
**Taiwan's China Problem: After A Decade Or Two,
Can There Be A Solution?**

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PREFACE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page
Introduction	1
Premises	3
A Premise of China's Future International Power, and Disclaimers About It	3
A Premise about China's State Form and Relations with Large Democracies	5
Premise about Rightful Pride on Taiwan and the Uses of Self-Determination	7
A Premise about the Future Continuity of Chinese Claims to Taiwan	11
Premises that the U.S. Will Not Abandon Taiwanese to a Non-Liberal Future, But U.S. Interest Ends When Beijing Allows an Enforceable Taiwan System	12
Synopsis of Negotiations over the Taiwan Strait	13
Causal Factors	17
Factor 1: Patriotic Conservative OR Growth-Oriented Reform Leadership in Beijing	17
Factor 2: Taiwanese OR Chinese-Taiwanese Self-Identification on the Island	19
Factor 3: Mainland OR Island Military Superiority in the Strait	23
Factor 4: Exogenous Contingencies	24
Policy Recommendations: Offshore American Strength, Engagement, And a Cross-Strait Truce	26
Conclusion: Taiwan and the Practical Value of Chinese Democracy	32

Hope is a good breakfast, but a bad supper.
— Francis Bacon

Introduction

In the next century, China will become a “superpower.” What does this mean for U.S.-China relations, and what does it mean for Taiwan?

These are highly sensitive questions. Many Chinese and Taiwanese tend to judge any analysis of them hastily—in terms of national identities that are deemed super-rational, basic, and unchangeable. Some Americans tend to view any treatment of the Taiwan-China topic also in quasi-patriotic terms, asking whether it is sufficiently assertive of U.S. democratic, economic, or security interests. This policy problem is so charged with deeply held commitments that strong political bias in any rumination of it is often implicitly assumed to be unavoidable. The interest of too many is to determine a positive stance toward it, rather than to try to analyze it in universalist terms, presentable to anybody.

The present author aims to confuse quick judges. He is not just “pro-China” or “pro-Taiwan,” pro-democracy or pro-trade. How could a U.S. policy on the matter be adequate, if it were not all these? The viewpoint in this essay is American, and the object is to assess U.S. policy. The aim is to search for ways in which coercion might be avoided between Taiwan and China—both for their sakes and because such a war would probably reduce long-term American influence in Asia.

The mainland claims the island. Leaders of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have never forsworn military means to assert this claim. Party conservatives among them would especially like to see all non-Chinese power in East Asia decline. But use of force to unify China, after the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) becomes stronger, could hurt the interests of both the PRC and Taiwan—and of the U.S. too. In that event, America’s position would be worse than at present no matter whether it entered the fray or in later years decided to stand aside and see Taiwan’s people coerced into a Chinese unification whose terms they had not influenced.

So two policy recommendations are important enough to offer early: Washington should assure Beijing that America recognizes China’s claim to the island, but also that America is determined to keep peace in the Taiwan Strait while Chinese politics modernizes, especially until Beijing and Taipei agree to a truce.¹ Technologically advanced U.S. armed forces in East Asia must be maintained, in particular to deter the most likely forms of warfare that could arise there (which might involve a blockade and mines in Taiwan waters). Such forces have deterred most PLA adventurism thus far, and they can help prevent a Sino-American military conflict in the future. So this essay will argue for some containment of China, as well as for unprecedentedly serious engagement, because these two policies complement each other and prolong the current East Asian peace.

The aim of this analysis will not be to recommend policies prematurely, if they could threaten to destabilize the current situation that most people in the U.S., China, and Taiwan find satisfactory at least for the nonce. But the durability of this situation after one or two decades needs to be tested. Definitions and quasi-factual premises will be followed, below, by a précis of recent history in the Taiwan Strait. Then the project will specify factors that are most likely to determine whether Taiwan's China problem is likely to be settled in peace or in war.² Another possibility, not taken here, would be to offer future scenarios of China-Taiwan relations. Scenarios use a valid kind of causal logic, relying on putative "final causes" rather than "original causes" to identify factors that explain what may happen. This method is fashionable, but it should always be combined with an analytic effort to identify original causes also. To provide a convincing analysis, many combinations of types of final causes would have to be considered. Since first-cause logics and final-cause scenarios are analytic complements of each other, looking at the same things merely from different directions, either is logically sufficient to suggest policy recommendations. These approaches can never do more than verify each other.

Offering policy recommendations may seem an extraordinarily odd business in the China-Taiwan case, because America's existing policies have brought beneficial results for all parties throughout the past quarter century. The U.S. acknowledges there will be a single China. Since 1978, Washington has recognized the government in Beijing as that nation's current representative. The U.S. admits the Chinese claim that Taiwan is part of China (at least of a future Chinese state that will later be negotiated on both sides of the strait), having further obtained PRC agreement that Americans have many kinds of unofficial relations with people on Taiwan. U.S. leaders have also stressed, in documents signed together with Chinese leaders, a strong American interest in East Asian peace. To this end, albeit without agreement from Beijing, America has sold deterrent-defensive military equipment to Taiwan. Since 1982, Washington has agreed with Beijing that the quality and quantity of these arms sales will decrease over time—especially as China may manifest the general interest it has also sporadically declared in peace. By domestic U.S. law, Congress has given the President standing powers to help defend Taiwan, presuming this is in the American interest.

These sophisticated and politically ambiguous policies were established by the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 and by three U.S.-PRC communiqués of 1972, 1978, and 1982. They have fostered extensive trade and investment among the U.S., the PRC, and Taiwan—from which all three have profited enormously. These policies have thus far not led to war. They have probably helped to foster growth-oriented leaders in China—to some extent even during the conservative years since the 1989 killings in Beijing. Any change of such winning policies should be careful and perhaps slow. Any reexamination of them is vulnerable to the old wisdom, "if it isn't broken, don't fix it." But the past success of this policy set does not ensure that Americans, or others, will benefit from it forever. The multiple threads of this remarkably complex policy have not frayed badly yet, but its continued integrity is already being tested by Beijing and Taipei leaders. The capacity of contented political elites to ignore resources that can defeat their established notions is a rich topic for historians of folly.³ The main lesson to be drawn from this history is that the assessment of such resources must be continuous.

Complacent officials in Washington prefer to ignore two large problems created by their policy: It breeds angry irredentism in China and permanent separatism in Taipei. Nobody in

either Beijing or Taipei breaks the U.S. officials' reverie, however, and they have scant interest in questioning an established policy that has been very successful in all other ways. In Beijing, the ruling politicians require tacit army support, and the Taiwan issue is their best rationale for spending on high-tech weapons that their generals and admirals want—but it is still counter-effective for them to discuss much in public about their need for attack options, because their army is not yet ready to follow through on such talk. In Taiwan, the ruling politicians have cogent electoral reasons not to disturb their voters with any hint that U.S. defense of the island has any specific limits. So U.S. policy goes unquestioned even as militarists in Beijing and separatists in Taipei act quietly to subvert it. This could prove to be the recipe for a Sino-American war after one or two decades.

Premises

A Premise of China's Future International Power, and Disclaimers About It

An early assumption of this analysis is that, as Napoleon famously predicted, China is finally “wakening.” The PRC's economic growth since the 1970s has been very quick. The growth of its military power has been less sharp, and the Beijing government now exerts less control over many diverse local power networks within the mainland than it did during the early decades of revolutionary rule. But few analysts would doubt the factual prediction that China will become relatively stronger on the world scene in coming decades. So Beijing's terms for any unification with Taipei may be less forthcoming over time, as PRC power increases.

This first premise is proposed as a likely future fact, not a normative opinion-like prescription. There is no call here to assess China's rise as “good” or “bad,” but only to forecast it as highly probable. Many further qualifications should also be made about this surmise that Chinese leaders' ability and will to realize their own conception of their national interests is liable to grow.

As regards timing, the speed of China's empowerment for various purposes relative to the United States, Japan, Indonesia, India, Russia, or other large nations can be subject to varying reasonable estimates. Many scholars—including many in both Beijing and Taipei—expect China to remain clearly unable to exercise its Taiwan claim at least for several years.⁴ Recent journalism published in Taipei cites the date 2010 as a likely time of crisis in island-mainland relations.⁵ An aspect of such calculations is the ongoing delivery of 150 F-16 and 60 Mirage aircraft, as well as 130 warplanes produced on Taiwan. It is possible to argue that the U.S. military is still modernizing faster than the PLA, but some relevant weapons such as mines and missiles are relatively inexpensive, difficult even for modern forces to deter, and applicable at least against Taiwan's economy. In the decade from approximately 2005 to 2015, China's weakness vis-à-vis Taiwan is expected by many researchers, who have various political viewpoints, to change. China's ability also to raise the non-military costs of any countries aiding Taiwan (even if the PRC's own costs are greater) will increase. Perhaps a startling breakthrough of defense technology or an unexpected change in East Asian politics (e.g., in Japan) could alter this prospect somewhat. But by some period after 2010, China will probably become able to assert its Taiwan claim more effectively than at present. This effectiveness is delayed by specific military difficulties the PLA would face in winning a conflict it might start, and also

because Taiwan's military is still strong against an invasion if not against a blockade.

