. The Italian-built vessel is equipped with a sophisticated sonar system that can locate objects at depths in excess of 10,000 meters. At approximately the same time, it was announced that four minesweepers which had been purchased from Germany in 1991 as commercial vessels had been operating in Taiwan waters disguised as oil exploration ships, with their crew members wearing civilian clothing. They formally joined the ROC navy in March 1995.

Although these acquisitions, when added to the existing inventory, make the ROC one of the major naval powers of the region, several lacunae continue to exist. Taiwan's efforts to lease amphibious landing ships have been blocked. The ROC had requested to lease three amphibious landing craft for transporting tanks and heavy armor. Greece and Turkey, by contrast, received immediate approval despite the longstanding mutual hostility between the two. And Taiwan has been unable to purchase submarines since the Netherlands purchase a decade ago. Germany, Australia, and

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the United States have all been approached, to no avail.\textsuperscript{18} In June 1995, a frustrated Ministry of Defense official suggested that perhaps the ROC should attempt to buy Kilo-class submarines from Russia,\textsuperscript{19} prompting a number of people to ask about the wisdom of procuring the same submarine as one's adversary was acquiring. No news of purchases, or even negotiations, followed. In the fall, Navy Commander-in-Chief Ku Chong-lien reiterated his desire to purchase 24 submarines, saying that ten was the minimum number necessary to protect the security of the ROC's sea lanes.\textsuperscript{20} The favored boat was Germany's HDW 209, a diesel electric model which has been sold to Turkey as well as several Latin American states. The ROC's bid to purchase ten HDW 209s was rejected by Germany in 1993, after hard lobbying by the PRC.\textsuperscript{21}

c. Ground Forces

Consonant with the belief that air and sea defense should have priority, the army's force modernization program has been modest by comparison. In a somewhat controversial 1995 purchase, the ROC army acquired 260 M60-A3 tanks from the United States. Critics had argued that this model was not well suited to Taiwan's rugged terrain. The government explained that PRC opposition had made it impossible to acquire more desirable models, including the American M-1, British Challenger, or German Leopard II. The M60-A3s have night-fighting capabilities plus an excellent stability system that allows them to shoot accurately even when moving at high speeds; the army's anti-landing defense capability will be substantially increased when the tanks and AH-1W attack helicopters that it has ordered are deployed.\textsuperscript{22} Critics countered that the domestically-produced M48-H Yung Hu (Brave Tiger) had outperformed the M60-A3 in terms of fire-control and its stability system, adding that Brave Tiger's cross-country capability and fire-


\textsuperscript{21} Lilian Lin and Sofia Wu, "Western Countries Urged to Sell Subs to Taiwan," CNA, November 26, 1995.

\textsuperscript{22} Benjamin Yeh, "Army Announces Receipt of M60-A3 Tanks From U.S." CNA, March 7, 1995.
power were also superior to those of the PRC's T-80 tanks. In any event, the U.S. tanks were acquired, with the army's elite motorized division in Linko chosen to receive the first shipment to arrive. This presumably indicates the area where the defense ministry expects that the PRC will try to land its troops first.

The U.S. government also approved the sale of more than 700 XM8 armored gun systems (AGS) to Taiwan in 1994, the same year that it was approved for use in the American Army. The agreement, the first export of the weapon, is likely to include co-production. The XM8 will replace the ROC's M24 and M41 light tanks which are, respectively, 50 and 40 years old. It has a computerized fire control system and day/thermal night signs; an automatic loader for the XM8's 105 mm rifled tank gun allows the crew to be reduced to three men.

Another priority area for the army has been to acquire anti-aircraft missiles, with CIST devoting an estimated $700 million into the development thereof. The resulting Tien Kung (Sky Bow) missile reportedly performed well in tests, and an additional $200 million was budgeted for production. However, when the U.S. indicated its willingness to sell the ROC upgraded Patriot systems for $121 million, the Sky Bow order was cut from nine systems to six. This cutback, as with similar reductions in orders for the IDF plane and the Kuang Hua frigates, illustrates what must be a frustration for ROC defense planners: the United States becomes willing to sell or lease weapons (in these cases, the Patriot, the F-16, and Knox class frigates) only when Taiwan has developed a comparable indigenous capability.

This is doubtless a factor in the ROC seeking out arms suppliers other than the United States, to keep the U.S. from having what is in effect a veto power over the nation's ability to defend itself. The decision proved effective when, after having been refused permission to purchase shoulder-fired Stinger missiles, the ROC was able to purchase the comparable Mistral missile from France. The

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agreement came, however, at a high price: France reportedly asked $900,000 for each of the 550 sets of missiles, which includes a tripod launching pad, a ready-to-be launched missile, and two spares ordered. The announced destinations of the first *Mistral* s to be delivered were six combat units in northern, central, and southern Taiwan plus units on the offshore islands.27

d. Problems

Until the 1995 tensions that followed Lee Teng-hui’s visit to the United States, the portion of the ROC’s budget devoted to defense had actually been declining, from approximately 30 percent in the mid-1980s to below 25 percent in the early 1990s. However, given the ROC’s strong economic growth, this was a declining share of a steadily enlarging pie: the defense budget increased from $NT 161.3 billion ($US 4.1 billion calculated at the then-exchange rate of $NT 39=$US 1)28 to $NT 251.2 billion ($US 9.55 billion calculated at the present exchange rate of $NT 26.3=$US 1).29 Although these figures are in current rather than constant dollars, the ROC’s inflation rate has been low over the entire period. With so much money being spent and so many suppliers being contacted, it is not surprising that corruption should occur. In one spectacular instance that occurred in December 1993, the executive director of the ROC navy’s weapons acquisition office was murdered after he announced his intention to inform on irregularities in procurement.30

There were open admissions that the procurement system contained irregularities, with retired officers engaging in influence peddling, and pledges that efforts were being made to reform the system.31 In June 1994, the Control Yuan impeached eight air force generals for negligence in connection with the acquisition of anti-submarine helicopters—the first time that impeachment proceed-

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ings had ever been instituted against such high-ranking officers.\textsuperscript{32} And in July 1995, seven retired generals were among 23 persons censured over a 1985 contract with then-Grumman aircraft.\textsuperscript{33}

Yet another problem for Taiwan's defense planners was to interest enough highly-qualified individuals to embark on a military career. A legislator knowledgeable on defense matters opined that soldiers must be compensated on a scale comparable to that in the civilian sector before this situation could improve. And the status of noncommissioned officers should be raised so that it approached the level of regular officers.\textsuperscript{34}

The ROC also lacks space for large live-fire drills and risks provoking the PRC if it conducts them. At one point, the air force was contemplating leasing the skies over a foreign country so that its pilots' training missions could range over a wider area.\textsuperscript{35} This problem is also being addressed through the creation of computer simulations so that military tactics can be tested and refined without large-scale live-fire exercises and the mobilization of large numbers of troops. War games reportedly focus on determining the most efficient battlefield measures to repel mainland attacks from the air or sea. The objective is to ensure that Taiwan's smaller and more mobile units defeat the mainland's larger but significantly slower invasion forces.\textsuperscript{36}

Defense against incoming missiles is another weakness in the ROC's defenses. After the first of the PRC's two missile tests in the Taiwan Strait in 1995, a senior official in the defense ministry said frankly:

We simply don't have the equipment to detect the missiles even if they have already been fired. Any information can come only from abroad, and we currently have not been told anything.\textsuperscript{37}

In October, Defense Minister Chiang Chung-ling, responding to an interpellation by the Legislative Yuan, said that acquiring such a


\textsuperscript{33} CNA, July 31, 1995.

\textsuperscript{34} Chien-tuan K'e-chi (op. cit.), p. 18.

\textsuperscript{35} There is precedent for this in the civilian sector. Taiwan's flag carrier, China Airlines, has leased airspace over the Philippines for training its pilots.