A further disclaimer is that the future danger of military conflict over Taiwan might be relevant only to future, not current, U.S. policies. Patterns that may be best for posterity might not be best now. The aim here is to suggest alterations only when they can prevent losses from less well-planned changes afterward. Good recommendations for the future are nonetheless worth mooting for the sake of maximizing benefits and minimizing losses later.

Yet another qualification is that the near-certainty of China's future "superpower" status does not mean that the wishes of the Middle Kingdom's leaders will then prevail everywhere. As the United States discovered in Somalia and Vietnam, and the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan, superpowers are not always supremely effective. But China's population size and economic growth (even presuming this slows somewhat) give the PRC great resources. If Beijing's top politicians are determined to use these assets in a location near territory they control, they will over time become increasingly capable of realizing their wishes in their own neighborhood. If China becomes relatively stronger, other powers such as Japan and the United States can be expected to weigh their overall interests in deciding whether to commit resources to countervail China then. For the nonce, the U.S. would surely pay these costs—and now, Taiwan may still be able to defend itself without assistance. In the future, not so much because China is likely to strengthen as because Chinese politics are likely to pluralize, the U.S. relation to Taiwan should depend increasingly on whether the Taiwanese act in their own long-term interests.

China may become stronger, without necessarily becoming more bellicose especially in this civil war, if there is a future chance of a peaceful solution. The PRC's leaders, for many decades in a more revolutionary mood than at present, could have retrieved Hong Kong long before they actually did so. The world's most populous country has now apparently finished its violent revolution. Its internal politics are in a long and halting era of power derogation. Beijing is having to reduce its control over many local power networks.⁶ PRC government legitimacy comes mostly from economic growth—although high Beijing politicians also talk about service to national pride as a cause of popular support. This process is not swiftly leading to democratization, however. Competitive national elections and wide freedoms of political speech are not promised anytime soon. The world's largest polity is nonetheless gradually diversifying. As the revolutionary generation dies, technocrats have replaced them—and a greater variety of politicians may follow.⁷ This change may make the Chinese government more responsive to a greater range of the mainland people's own interests, and perhaps also to practical needs in other places. A post-centralist China might become interested in serious negotiations with Taiwan, even though its resources grow.

If American policy were aimed at preventing China from becoming stronger, that goal would ultimately not be achieved. The world's most populous nation may in the very far future become the world's strongest too. U.S. policy should aim to encourage the emergence of a China with which the U.S. as a democracy can get along passably. Taiwan, for its own security, eventually needs a more stable arrangement with the PRC than it now has. Taipei would be most unlikely to reach any agreement with Beijing without some guaranteed form of federal or delayed unification—but it could probably receive better conditions in the medium-term future than in the long-term, when China's relative power will predictably have grown stronger.

A Premise about China's State Form and Relations with Large Democracies

Since the 1911 Revolution at least, many in the U.S. elite have hoped China would become a more democratic polity. PRC leaders have often seen this wishfulness merely as a legacy of missionary sermonizing, 19th century imperialism brought up-to-date. Why, they ask, are Americans eager to voice liberal critiques of authoritarian states with which U.S. trade is fruitful? Have the Americans any non-idealistic, more-than-merely-meddlesome reason to express themselves on human rights in other places with different cultures, such as China and its largest island—or to protect the island's people from a regime that still imprisons some people for peaceful dissent?

It is possible to explain, in terms whose validity PRC elites could not deny, the universally presentable *Realpolitik* reasons for this U.S. behavior. A preliminary disclaimer, however, is that not all of the actual reasons in this case are universalist. Perhaps the leaders of each nation, including America, have a propensity to think their own political structure (which put them on top) is composed in the wisest, most civilized manner. Political moralizing is nothing new in Confucian or Communist or pacifist or even racist forms, as well as in the liberal genre. But there is a general, not just liberal or Western or American, case to be made that explains why liberal rights can be a concrete rather than an ideal foreign interest of any democracy.

Since Immanuel Kant, and increasingly in the U.S. during recent years, scholars have shown that liberal governments act unlike other kinds in a crucial sense: Democracies have historically not gone to war against each other.⁸ They often have leapt into wars against countries that do not maintain liberal systems (just as authoritarian regimes have also often attacked each other). But established liberal states have generally tried to hash out their disputes without resorting to force.⁹ This is an empirical statement; the theoretical reasons why it holds true in fact are not clear.¹⁰ Perhaps if leaders are elected in regimes that channel domestic conflict peaceably, then they presume they can negotiate international disputes with the leaders of similar regimes, needing no resort to violence. Even when democracies have large quarrels with each other, they do not “construct” their national interests in such total conflict that a war would be justified. Competitively elected rulers, even if they come from countries that are very diverse in culture, have *for whatever reasons* avoided force when thinking about their mutual disputes. They get along reasonably well, even if they have radically different levels of objective power (e.g., Canada and the United States since the 1830s). They build institutions for talking or posturing or delaying problems rather than fighting. They convene G-7 meetings—or now with Russia's president, Summits of Eight. They also have tried to hasten democratization in states they take to be proto-liberal.

This “democratic peace” hypothesis has become an explicit basis of American foreign policy. President Bill Clinton opined in his 1994 State of the Union speech that “democracies don't attack each other.”¹¹ This may be seen from various angles. From a U.S. domestic viewpoint, it is an ideology—as Asian authoritarians would be quick to agree. It “plays in Peoria” because it echoes long-standing U.S. rhetoric about democracy. It serves the particular electoral interests of U.S. politicians who espouse it; and in that guise, the idea has no claim on anybody in Asia. But from a policy viewpoint, for any democracy, it seems to be a fact that can help save concrete costs by avoiding the emergence of future wars.

From an academic viewpoint, the “sphere of democratic peace” may be nothing more than a conjecture that organizes past evidence neatly. Any major war between clear modern democracies would disprove it. The odd circumstance is that no such war has occurred. Recent research has refined the hypothesis, looking at conflicts of various sizes, showing that democracies may go to war as often as other regimes, although not against each other and often against weaker states.¹² Geographical distances and particular past alliance patterns may affect the evidence for the conjecture. Countries that are arguably *in the process* of democratization may tend to be particularly bellicose.¹³ Also, international institutions may engage non-liberal countries in peace mechanisms (e.g., the United Nations Security Council where the PRC gains great face) that encourage pacific policies similar to those between democracies.¹⁴ Such institutions may help the non-violent resolution of disputes by any country regardless of its state form.¹⁵ With additions and refinements, the democratic peace conjecture nonetheless thus far remains valid: Established democracies in practice negotiate their differences.

If so (and if the U.S. will remain a democracy), then there is a ubiquitous *Realpolitik* rather than a culture-specific normative argument that a sensible long-term aim of American policy is to expand the number and power of other democracies. If that policy were to succeed, the U.S. could maintain most of its international interests without so much need to expend lives and wealth in future wars. This argument is not at all about the (very important) domestic virtues of liberal democracies; it is about resource management in international affairs. It does not depend on any of the various Western traditions but is comprehensible anywhere.

China, because of its increasing national power, is the main country to which these considerations are most relevant. If Bhutan were to become more democratic, Americans might rejoice on purely ideological grounds. But China is in the big league. Another very large ex-Communist country, Russia, has a recent career suggesting that states once run by Leninist parties can evolve at least haltingly in more liberal directions. (Taiwan, though smaller, is another example of such evolution.) Since no nation is wholly democratic, or in nonstate organizations mainly so, this is as much change as any realist would expect.¹⁶ Post-revolutionary China has changed dramatically in the past two decades, and statespeople elsewhere sensibly try to shape their own policies to benefit from such change.

President Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Samuel Berger, asked in a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations: “Can China successfully make the next great leap toward a modern economy in the information age without producing the result of empowering its people, further decentralizing decision making, and giving its citizens more choice in their lives?” He answered his own question, “Possible, but I doubt it.” Secretary of State Madeleine Albright offered the opinion that, “China will be a rising force in Asian and world affairs. The history of this century teaches us the wisdom of trying to bring such a power into the fold as a responsible participant in the international system, rather than driving it out into the wilderness of isolation.”¹⁷

It can be observed historically that liberal-tending evolutions have sometimes, though not always, occurred in the aftermaths of violent spates of centralization.¹⁸ It can also be observed that nonliberal regimes have difficulty sustaining themselves in countries with incomes over

\$6,000 per-capita, especially where other social indicators such as education and health levels are high.¹⁹ If China and the U.S. can get through the next few decades without a military conflict, then these two very large countries probably stand a strong chance of remaining at peace later. Good policies can aim for such results.