\textsuperscript{36} Charles Man, "Computer Simulations Outline Invasion Scenarios," Eastern Express (Hong Kong), October 24, 1995, p. 13.

detection capability had become a major priority after the PRC's tests. During the following month, the ROC indicated that it was interested in joining the U.S. in theater missile defense (TMD) development, and that it planned to raise the issue of ROC participation at the annual Taiwan-U.S. arms sales meeting in 1996.

The IDF fighters have experienced engine problems. In 1994, it was revealed that 28 of the engines on the first 20 prototypes of the twin-engine plane had to be replaced—that is, 60 percent—and the air force was concerned over the seepage of fuel from the IDF's oil tanks. In July 1995 an IDF plunged into the sea off western Taiwan after defects in its fuel system caused both engines to shut down. Further deliveries of the plane were halted pending a major overhaul of the system.

Another potential hazard is integration of the diverse systems being acquired. As one analyst points out, the fact that the ROC's ships and fittings are from so many countries may pose a problem for logistics support. In general, defense experts give high marks to the ROC military modernization program on this score, and point out that Taiwan's efforts in this field far outweigh those of the mainland, which sometimes seems not to have noticed that the problem exists. In the case of the Perry-class frigates, the ROC bought a proven design and simply put it together, purchasing all of the attendant subsystems (command, control, communications and intelligence (C3I); radar; close-in weapons systems, etc.) from the U.S., which has already integrated them. However, integrating the datalinks between Mirages and F-16s may be more difficult. A system is often only as good as its weakest link. While foreign analysts judge the ROC as good at "add-up technology," it remains to be seen whether the country's defense planners have created what might be called an effective system of systems which will enable Taiwan's military forces to "fight smart."

42. Hu Hsun, op. cit., p. 25.
3. The PRC Military

Mainland China is the ROC's only plausible adversary. Its People's Liberation Army (PLA; term includes navy, air force and marines as well as ground forces) has three million active-duty members, or 7.5 times as many as the ROC. The PLA is also backed up by the world's largest pool of reservists and militiamen. Mainland China is a nuclear power; Taiwan is not. In virtually every category of comparison, the mainland's equipment far outnumbers that of Taiwan: missiles, submarines, frigates, fighter aircraft, and the like.

The odds are not, however, as daunting as they might seem at first. The mainland's Central Military Commission has explicitly ruled out the use of nuclear weapons in the recovery of Taiwan, and this restriction is apt to be adhered to even in a large-scale war. Détonating nuclear warheads in support of an invasion of Taiwan would belie the PRC's frequently repeated claims to be freeing its fellow Chinese from the bondage of their "unpopular" government. There is danger of fallout to the heavily populated coastal areas of the mainland nearest to Taiwan. Japan, with its well-known nuclear allergy, can be anticipated to respond angrily. In mid-1995, Japan announced the postponement of certain loans in retaliation for Chinese nuclear testing in far-off Xinjiang. It is certain to be considerably more strident in response to actual nuclear attack in its immediate area. The PRC values Japanese investment in and loans to its modernization program. With memories of Japanese cruelty to China during World War II still vivid, the PRC also fears taking any action that might provoke Japan to remilitarize. As well, a nuclear attack would cross a threshold that has been carefully maintained since World War II, thus inviting international condemnation. In light of these factors, it is unlikely that the mainland will exercise the nuclear option against Taiwan. A public threat to use nuclear force against Taiwan would carry many of the same adverse consequences for the PRC as actual use.

As for manpower, Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms have made the military the employer of last resort for many, and officers worry that they will be commanding an army of the unfit or unwilling. The army's combat effectiveness has been further eroded by

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Deng's encouraging it to participate in the country's economic modernization. Many PLA units seem more concerned with honing their business skills than their warfighting capabilities, and would be reluctant combatants. Massive corruption within the military has been a matter of utmost concern to the PRC's central government, but there is no politically or economically feasible way to end it. The same is true of individual units' "small treasuries": private sources of funding which enable the custodians thereof to exercise some discretion in deciding whether, or how quickly and thoroughly, to obey orders from Beijing.