Premises about Rightful Pride on Taiwan and the Uses of Self-Determination

The likeliest cause of a Sino-American conflict is not hard to identify, and it would probably begin as a blockade against Taiwan. So Taiwan is often discussed as a “problem” or an “issue.” But actually, Taiwan is not a problem. It is an island, with more than twenty million people on it. The problem is that the PRC claims it and them—and threatens to do so with increasing power, even though a substantial number of them do not currently honor this claim. A further problem, from the Chinese viewpoint, is that the United States as a foreign power continues to impede the implementation of this claim. This is seen by many educated Chinese, including some who live on Taiwan, as continued imperialism.²⁰ They take it as a national humiliation (*guochi*), a term that PRC leaders use very politically but also may feel emotionally when they speak about Taiwan.

Nonetheless, many Beijing leaders know that “the Taiwan problem” is essentially already solved for them, because the U.S. has agreed to the principle that there is one China and Taiwan is part of it. They feel confident this result will be realized over time. Even though they hesitate to stress that time is also tending to disaggregate practical sovereignty throughout China, they have suggested to people on Taiwan that this future Chinese state may be established by mainland-island negotiation. Allergies to symbols of federalism seem to be waning among PRC intellectuals, as they very slowly begin to realize that not all federations specify secession rights. Taiwanese intellectuals’ devotion to symbols of sovereignty, which probably reduce the island’s long-run chance of autonomy rather than strengthen it, might also later recede if the Kuomintang era there fades into the past and voters take their long-term security problem more seriously.

Electoral victories by the originally pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party on the island have been won largely on economic and anti-corruption issues. The DPP by late 1997 (when it outpolled the KMT in crucial elections for county magistracies) did not present itself as provocative to the mainland. Furthermore, careful opinion surveys in Taiwan suggest that about one-fifth of all people there want independence (either immediately or later), but only about one-twentieth want independence as soon as possible. Another fifth want an indefinitely long continuance of Taiwan’s current situation, i.e., a nationally uncommitted but practical kind of autonomy. Roughly another fifth want the status quo now but unification with China later. The most popular specific option, garnering one-quarter in a 1997 survey and as much as two-fifths in 1995 and 1996, is to maintain the status quo for now and to postpone any decision about Chinese or Taiwanese identity.²¹

The concerns of most Taiwanese about unification relate to their incomes, which average much higher than on the mainland. Military security is linked to this practical way-of-life interest in economic security. Business interests on Taiwan have “moved an unwilling state” toward more accommodation with China.²² But among intellectuals, many in both Taiwan and

the PRC (for their own opposite reasons) talk mainly about norms, especially the island people's sense of identity, which generally remains Chinese but has also in recent years become more distinctively local. "What they want to eat is no longer Sichuan *mapu doufu*, but Tainan *dandan mian*."²³ Most Taiwan voters' interests tend to be less abstruse than educated writers' discourses imply.²⁴ James Carville's motto travels well across the Pacific: "It's the economy, stupid!" A Taipei taxi driver in 1997 put his doubts about unification in terms of his welfare more than his identity: "We have had the experience of being taken over once by bandits [he meant Chiang Kai-shek's army], and we will not allow it to happen a second time. What has the mainland done for us? Nothing. What we have built up here, we have done by ourselves."²⁵

President Lee Teng-hui faces an electorate in which such views are common, and he also faces a long-term security threat from the PRC. He speaks for unification, but with extended delays so that he often sounds like an autonomist. "There is no need to declare 'independence,'" Lee remarked in 1997. In the same speech, he said he wanted a "reunified new China under democracy, freedom, and economic prosperity"—as some reformers on the mainland also want—but he called for "enough time to increase understanding and reduce distance."²⁶ In another 1997 speech, Lee said, "In our pursuit of national unification, we are concerned not only about form, but more so about substance. . . . Taiwan, the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, and Macau must be united under the principles of democracy, freedom, and equitable prosperity."²⁷ Whether Lee's gradualism really amounts to separatism (as most PRC elites and independence-minded Taiwan elites like to believe for their own opposite reasons), the main fact about his stance is its slowness. President Lee has a "deferral agenda."²⁸ He can easily be interpreted to mean that no kind of agreement on unification, even of a symbolic sort, will be acceptable to Taipei until the CCP as a Leninist Party is overthrown—a condition to which some in Beijing might perhaps object. And it will take even longer before the whole mainland achieves a per-capita income as high as Taiwan's. Many would be pleased to see these developments, and the Republic of China President's prediction of them suggests his public concern for all of China. But Taiwanese might ask whether a solution to Taiwan's long-term security problem should depend so exclusively on what happens elsewhere.

Pragmatic gradualism, which is now official policy on Taiwan, would delay a cross-strait agreement beyond the time (if this has not already passed) when Beijing perhaps in exchange for a remote and prospective form of unification acknowledges that Taipei has an army, which is legitimate to assure that "Taiwan people will rule Taiwan," as Beijing promises they will do. The potential problem with President Lee's gradualism comes from evidence that PRC relative military power is increasing faster than PRC per-capita incomes or PRC liberal freedoms. Taiwan's own interests, not mainland economic and political development, would be a more practical basis on which to negotiate unification, as President Lee still says he wants to do. Because of China's increasing relative power, the sooner he or his successor does that, the better the terms Taiwan will be liable to obtain.

Taiwan apparently will need some kind of truce, because without it Beijing militarists can reiteratively attempt armed means to force their own terms on Taiwan before Chinese politics diversifies. If superpatriots came to power in Beijing, they could discount the international costs of such bullying, even if (as is likely) these costs proved to be very high and even if Taiwan were not subdued. Such events—perhaps partial blockades by mines, submarines, and

missiles—would give Beijing conservatives claims to greater patriotism than their reformist rivals. This might well be more important to them than the reaction of the U.S. or other countries. Taiwan's Defense Minister Chen Li-an opined that before any invasion Beijing would probably "blockade Taiwan in order to suffocate its economy."²⁹ Taipei could wait for such events, which would hurt the island but not actually occupy it, before starting to negotiate seriously with Beijing. But even presuming the U.S. would support Taipei in painful reiterations of this scenario, such as have already occurred twice in rather mild forms in 1995 and 1996 (and have occurred many times in the Middle Eastern tribal war), the result would not be long-term security for Taiwan.

The crucial question about any choice of identity on Taiwan, combined with any timing of its exercise, is whether such a selection in context will benefit Taiwan's people. An important part of this context for many decades has been the United States. Since Woodrow Wilson's time, it has been common knowledge that the U.S. tends ideologically to endorse the political self-determination of peoples. Actual U.S. policies have very often departed from this ideology, but the norm remains a U.S. ideal. So the democratization of Taiwan, together with the fact that the U.S. is strong militarily, has thus far structured incentives for Taiwan voters that may disserve both American and Taiwanese long-term interests. Voters understandably do not want to prejudge issues until they must. So they tend to elect officials who seem to favor either independence or indefinitely long autonomy from China. They have no major current reason for any policy other than delay, which seems to keep all their future options open. This situation, combined with the passivity of U.S. policy, which calls for serious negotiation between Taiwan and the PRC only if they both wish it, has encouraged many Taiwanese blithely to think they have no big China problem they need to help solve.

Legal independence is sometimes considered the thing they would never forswear. But sovereignty is not food to eat; it shelters nobody from the rain. The main external protector of the ROC is not among the nations that recognize it.³⁰ If Taipei decided for practical reasons to compromise some sovereignty for peace with Beijing, the Taiwan Relations Act as a domestic U.S. law would not be affected. A majority of roughly four-fifths on the island wish to leave the question of Chinese or Taiwanese ultimate sovereignty undecided for a long time.³¹ This stance is compatible with a potential basis for truce between Taipei and Beijing, by which the mainland would not pursue the use of force against Taiwan for a stated number of decades (e.g., fifty years) while Taipei would not pursue independence during the same time. PRC hardliners and Taiwanese nationalists would currently oppose such a compromise, because PRC reformers and Taiwan gradualists would benefit politically from it. But sovereignty questions may be less substantive than the likelihoods that China will diversify and Taiwan will need a more stabilizing China policy. Identities may inspire action, but each individual or collective can concurrently own many of them.³² No group has an obvious right to determine the identity of any other. A modern ideal is that the relevance or irrelevance of an identity in any situation should depend on what it brings in specific contexts. Identities imply costs or benefits for people, who thus are qualified to decide their own labels.

On the other hand, that kind of choice also implies a responsibility to bear the consequences of whatever identity is selected. It is apparently not the right of mainland Chinese, nor of any Westerners, to tell Taiwanese who to be. By the same token, Taiwanese rather than anyone else

bear the burden of results that flow from a choice of identity they make. They are accountable for any consequence, too, of the manner and time in which they pick their preferences. The American bias for the self-determination of peoples, by democratic or any other methods, does not imply a basic U.S. duty to uphold such a selection against resistance; the people who make the choice have that job instead, unless some other U.S. interest motivates a decision to help them.

Max Weber, who by many accounts was the best social scientist ever, has outlined in general the sort of morality that is relevant here. A principle or “ultimate end,” e.g. an ethnicity, does not exhaust the analytic criteria for judging the ethics of a policy. What is right must also be defined by net benefits, “responsible” results.³³ If most people on Taiwan decide they want to be Taiwanese rather than Chinese (or more likely, if they postpone this choice until a time after which nobody will benefit from trying to enforce it), they alone have that right—and the duty to see it through.

Why does an ethic of results trump an ethic of principles, for deciding what the U.S. should do? Action on existential principles defines the identities of actors and bolsters the norms by which they cooperate together. But results can be assessed by anybody—even someone with a different identity—using models to forecast unintended causations. Even the most ardently nationalist Taiwanese do not claim most Americans in their particular group. Nor do Chinese. So they both can understand that the U.S. must judge its actions by consequences, not any Chinese or Taiwanese principles of nationality they espouse. America must maintain its freedom to act in its own interests. The U.S. can use a results test to judge what it should do in the Taiwan Strait. Incidentally, it may in this case by doing so promote a fair peace for all parties.

Taiwanese, even more than Americans who are literally halfway around the world, need a China policy that will stand the test of time. They are justly proud of their economic and political accomplishments, and U.S. policy would be problematic if Taiwanese did not have their real needs met. There is no abstract logical reason why the practical interests of Taiwanese, Chinese, and Americans must be harmonizable, but it is argued below that a truce result can be adequate in practice for all three groups. At least some on Taiwan also sense this. The KMT Central Policy Council in 1996 commissioned a study group to write a “draft peace accord” with the PRC. This included a clause that separatism should be “diffused.”³⁴ Even separatist leaders might later go this far, if they come to realize that their island needs some autonomy from the United States, not just from the mainland.

A Premise about the Future Continuity of Chinese Claims to Taiwan

Another assumption here is that Beijing leaders are very unlikely to rescind their assertions that Taiwan is Chinese. These claims will probably last longer than Taiwan’s abilities or other countries’ wills to counter them, even though that situation may not become obvious for some years. Here is another likely future fact. Taiwan nationalists do not enjoy hearing about this, of course—and they have a right not to like it. They cite the fact that post-revolutionary Russians allowed the Soviet empire to break up, even though few outside observers had predicted this.³⁵ But in the late great U.S.S.R., barely half of the people were Russians. In China, over nine-tenths are Hans, as (by language, kinship structure, religions, and some other standard

measures) are Taiwanese. The chance that PRC elites will bring themselves to forget about this is very low, now that they think their power will increase. If this premise about the likelihood of Beijing's continuing claim is true, Taiwan separatists should in their own interests face it squarely rather than think wishfully that the evidence it summarizes does not exist.

This premise needs disclaiming refinements, like the previous ones. It certainly does not presume that the Chinese Communist Party will continue to rule China for a long time in a Leninist and would-be disciplined form. The Party might go on, or it may be over. But practically all mainland elites—in government or in dissent—agree that Taiwan is Chinese. Very few in the PRC challenge this view. Mass attitudes toward Taiwan are far less clear than those of elites; but for purposes of thinking about Taiwan's security, the views of the leaders count more (until the PRC becomes pluralized, in which case some Taiwanese may become less resistant to the claim). Many in China are keenly envious of Taiwan's economic, political, and cultural successes. Northern intellectuals seek aspects of Taiwanese society to decry. Few other Chinese agree. Taiwan's TV humorists and torch singers (previously the late Theresa Teng Li-chün) have been worth an aircraft carrier group. But they undermine the Communist Party more than they persuade mainlanders that Taiwan is not Chinese. How could such success, by people who can speak Chinese, be foreign?

Not just Taiwanese identity and self-determination are at issue across the strait; Chinese nationalism is, too. State patriotisms have historically come in many forms, and in China (like Germany, Russia, and Japan) the traditional style of nationalism has been collectivist and authoritarian.³⁶ But in Taiwan and Chinese coastal areas with pioneering traditions, styles of authority have been more individualistic, at least among local leaders. The contrast with official attitudes in north China is sharp. One scholar of the Taiwanese people says they increasingly “detest the bigots from Beijing who think that being born in the shadow of the Forbidden City gives them the right to boss around Chinese people everywhere.”³⁷ In this easily documentable view, the main problem lies in old political pretensions among Chinese intellectuals, especially those who received educations in the northern capital. Yet one Taiwan scholar has used statistics from questionnaires to determine that wide-based popular mainland attitudes toward state and nation are slowly dividing; and he speculates this is a good omen for peace in the Taiwan Strait.³⁸ Nationalisms are contested, and they change because of “*ressentiment*,” a process by which one group envies what another has. Taiwan and Hong Kong, which have much that most PRC citizens covet, are not just being absorbed by the Chinese polity; they are modernizing it.

Nationality is a matter of dignity.³⁹ It is easy to construct either Taiwanese or Chinese arguments for pride, and it is not the business of U.S. policy to rebut either. But dignity is not the only benefit that generates national identification; prosperity and security are others. Anyone, even a foreigner, can moot structures to maximize them all. People construct their national identity in various ways.⁴⁰ Chinese entrepreneurs, southerners, and perhaps some dissidents press for unification with Taiwan less ardently than militarists, northerners, and conservative intellectuals. This seems to be a difference of approach, a tactical disagreement rather than a strategic policy difference. If the Beijing government were to become more representative of China as a whole, it might more easily agree on terms for unification that a Taipei government would find acceptable—and of course, this could be important. But

apparently nobody has yet found any evidence that even a future Chinese government that were forthcoming on unification terms might agree to a permanent separation of Taiwan from China. This is another “future fact” that any dispassionate analyst of the situation must take into account.

***Premises that the U.S. Will Not Abandon Taiwanese to a Non-Liberal Future,
But U.S. Interest Ends When Beijing Allows an Enforceable Taiwan System***

The U.S. will not and should not reduce its military forces stationed in East Asia. America has a concrete interest in seeing China modernize economically and diversify politically—but it also has major interests in continuing to show that the U.S. democracy is militarily strong and willing to defend its long-term interests. For this reason, America’s elected leaders will not in practice abandon Taiwan’s people to a situation such that Taipei cannot concretely enforce Beijing’s verbal promise that “Taiwan people will rule Taiwan” at least for a long period after a truce.⁴¹ By the same token, this guarantee must depend on the willingness of Taiwan’s leaders to accept a plausibly enforceable unification offer from China, if one ever comes from there. If Beijing were to specify terms for Chinese unification that in U.S. leaders’ judgement included adequate means controlled on the island to ensure the preservation of Taiwan’s polity several decades into the future, then U.S. defense responsibilities for Taiwan would cease—whether or not the Taipei government accepted these terms at the time they might be forthcoming.

Such terms may, of course, never emerge from Beijing. Chinese hawks who separate their national identification very hermetically from their sense of fairness, and who take the “my country, right or wrong” stance that is typical of pre-modern patriots everywhere, will consider the U.S. position described above to be simply a national insult.⁴² More circumspect Chinese, who realize that nationality is not the only trait of any person or group, are more likely than superpatriots to unify their country, because they can take account of the actual situations of their putative brothers and sisters on Taiwan. The U.S. really does have a one-China policy (although many intellectuals in both Beijing and Taipei disbelieve this).⁴³ The U.S. has never made a commitment to support Taiwan separatism—and should not do so, because that would ensure either a war over the island or eventually unjust terms for Taiwanese.

Nationality is nowhere solely a matter of norms. The processes of national identification are extraordinarily diverse, and they depend on the strategies of politicians as well as on many contextual factors, including income and security.⁴⁴ Chinese superpatriots who deny this have no legitimate reason to negotiate with Taipei about anything. A more perennial and very traditional Chinese position, however, is that an ethical politics to hold the world together should not be separate from that which holds China together, fostering contented families and breeding responsible individuals. As regards Taiwan, Americans are likely to remain serious about democracy on the island for a long time, so long as Taiwan retains a serious chance of being Chinese. This U.S. position is consistent with the practical interests of people on Taiwan—and with Beijing’s “two systems” principle if future Beijing politicians can prove the two will be different enough to guarantee that Taiwanese run their own system.