Elite units exist, receiving special rations and other perquisites, and it is these that most concern ROC planners. They are relatively few in number, however, and distributed in many different areas of China, presumably as much to deal with local contingencies as overseas adventures. It would be unwise for the PRC to concentrate all of these units to deal with Taiwan lest "subversive elements" in restive areas such as Tibet and Xinjiang seek to take advantage of Beijing's preoccupation with the invasion of Taiwan to cause problems of their own. Moreover, the PLA lacks the amphibious lift capability to ferry sufficient troops to the island to take it over. At present, it is estimated that two divisions at most—i.e. less than 30,000 men, even if support forces are included—can be transported across the 100-mile wide Taiwan Strait.

Equipment disparities are also less than they might seem: obsolete and obsolescent models abound. The PRC has so far obtained only 26 Su-27 fighter planes from Russia; even if an additional 24 are acquired, as rumored, they will hardly be enough to establish air dominance. Since maintenance standards are poor, a number of these 50 may have either crashed or been grounded for repair at any given time. Discussions have been held with Israel with regard to development and production of the F-10, also known as the J-10, which is based on the Lavi. However, Western defense analysts are doubtful that the plane can be deployed before 2002, if at all. Another expert opines that the only way the PRC can get the F-10 into serial production would be under close Israeli supervision of the sort that would be difficult for the Chinese to accept.

Air-to-air refueling capability exists more in theory than in practice, which will limit the planes' time over their targets. Also,

although troop training has improved markedly in recent years, the relatively low educational levels of many recruits plus budgets that do not allow for adequate practice in using equipment which would allow that equipment to achieve maximum potential continue to be problems. Annual flying hours of pilots, a traditional index of readiness, is an excellent example of training inadequacies. The PRC's bomber pilots fly an average of 80 hours a year; fighter pilots, 100 to 110; A-5 ground attack pilots, 150. Much of this time seems to be devoted to elementary navigation. By contrast, the minimum standard for North American Treaty Organization pilots is 180 a year, a standard met by ROC military pilots.47

The PLA's other services face similar problems. This is not to argue that the mainland's military need not be taken seriously. But it does mean that the threat to Taiwan is not as great as the overwhelming disparity in numbers of personnel and equipment might lead one to believe.

4. Attack Scenarios

With regard to the six scenarios envisioned by the ROC's 1994 Defense White Paper, should the mainland initiate an air strike across the Taiwan Strait, the ROC would attempt to destroy the C3I of the PLA air force with such electronic countermeasures as it has positioned on Quemoy and Matsu and other appropriately located emplacements. The Strong Net air defense system, including the E-2T Hawkeyes and ground-based radars would detect oncoming mainland aircraft. The ROC air force would scramble its planes and attempt to destroy them. The mainland planes that get through will be met by ground-to-air missiles.

ROC estimates are that the maximum number of enemy planes that can be on target over western Taiwan at any given time is 168. However, at least thus far, the mainland's air force has not shown itself capable of handling more than one hundred warplanes simultaneously in battle. Taking into account other factors such as the performance of the airplanes, the physical condition of pilots, and the quality of logistics support, the Chinese communists will be able to dispatch three or four batches of planes daily. Hence, at least in theory, the maximum number of "usable" airplanes for each attack would be 390, and the maximum daily number of sorties, 1,560. The mainland air force will seek to gain air superiority so that its navy can begin transporting landing forces to Taiwan.