Synopsis of Negotiations over the Taiwan Strait

Pervasive distrust between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang has been a constant feature of their relationship for decades. Recent negotiations over the Taiwan Strait have to contend with the sad fates of all previous CCP-KMT “united fronts.” The first of these coalitions, against northern warlords in the 1920s, was ended by Chiang Kai-shek’s violent attack on urban Communists in 1927. After the Xi’an Incident of 1936, a “second united front,” nominally an alliance against Japan, saw both the KMT and CCP husbanding their resources for later use against each other. After 1945, U.S. efforts to broker talks between the two parties scarcely interrupted their civil war. This history, which is old but is still recalled when problems arise in new negotiations, is a most unpromising background on which to build mutual confidence. In the 1980s, this pattern changed because of new trends on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

In the PRC, reform leaders under Hu Yaobang, breakneck economic development, and administrative localization made clear that China was emerging from its centralist revolution. On Taiwan, opposition parties became legal in 1986, martial law was abandoned in 1987, and Taipei gradually softened its “three no’s” strictures against contact, negotiation, or compromise with the PRC. Cross-strait trade rose, first when Taiwan entrepreneurs did truly extraordinary business with the “north Hong Kong market” and then more openly. In 1989, Beijing established a CCP “leadership group” on Taiwan affairs, as well as an office on Taiwan affairs within the State Council, and the formally non-governmental Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). In 1990, Taipei established its National Unification Council chaired by the President, as well as a Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) within the Executive Yuan, and the “private” Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF). The two officially non-official units, ARATS and SEF, were able to reach fruitful agreements on some economic and practical matters. High-level negotiations were held in Singapore during April 1993 and became famous as the Wang-Koo talks, named after the foundations’ leaders Wang Daohan from the mainland and Koo Chen-fu from the island. Their deputies were to meet every six months, in China and Taiwan alternately, and lower officials every three months.⁴⁵

On May 1, 1991, the Taipei government changed its previous policy of treating the PRC as a territory merely under the temporary control of Communist rebels. Instead, Taipei recognized the PRC’s effective jurisdiction over the mainland. Even in surprisingly public situations, Taipei spokespeople sometimes referred to that entity as “China.”⁴⁶ Their hope was to receive parallel treatment from Beijing, which has not been forthcoming. Implicitly, though only privately, both sides recognized the likelihood that Beijing’s ability to impose terms would sharply increase at least after one or two decades. So the 1991 timing of the change in Taipei is subject to different interpretations. The PRC’s leadership was generally conservative after its 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, in comparison to its reformist tenor during many years from 1978 to 1988. It is difficult to know the extent to which the 1991 change of policy in Taipei was driven by a desire to disengage from the mainland and strengthen Taiwanese autonomist politics (as most PRC elites claim), or instead by Taipei’s efforts to create an environment in which terms for unification might be justly negotiated (as officials on the island assert).

Either of these opposite interpretations can be sustained by various kinds of objective evidence. Any choice between them must rely on subjective assessments of the motives of leaders—with each side seeing in the other a “lack of sincerity.” This accusation is regularly

thrown by Far Eastern negotiators at their interlocutors, whenever the accuser's terms are not met. The ARATS-SEF discussions have steered away from political and security topics, while economic relations have blossomed.

By the mid-1990s, about 20,000 PRC firms had received Taiwan investments (the Beijing estimate of this number was roughly twice the Taipei one).⁴⁷ Exporting firms inside Taiwan have long tended to out-contract many tasks to smaller companies. When these large exporters invest in China, their smaller partners often follow. ROC laws further this trend, because they require that major investments in the PRC meet stringent criteria whereas small investments are less regulated. So in Taiwan, the political effect of cross-strait investment is greater than it would be if the island's export sector were more vertically and less horizontally integrated. Non-political unification is already far advanced, but political and military relations between the two sides scarcely exist.

Both PRC and ROC leaders have separately on several occasions suggested very general terms for unification, of which the most interesting from Beijing were published early, in the 1980s. The first of these vague proposals came in a 1981 statement by PRC General Ye Jianying. Ye's "nine points" suggested that Taiwan could maintain its own army after unification.⁴⁸ Although Ye mentioned no particular reason for this military proviso—and it has not been repeated in later PRC lists of unification terms—the availability of Taiwan-controlled means on the island to enforce *any* other agreed guarantees increases Taiwan's incentive to accept a negotiated package. Actually, Taipei does not need to ask Beijing's permission for an army on the island. It already has one there. But it could well use an acknowledgement of that military's legitimate purpose.

Senior leader Deng Xiaoping in 1983 suggested "six points" for negotiation with Taiwan. As he grew older, Deng said that his eyes would not close until Taiwan was unified with China. Finally, they closed anyway. Before Deng's death, President Jiang Zemin in 1995 announced another list of "eight points." These precluded any action or talk about Taiwan independence and insisted there must not be "two Chinas." Jiang indicated he would negotiate with "Taipei authorities on any topic of their concern" and suggested "consultation on an equal basis soon," although it was unclear how officially the sides would identify themselves. Taiwan's leaders did not take up his offer on speculation; their replies were not discourteous but were equally vague. Many PRC officials and intellectuals have interpreted Jiang's points as forthcoming, because they specified that "Chinese do not attack Chinese" and that only separatists and foreigners should be attacked. Taiwan's "autonomy" within China was promised, although no guarantees beyond verbal promises were suggested. This was objectively a less forthcoming list than Ye's early attempt, because armies were not mentioned and the PRC is now relatively stronger.⁴⁹ But Jiang clearly suggested that using force would not be the best Chinese tactic for solving the cross-strait problem.

Two months later, President Lee Teng-hui issued a similar "six-point" statement that called for building confidence between the two sides by expanding contacts in functional fields and at international meetings. But then the grant of a U.S. visa to President Lee brought all Beijing-Taipei contacts to a sharp, albeit temporary, halt. Chinese naval and missile exercises were the main news of the following year, although these too can be interpreted in diverse ways.

China's naval and air forces are slowly increasing, although they almost surely could not yet defeat those of Taiwan defending the island. You Ji suggests that the military exercises, whatever they may bode for the far future, mean the opposite of war soon: "Until the PLA feels confident, it will be reluctant to be dragged into war. Militarily, brinkmanship in essence buys time to secure PLA readiness."⁵⁰ Hong Kong newspapers claim that President Jiang has pressed for a plan by which the PRC would complete the construction of an aircraft carrier early.⁵¹ From Russia, China has arranged to buy ships that carry supersonic cruise missiles, which perhaps could do damage even to the largest American aircraft carriers.⁵² China might pursue such weapons even if Taiwan did not exist, but the advent of new military technologies could reduce incentives to make an acceptable deal.

Trust between Beijing and Taipei authorities remains nil. Any confidence that might be constructed without forceful guarantees will remain fatally vulnerable to political attacks by either Beijing hardliners or Taipei separatists, whose domestic strength in each case depends largely on a reputation for firmness against the other side. For example, a multi-party National Development Conference in Taiwan in December 1996 reached a consensus to "adjust and downsize the structure, functions, and operations of the provincial government." This move is subject to diverse plausible interpretations. One of these, which the PRC *might* have adopted, is that the administrative streamlining made Taiwan's structure formally closer to the one-local-government-per-province configuration that prevails elsewhere throughout China. This view would have been consistent with the PRC claim that the ROC top authorities are merely a provincial government. Instead, PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen called a special press conference to castigate Taiwan's moves to "abolish the provincial government."⁵³ The main issue was not what had been done, but that the other side had done it.

Similarly, whenever a PRC politician's speech refers to the applicability of a "one country, two systems" pattern to Taiwan (as happened often, for example, during the Hong Kong handover period), Taiwan spokespeople squelch the idea, preferring the phrase "one country, two equal political entities."⁵⁴ In fact, the meaning of "one country, two systems" could instead be interpreted as very flexible now that China's claim to be socialist has become merely nominal (the PRC seldom protects labor, for instance, from being an ordinary market commodity). If a Chinese Taiwan "system" were negotiated to include rights that could be defended by the island's own military for some decades, then "two systems" should become acceptable in Taipei even if that phrase is alien.⁵⁵ A less forthcoming PRC definition of "system" was presumed in Taipei to be the only possible public meaning of the term. But if ROC leaders want unification with security guarantees or an eventual confederation, they might be politically smarter to redefine it for their own uses.

Supposed motives among leaders on the opposite shore are reflexively doubted by elites on both sides. The issue is not whether these conflicting sets of ambitious politicians in Beijing and Taipei trust each other; they absolutely do not. It is whether they can create a structure of guarantees allowing them to get along. When Taipei leaders emphasize "confidence building" aside from negotiation to get the concrete means to maintain confidence, they do not solve their island's security problem. When Beijing leaders want more "sincerity" from Taiwan, they may rely on expectations of future power rather than their own sincerity in promises of the island's autonomy within China. The question is whether these two groups of leaders will find ways to

enforce agreements that could meet their mutual interests—and perhaps even the interests of the people they claim to serve. These factors depend on: (1) whether PRC leaders will be mainly conservative or reformist, (2) whether the islanders identify themselves as exclusively Taiwanese or Chinese-Taiwanese, (3) whether the mainland or the island will at various times have military superiority over the strait, and (4) whether other exogenous contingencies in East Asia hinder or help the chances of peace.

Causal Factors

The most direct kind of explanatory account of the future starts from the present, separating causal factors as economically as possible. Each of these factors is given a number (1 to 4) in lists both of causes and then of the policy recommendations to which they relate. These are generally presented in dichotomous form, with the first alternative abetting war and the second abetting peace.

Factor 1: Patriotic Conservative OR Growth-Oriented Reform Leadership in Beijing

The conservatism or reformism of Beijing's leadership within the next decade may well be the most important impetus to war or peace in the Taiwan Strait. This factor is likely to determine the terms that Beijing will consider for unification, and thus it may determine whether Taipei can accept these for the sake of solving its China problem. It may well mean, at some future time if xenophobic conservatives are in power, a blockade and missile launches against Taiwan, because the direct costs of such action by the PLA are low and the indirect costs may be irrationally discounted by leaders whose legitimacy is based on fervent patriotism.⁵⁶ This variable could be sufficient to cause long-term Chinese sovereignty on Taiwan, at least in terms of national symbols, although it may fail to do so over the next several years. A preponderance of chauvinistic or "openness" claims to legitimacy among Beijing leaders during an intermediate period between these time frames, after a decade or so, may establish whether mainland-island relations develop peacefully.

Vilfredo Pareto, in his theory about the circulation of elites, explains why the distinction between conservatives and reformers is a hardy perennial in all politics. On one hand, any elite values its integrity, its ability to judge quickly the people who are considered legitimately within its membership and those who are not. On the other hand, any leadership also has some concurrent need to recruit "new blood," with new ideas, so that it can remain flexible as the environment changes.⁵⁷ In China recently, the speed of economic development has had big implications for the kinds of decisions that need to be made. A fad for promoting "technocrats" in the 1980s thus far has been the Party's most important attempt to adapt.⁵⁸ These were reformers, though only sometimes proto-liberals; but some of them have been frank in admiring Taiwan's economic achievements. If this reformist "tendency of articulation" becomes more important in Beijing than it generally was in the aftermath of 1989, the terms of unification available to Taipei (though not terms of permanent Taiwan independence) may be better than if conservatives rule the PRC.⁵⁹

Conservative-vs-reformist politics are by no means limited to economic and technical

matters. Among the PRC elite, purely symbolic interests concerning Taiwan have often tended to overwhelm concrete interests. When George Bush announced a major sale of F-16 aircraft to Taiwan (while on the campaign trail in Texas, where these planes are made), the PRC reaction was surprisingly low-key even though China's concrete interests in Taiwan were set back by Bush's action. But when President Lee Teng-hui received a tourist visa to visit his alma mater at a hard-to-reach city in upstate New York, the PRC cancelled the American visit of State Councillor Li Guixian, recalled the Chinese air force commander and his delegation halfway through their major tour of the U.S., postponed immediately and indefinitely an important meeting of Chinese with American legal experts, and summoned U.S. Ambassador Stapleton Roy to the Foreign Ministry in Beijing, lodging a strong protest, demanding a reversal of the visa decision, and warning that U.S.-PRC relations were now endangered at all levels.⁶⁰ The F-16s were a concrete threat—and their military effectiveness, putatively depreciated over two decades, delays China's Taiwan claim even though President Bush suggested otherwise.⁶¹ But the symbolism of the tourist visa brought a much greater PRC reaction.

Political scientists are inept at predicting outbreaks of dictatorship or reformism (just as Sinologists among them have been documentably inept at predicting *any* major political change in China since mid-century). For example, few predicted Hitler's defeat of the Weimar democracy. Students of Iberia before the mid-1970s could easily prove why Franco and Salazar had to be followed by other authoritarians—but Spain and Portugal both confounded these predictions, becoming liberal instead. In 1984 Samuel Huntington published an essay entitled "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" that downplayed the quick likelihood of liberal states.⁶² But by 1991, with democracies breaking out all over Eastern Europe, Latin America, and even parts of Africa, Huntington published a book qualifying his earlier (wrong) prediction, and pointing instead to international waves of democratization.⁶³

China has just undergone its centralist revolution. The sequel there in terms of political development is not easy to know surely. If Chinese liberalism advances against the very powerful institutions, groups, and cultural factors that oppose it, Taiwan might receive a deal it could accept. Perhaps a new kind of PRC leadership at some point will grant terms to the island that its leaders would not refuse—if only to solve their security problem. If this kind of change in the PRC fails to occur at any time in the coming few decades, however, the U.S. must be prepared to maintain its current position of quietly but strongly deterring military action against the island. The alternatives to this policy (war over Taiwan or abandonment of Taiwan) are even more expensive, if Beijing offers no agreement that includes guarantees rather than just promises.

Many Chinese intellectuals echo Taiwan separatists in stressing (for domestic political reasons) that sentiment for independence has recently been growing on the island. The evidence for this trend is real, especially in cultural circles; but its future is uncertain, now that Taiwanese recovery from KMT mainlander rule has receded into history. PLA missile launches have of course alienated Taiwanese—but have also led them to factor security concerns into their processes of national identification more carefully. PRC intellectuals, especially those in government, have yet to understand that some allowance for public advocacy of Taiwan separatism would not just be compatible with, but would actually aid, their ostensible cause of Chinese unification.⁶⁴ The fact that Taiwan is an island will not disappear. Its particular history

is in the past and continues to see much reinterpretation but cannot objectively change. China's leaders can hardly think Taiwanese will ignore this. Maybe Beijing can get used to leading a modern diversified society throughout China. PRC conservatives' stress on cultural symbols of sovereignty impedes Chinese unification just as surely as Taiwan independence advocates' stress on such symbols does. A Taipei government that might agree to unification might not agree to throwing peaceful advocates of separatism into jail.

The U.S. has a very strong interest in aiding growth-oriented PRC reformist elites (southern, local-entrepreneurial, and some technocratic leaders) who are open to "new blood." But America is a foreign power and thus could interfere counter-effectively in domestic Chinese politics if its efforts were direct rather than indirect. Contacts with all Beijing leadership types are important to the United States. "Engagement" may cause China's future leaders to realize that the U.S. can support all their national goals if they come to represent the full diversity of their own huge country—because if that happens, the U.S. would be able to get along well with a China that may eventually be stronger than itself.

Factor 2: Taiwanese OR Chinese-Taiwanese Self-Identification on the Island

The government in Taipei, not just that in Beijing, will determine whether coercion is used over the Taiwan Strait. It must agree to interim or later terms that also pass muster in Beijing, if the dispute is not likely to be settled later by warlike means. Ethnic norms have to be balanced, in a domestic political process on Taiwan, against non-normative income and security concerns. This may be phrased in terms of existential choices: the Taiwanese themselves will have to decide in their total context whether they can be Chinese. If they choose (either directly or by a postponement over decades) a non-Chinese identification, then Americans will similarly have to choose in their total context how to respond to this situation.

In practice, however, it is more useful to phrase the issue in terms of the unintended conditions that affect the results of such choices. Just as economic development is likely to diversify PRC politics more than Party conservatives wish, so also people deciding about their national identity on Taiwan may in the future heed more carefully the off-island context of their decisions. There is evidence they have very slowly begun to do this, even though most intellectuals willfully downplay this evidence that cognitive determination is not all-powerful. Ordinary Taiwanese, like ordinary Puerto Ricans for example, allow non-normative considerations to play a partial role in their own political identification.

The DPP was founded to support Taiwan's independence. The center of its green-and-white party flag shows an outline map of Taiwan. When a party spokesman in the late 1980s was asked whether this meant the DPP was uninterested in China, he joked that when the Taipei government recovered the mainland, his party would put an outline map of China in the middle of its flag.⁶⁵ The DPP, for the National Assembly elections of 1991, had a platform favoring declaration of a "Republic of Taiwan." In another island-wide election in 1992, the DPP manifesto became just slightly more abstract, favoring "One China, One Taiwan." The KMT platform that same year, however, began unambiguously: "We insist that there is only one unified China. . . . We are resolutely against the proposals of Taiwan independence, 'One China, One Taiwan,' or any other attempt to split the land of our country."⁶⁶ But neither of these existential themes played very well on the stump, where most people were sensibly

concerned about the mainland threat and actually had some pride in being both Chinese and Taiwanese.

Electoral competition in the mid-1990s, in the context of Taiwan's security problem, caused the public policies of the two largest parties, the KMT and DPP, to converge. As late as February 1995, a DPP convention agreed without a formal vote that the party should "continue to advocate the declaration of a 'Republic of Taiwan.'" But party workers soon privately suggested that in order to win more electoral victories, the DPP would have to moderate this position. They called for a revised party platform, asserting instead that, "it is an irrefutable fact that Taiwan is an independent country" already—lest DPP candidates be vulnerable to the charge that they would inadvertently lose Taiwan autonomy because of a PRC reaction if they gained power. Many Taiwanese voters apparently believed the local aphorism that, "Independence is something you can do but cannot say, and unification is something you can say but cannot do." The uncertain central preference of many Taiwanese voters (as distinct from elites) has been to avoid foreclosing their options of political identification, while maintaining stability and economic prosperity.

Surveys in 1992, 1993, and 1996 (shortly after one of the PLA exercises) asked Taiwan adults two questions that aimed at separating the ethnic-normative bases of their political identities from the pragmatic-situational bases: (1) Some people think that *if* Taiwan after independence could maintain a peaceful relationship with the Chinese Communist government, then Taiwan should become an independent country—do you agree? (2) Some people favor the idea that *if* Taiwan and China were to become comparably developed economically, socially, and politically, then the two sides of the strait should be united into one country—do you agree? Responses could be cross-tabulated.