In 1994, the commander in chief of the ROC air force revealed that computerized simulations showed a 1:1 rate of losses when a combination of Mirages, F-16s and IDFs faced the PRC's Su-27s, F-7s, and F-8s. Assuming that these predictions are correct—and it should be emphasized that war gaming has frequently failed to predict actual results—Taiwan would lose the air war by gradual attrition: the PRC has far more planes. However, a 1:1 loss ratio sounds exceptionally high, and a PRC victory in the air war is by no means a foregone conclusion. The ROC air force aims at maintaining air superiority over a 463 kilometer fan-shaped area for one week. The assumption is that by the end of one week, one or the other air force will have been destroyed. If it is the PRC's air force, Taiwan will have won. If it is the ROC's, the mainland will launch a maritime attack. Deprived of air support, the ROC navy's resistance will ultimately prove futile: its ships will be destroyed, and a ground invasion of Taiwan can begin.

The second scenario, that of a sudden missile attack on Taiwan's west coast is, according to ROC defense specialists, a blind spot. Taiwan has no military satellite, and even prompt notification by the U.S. is no substitute for real-time warning. The island's anti-missile defense systems, including Patriot emplacements, will be able to destroy some, but not all, of the incoming missiles. There will be great human damage to the densely populated island, but unless the missiles are equipped with nuclear warheads, they will not significantly degrade Taiwan's military capacity. According to a handbook prepared by Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a huge number of missiles would be needed to subdue the capital city alone. Basing its predictions on Iraq's Scud missile attacks, the DPP handbook estimated that each mainland missile would cause about 200 casualties, and that even if the ratio of missiles hitting targets is 100 percent, it would take 30,000 missiles to deal with Taipei's two million inhabitants. The actual ratio of launches to hits would, of course, be considerably smaller. Moreover, the PRC's entire stockpile of M-9 and M-11 missiles is not this

48. For example, in 1982, the U.S. Naval War College was asked to simulate the 1942 Battle of Midway on its computers. It "predicted" that American forces lost. In fact, just the opposite happened: the battle is considered a major turning point of the war against Japan.


large, and the mainland would be disinclined to use them all against Taiwan lest some other power choose this moment to cause trouble for it.\textsuperscript{51}

The DPP handbook's analysis ignores the possibility that it would not be necessary for the entire population to become casualties: successful missile attacks on several selected population centers throughout the island might win the war of nerves. However, as shown by the experience of World War II, civilian populations quickly became inured to heavy bombardments, learned to take precautions against them, and had their will to resist the enemy strengthened rather than weakened by the attacks. The PRC might exhaust its entire stockpile of missiles without obtaining a surrender, while incurring international condemnation.

Taiwan's probable response to the PRC's seizing the pretext of fishing disputes to confront the ROC navy would be to resist the provocation as much as possible. In 1993, a newly-created coast guard assumed responsibility for many of the duties formerly under control of the navy with regard to smuggling— which is frequently carried out by fishing vessels—and entry and exit from Taiwan's coastal waters. During the following year, police boats rather than warships began patrolling the Spratly Islands in an effort to minimize confrontation.\textsuperscript{52} In the event of serious provocation involving fishing disputes, the ROC could retaliate in kind but follow the PRC's lead in escalating the confrontation. The longer the situation lasts, the more the international community will perceive China as bullying Taiwan. Those countries whose shipping is inconvenienced thereby are likely to exert pressure for a peaceful solution.

The best defense against the fourth scenario, that of the PRC luring ROC air and sea forces into battle after first attacking ROC-held islands or supply vessels plying the Taiwan Strait, is to decline to be lured. Garrison forces on Quemoy and Matsu have considerable ability to hold out, and the smaller islands are not worth risking major air and sea assets to defend. Once again, playing for time is the best ROC strategy. As for the fifth scenario, a takeover of Taiwan-held islands using a small combat force, here again the response depends on which islands are targeted. It is likely to be similar to the preceding scenario.

\textsuperscript{51} Lillian Wu, "DPP: Mainland To Pay Price If It Attacks," CNA, October 26, 1995.