An increasing minority (one-tenth in 1992, one-fifth in 1996) both opposed China's unification even after future PRC political change and favored Taiwan independence if the island could then avoid war with the mainland. A sharply decreasing portion of the respondents (41 percent in 1992, but 17 percent in 1996) both favored Chinese unification after PRC political change and opposed Taiwan independence even if the island would then remain safe. An increasing plurality (27 percent in 1992, 39 percent in 1996) had a pragmatic, part-time-patriotic national identity, favoring Chinese unification after cross-strait disparities were lessened but also favoring Taiwan independence if this could be safe.⁶⁷

This is the context in which Taiwan's politicians operate, and the cautious centrism of the electorate apparently caused Taipei leaders' stances to become less extreme and clear-cut. In the first direct presidential elections, during the spring of 1996, a middling position assured Lee Teng-hui, who is Taiwanese-Hakka but is also the candidate of the party that can most easily claim to represent stability, a big electoral win. The main effect of China's missile tests near Taiwan just before the voting may not have been to move voters away from the DPP candidate Peng Ming-min, whose staff were privately reporting long before the missiles that they expected to lose up to one-third of their traditional local supporters in the presidential race where security issues are central.⁶⁸ Many DPP supporters regarded President Lee as a Taiwanese at heart. China's objectives in saber-rattling may have been aimed at Lee, but they probably helped him.

As the DPP moved closer to the "center" of Taiwan politics along the autonomy-unification

spectrum, existential separatists by 1997 formed a Taiwan Independence Party, calling openly for the establishment of a new nation. This echoed the earlier formation, at the opposite end of the spectrum, of the New Party attracting Chinese nationalists who had split from the KMT because of Lee Teng-hui's toleration of notions about Taiwan autonomy.⁶⁹ President Lee still appealed, however, to most Taiwan voters who seriously wanted autonomy but feared that the earlier DPP policy of declaring independence would lead to an opposite result because of the PRC reaction. Independence is not the only issue in Taiwan politics—corruption scandals, pollution, development projects, urban transport, and other matters also stir debate. Garbage pick-up procedures are a surprisingly serious political issue in Taipei (even though writers have not been as inspired by this as voters have). The cross-strait question still causes the deepest divisions.

Only a few DPP or KMT politicians are willing, except in private, to moot confederal arrangements with China even at a distant future time. Chen Shui-bian, the DPP Mayor of Taipei who may still have a tacit pro-independence position and is the likely DPP candidate for president in the 2000 election, might win if KMT factions split between ex-Premier Lien Chan (the party's likely nominee, but reportedly a mediocre campaigner) and ex-Taiwan Governor James Soong (a better campaigner, but a mainlander).⁷⁰ On the other hand, voters who support the DPP in local elections might possibly switch to a KMT candidate in the presidential race because they do not want to provoke the mainland. Expressive exercises of Taiwan identity in local elections might not be replicated in the presidential race, although DPP candidates often win on economic and local issues.

The KMT increasingly suggests that Chinese unification must be postponed to some far-future date. Presbyterian President Lee has metaphorically likened himself to “Moses leading his people out of Egypt”—a liberation the PLA might prefer to perform. President Lee's stated policy has supported unification, but on a gradual basis with no due date. This stance gives the PRC no specific occasion for serious military operations. But it also runs the risk (from a Taiwan viewpoint) of postponing the matter until Beijing can decide it alone—unless by chance an unexpectedly reformist Beijing leadership in the mid-term future agrees to acceptable terms. Lee's policy pleases Taiwan voters who value current stability and prosperity; but it delays serious negotiations, in effect, until an ideologically amenable PRC government *may* come to power. If this occurs, Lee's policy could prove successful. If not, it could lead to a future situation in which the people on Taiwan have scant leverage to determine their own political fate.

If Beijing uses force after a decade or two, and if for any reason the U.S. then decides not to invest further resources in the project of keeping Taiwan non-Chinese, the result for Taiwan would be a messy conflict followed by Beijing supervision of the Taipei government. The terms would then be less forthcoming than have thus far been practiced in Hong Kong. A “basic law” for Taiwan can remain under Taiwan's control (as Hong Kong's constitution is not) if this military scenario is avoided. Often time makes problems go away, but China's claim to Taiwan is most unlikely to go away, and Taiwan's leaders may represent their people best by coming to terms with this situation.

President Lee's policy seems risk-free now, because the United States will for some years support a democratically elected regime on Taiwan that does not foreclose the possibility of

unification. The same policy could fail rather suddenly later, because of China's growing power and the likelihood (just or unjust) that after a few decades the United States may become unwilling to resist China militarily over the issue of prolonging Taiwan's options further. Some voices in Taiwan, pointing to America's "mainland fever," plausibly suggest that the U.S. will not protect Taiwan forever. Even if it did, unificationist Taipei writers say, the island might have a firmer international standing than it now does if it established a more secure link to China.⁷¹ This will not happen peacefully, unless favorable conditions prevail in both Taipei and Beijing.

In effect, the government on the island is taking a gamble that, within fifteen or twenty years, the leaders of China will have at least a temporary proto-liberal Epiphany and offer acceptable terms. This is unlikely to occur if Taiwan's main policy is inaction. Yet in December 1996, at an all-party conference in Taipei, a consensus was reached that "The government should strengthen the mechanisms by which opposition political parties . . . can fully participate in major policy decisions regarding relations with the Chinese mainland."⁷² Parties dedicated to Taiwan's permanent autonomy from China will thus be able to prevent any kind of Taipei-Beijing agreement, eventually leading their island (and perhaps the U.S. also) into a war.

For Taiwanese, Chinese identity remains a live option if they wish to choose it, not just because of their pre-1895 history but also because most Taiwanese saw their daily lives modernize for three decades after the mid-1950s under authoritarian Chinese hegemony.⁷³ The DPP leader Hsü Hsin-liang has a son who chose to study at Peking University. Taiwan autonomists seldom deny that their heritage is Chinese; their quarrel is with any effort to draw implications about nationality. But after some decades, Chinese politics will probably modernize to a point that a confederal arrangement will then be their best available option. They can obtain that only by taking a practical attitude toward sovereignty that some agreement with the PRC would imply. Taiwanese know that their new democratic habit gains them some American support (even if past televised riots on the floor of the Legislative Yuan blackened the reputation of democracy in Asia generally and fostered doubts about the depth of Taiwanese commitment to liberal tolerance). People on Taiwan may come to realize that the main American policy interest is not to uphold self-determination, but is to expand the community of countries who save each others' concrete resources by adhering to a democratic peace. Both America and Taiwan have interests in seeing China in that camp.

The U.S. has a moral, ideological interest in Taiwanese democracy. But the U.S. has a greater and longer-term material interest in the potential Chinese democracy, for the obvious reason that China has 60 times as many people as Taiwan (and 270 times as much territory). That is not the fault of the Taiwanese, but it remains a fact. Democracy in Taiwan is worth much more to America if democrats on that island define it as do democrats in Hong Kong, i.e., as Chinese.⁷⁴ The U.S. interest in maintaining a potential Chinese national identity for Taiwan is already large and will become greater during the next decade. The decisions that will come out of the Taipei government about national identity during the next few years will both influence and be influenced by the incentives that the Beijing government offers (or does not offer) to Taiwanese in an effort to persuade them they can be sufficiently content as Chinese after all.

Factor 3: Mainland OR Island Military Superiority in the Strait

The third major causal factor for war or peace in the Taiwan Strait depends on whether the mainland or the island has armed forces that are more effective for facing the particular kinds of conflict that could arise there. President Reagan in 1982 agreed with Beijing leaders to sell worse and fewer arms to Taiwan, although President Bush wretched on this commitment in 1992 with the F-16 sales. The Reagan accord is an odd document, because it is understood in China to constrain the U.S. from weapons sales more than it constrains the PRC from war. PRC spokespersons often repeat in public that Beijing does not forswear the use of force against Taiwan, while U.S. statements are often heard in public as general platitudes about peace rather than as specific conditions about sales to Taiwan. American adherence to the 1982 agreement will mollify Beijing and infuriate Taipei; reneging on it will mollify Taipei and infuriate Beijing. Only PRC ham-handedness with world opinion, during and after the Tiananmen massacre, gave President Bush a political opportunity to violate the 1982 communiqué. Even if another such occasion arises and prolongs Taiwan's military prowess somewhat, the chance that the island will achieve permanent defensive superiority over the mainland is not great.

Taiwan's current military strength favors the island's practical autonomy for several years into the future. This is almost surely the main reason why PRC coercive pressure for unification has not been sustained in past years. Continuation of Taiwan's defensive superiority would extend that period—and would allow more time in which other contingent factors could allow unification terms in Beijing that were forthcoming enough to be accepted in Taipei. But the military balance sustaining the current peace between the island and the mainland will almost surely tip in the PRC's favor after a decade or so. Unless there is a totally unexpected change in defensive technology that would raise its effectiveness for all modern armies, this advantage for Beijing could emerge after one or two decades irrespective of U.S. policy.