\textsuperscript{52} (no author), Xinhua (Beijing), May 16, 1994, in FBIS-CHI, May 18, 1994, p. 91.
The sixth scenario, a full-scale assault on Taiwan using a combination of strategies and forces, can be accomplished only if the PRC wins the air war with the ROC, bearing in mind the caveats discussed in scenario one above. Even here, however, the PLA’s assault on the island is going to be constrained by its inadequate transport capacity. Exercises for dealing with PLA attempts to land on Taiwan’s shores are a frequent subject of ROC military exercises. For example, in the operation code-named Kunlun #2 held in June 1995, anti-landing exercises included infantry and tanks confronting enemy troops, ships, and helicopters.53

In the case of another frequently-mentioned scenario, in which the mainland announces a blockade of Taiwan and starves the island into submission with minimal bloodshed, the PRC’s submarines would be crucial. Ships that risked running the blockade could be torpedoed, and the submarines could lay mines, of which the PRC has a plentiful supply, around the island. The mainland’s navy would board and otherwise harass foreign vessels in the Strait.

The Taiwan Strait is an extremely busy international waterway, and the shipping of many nations would be adversely affected by a blockade. The ability of the mainland navy is better on this western side of the island than it is on the eastern side and, of course, a blockade is not effective unless it can encircle the island completely. The ROC has spent considerable time and effort in enhancing the shipping capacity of its east-coast ports over the past decade. It has also drawn up plans to convoy supply ships in on the east coast to minimize shortages of needed goods. Fuel and other commodities have been stockpiled. Also, as pointed out by ROC defense expert Andrew Yang Nien-tsu, the deep waters on the eastern side of Taiwan are not a good area for laying mines. Mines that are laid are apt to be dislodged by the swift currents in the area, threatening the shipping of neutral countries and angering both the United States and Japan.54 Moreover, blockades take a long time before they are successful, thus inviting foreign intervention. Particularly if its ships are “accidentally” sunk and its nationals killed, the United States may choose to send in its Seventh Fleet to enforce its often reiterated belief in the right of free passage for shipping. The PRC, if it decides to take Taiwan by force, is more likely to opt to try to present the international community with a fait accompli rather than

54. Quoted in Hsueh Erh-men, op. cit., p. 103.
risk the possibility of intervention through a blockade which, by its very nature, must be prolonged.

5. The Prognosis

Despite recent tensions, there are also forces working for the reduction thereof. The unfortunate Qiandao incident of March 1994, in which more than twenty ROC tourists to the mainland were robbed and burned to death, perhaps by PLA members, had no long-term consequences for relations between the two countries. Nor did the ROC's accidentally shooting 12 artillery shells into a mainland village later that year. The Taiwan government apologized and offered to pay damages. The United States also tried to lend its good offices. In September 1994, the head of the U.S. unofficial embassy to the ROC, the American Institute on Taiwan, met with the PRC's chief military attaché to discuss Taipei's fears of invasion.

The ROC has also announced several confidence-building measures. In July 1995, Taipei indicated that, after the March 1996 presidential election, it expected to raise the issue of direct military exchanges between the two sides. Taiwan also invited mainland missile experts to visit, and hinted that it might be possible for the mainland to launch the island's satellites. The ROC postponed its military exercise code-named Han Kuang # 12, scheduled for October 1995, as a goodwill gesture. In addition, it delayed deployment of Sky Bow anti-aircraft missiles on Tungyin Island to avoid violating a tacit agreement between PRC and ROC that neither side should place its missiles in positions that passed the halfway line across the Taiwan Strait.

In sum, the ROC is attempting to ensure its security by shoring up its defenses to the maximum possible while at the same time

55. Mainland authorities contended that the culprits included a demobilized soldier who happened to be wearing a PLA shirt. This is plausible. Still, the way that the authorities handled the case—including cremating the victims' bodies before relatives could identify and claim them—left suspicions in many minds.
creating opportunities for cooperation with its only likely adversary. The costs to the mainland of an invasion of Taiwan would be high, and its prospects for victory are uncertain. Since losing the conflict is likely to result in some form of de jure recognition of Taiwan’s de facto independence, the PRC is unlikely to attempt an invasion. The ROC government’s defense policies have been successful thus far. As with all such situations, however, continued vigilance is the price of continued liberty.
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