Taipei has been unable to produce on the island crucial equipment for effective defense, and there is no prospect this situation will change. Foreign weapons procurement has thus been essential for Taiwan—and very expensive. One estimate of the budget for these purchases abroad in the mid-1990s runs at an annual rate more than three times the total domestic cost of maintaining Taiwan's military.⁷⁵ The shopping list has included missiles of many kinds, jet fighters, helicopters, early warning airplanes, anti-submarine weapons, and frigates. With the Cold War ended, defense industries in many nations have shown interest in making sales to Taiwan for commercial reasons. PRC economic pressures against sales to Taiwan mainly mean that Beijing and Taipei bid against each other. So the prices rise, and Taipei has paid them.

From Beijing's viewpoint, the PLA could rather easily impose a damaging partial blockade against Taiwan's economy—but it could not quickly or easily invade the island or win a strategic victory. PRC military options also include a mere announcement of a blockade without much enforcement, which would affect trade and insurance rates, and this might be combined with armed missile strikes outside Keelung and Kaohsiung harbors, in the same places where PRC practice missiles previously landed. An air battle over the strait is also conceivable, but the outcomes of any of these options—or a combination of them—would probably take at least a month to determine. During that period, the U.S. (and probably not any latter-day Japan) might resupply Taiwan's forces or participate directly. The slow effectiveness of all PLA military options may explain why China has not already adopted any of them. It is the only reason why a

Beijing-Taipei truce to stabilize security over the strait is not even more urgently needed by Washington.

But the same coin has an inverse side: China's increasing weight in world politics gives many other countries a decreasing net interest to resist Beijing on this issue, to which the PRC might commit extensive resources including many that are economic rather than military. Of course, armed action by the PRC would be extremely expensive to China in economic terms—though it would not be unprecedented because of China's decision to enter the Korean War (on a peninsula PRC leaders did not consider Chinese, against a U.S. Army already there, and at a time when China was relatively weaker). Beijing is more likely to use force if the issue is Taiwan independence, rather than long-term deferred Taiwan participation in China. So both the threat to Taiwan and the options for its defense are more political than military.

The U.S. and its allies have interests in attempting to convince Beijing that they strongly support peaceful Chinese unification. Scant specific support for a peaceful solution has come from U.S. allies in the region, and European interests in both China and Taiwan have also been overwhelmingly commercial. America has many reasons to encourage the development of Chinese national self-identification away from militarist forms. Maintaining a clear superiority of arms in the hands of the U.S. and its formal allies in East Asia is a crucial part of this interest. But also, Americans' interest in containing PRC militarism is highly consistent with Americans' interests in engaging PRC socioeconomic nationalism—because Chinese patriotism is something that U.S. contextual constraints can help to shape. It is not something that the U.S. (or Taiwan) can cause to disappear. U.S. military support for Taiwan cannot feasibly last forever, even though some arms and military technology exports to Taiwan could continue—and might, for a few decades, become crucial factors toward allowing Taipei politicians to agree to the unification package that Taiwan eventually needs.

Factor 4: Exogenous Contingencies

Above is a list of the three main factors likely to determine peace or war in the Taiwan Strait, perhaps in the order of their long-term importance. Additional “random” causes, which could affect the outcome, are listed in a brief telegraphic manner below. The first of these random factors is probably far more important than any other.

First, the concurrent or sequential timing of factors (1) and (2) above could turn out to be crucial. Can an occasion for a Beijing-Taipei agreement be synchronized—with a perhaps truce-seeking Beijing leadership coming at the same time as a potentially Chinese Taipei regime—given the courses of politics in those two capitals? If PRC reformers happen to coincide with Taiwanese leaders who are not Sinophobes at some time within the next few years, a settlement of mutual claims is possible. If not, or if too much postponement leads to a military advantage for the PRC such as factor (3) describes, then a coercive blockade of Taiwan may become hard to avoid.

Second, in Korea the peacefulness or messiness of that other unification process could indirectly affect what happens in the Taiwan Strait. If the U.S. and PRC can broker a negotiation between the two Koreas that produces sufficient mutual benefit to all four of those parties (and to Japan, perhaps confirming the sufficiency of that country's anti-war constitution)

then confidence could rise about the possibilities of a peaceful solution across the Taiwan Strait. Both the Beijing and Taipei governments, of course, deny any connection between their dispute and the peninsula's case—but those assertions do not make the outcome in Korea irrelevant.

Third, Japan's ability to build much stronger armed forces, if given any need to do so because of events in Korea or perhaps elsewhere, has got to enter the calculation of any rational Chinese military planner. Andrew J. Nathan suggests that Taiwan's autonomy presents a security concern to Beijing, which for defensive (rather than other patriotic) reasons needs a veto over military deployments on Taiwan.⁷⁶ Japan is seen as the main long-term danger of this sort.⁷⁷ But Nathan's view may assign too large a role to conscious constructions of national security, and too small a role to the concrete situations in which they succeed or fail. As Jonathan Pollack writes, "strategic logic, however compelling it may appear at first blush, does not operate mechanistically. It must be validated by events, and it must be able to capture the goals and calculations of decision makers, not as a single move but as part of an ongoing process."⁷⁸ Taiwan is the most pro-Japanese place on earth outside Japan. That does not mean, however, the Japanese electorate would reverse its enduringly strong support for the "peace constitution" to prevent Taiwan from being Chinese.

Fourth, Southeast Asian relations with China could conceivably affect the Taiwan Strait dispute, too, for example if there were a more Islamic and very anti-Chinese Indonesia, or perhaps a Vietnam with considerably renewed power. Small islands in the South China Sea have already justified a build-up of the Chinese navy that affects the much larger and richer island of Taiwan.

Fifth, increased anti-Han separatist politics in Xinjiang, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, or Tibet could create an even more acute paranoia about China's potential fragmentation than already exists in Beijing. It is convenient to blame foreigners for these separatisms (or for the wariness of many Taiwanese toward the Communist Party). It is less convenient for PRC conservatives to blame predatory or neglectful policies of their own Party—including past policies that nobody now supports—for these liberation movements among Chinese minorities.

Sixth, Beijing's reaction to political dissent in Hong Kong could also conceivably affect the evolution of PRC-Taiwan relations. But the Special Administrative Region government is headed by technocrats who will do their level best to defuse issues that might cause unrest or give the votes of the government-housed clerical class to democratic candidates in Hong Kong elections.

Policy Recommendations: Offshore American Strength, Engagement, and a Cross-Strait Truce

Peace in East Asia, the main U.S. interest there, would be harmed either by serious PRC military pressure against Taiwan or by the establishment of a non-Chinese Republic of Taiwan. The U.S. President should therefore at present help to defend Taiwan resolutely in case of a serious PRC military provocation—and should also be explicit in public that if (in the U.S. view) Taiwan declares independence from China, that act would destroy the chance of cross-strait peace so that using the defense provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act would then no

longer serve U.S. interests. The Taiwanese do not lack a right of self-determination any more than any other group of people do, but they lack a right to insist that any other group (in this case, Americans) should go to war to support their change of political identity—and the central U.S. interest in East Asian peace is inseparable from postrevolutionary China's *eventual* democratization, because China as a democracy will behave peaceably toward other liberal states including the U.S.

Within the limits described above, the President can be explicit that Taiwan's status as a Chinese democratic society is the reason why America will not allow the island to be subjected to PRC dictatorship, so long as China's state takes that illiberal form. But by the same token, the U.S. commitment to Taiwan's people will later be fulfilled when either of the following two conditions arises: China's own halting democratization process may stabilize so that (in the U.S. view) it becomes irreversible. Alternatively, and more probably at an earlier date, Beijing may be willing to sign unification terms under which Taiwan's people can legitimately retain their own forceful means to assure that "Taiwan people will rule Taiwan," at least for a sufficient number of decades to make China's political liberalization by the end of that time a practical certainty because of economic growth. Industrialized countries tend to become democracies.

America's interest in Taiwan has, since the U.S. alliance with China in World War II, been linked to the island's Chineseness. Taiwan's democratic evolution shows that the world's most populous (and someday perhaps most powerful) nation can develop into a country with which the U.S. can have stable and fruitful relations over the long term. This is the main reason why America's one-China policy should be proven solid, as soon as either of the two conditions mentioned above is fulfilled. The only bias in this policy arises from long-term realism, not from political choice. This policy is not against Taiwan because it protects everything that Taiwanese really need to have protected. It is not against China because it differs from alternative policies that discount the likely effects of Chinese democratization for long-term peaceful relations with the U.S. Some people even in the PRC now admit there is more to admire in the island's political governance over the past several decades than in the way the mainland has been largely mismanaged. That is more politically relevant than the gentry in Beijing admit, but it is also more historically finished than those in Taipei admit. The future problem, for Taiwanese much more than for Americans, is that Chinese claims to the island combine with Chinese future power so they are now most unlikely to evaporate.

Both the Beijing and Taipei governments are obstructing Chinese unification in the near term. Beijing is doing so because its regime is not yet constituted in a manner to inspire confidence in Taiwan about the fulfillment of the PRC's public terms for unity. Taipei politicians also hinder Chinese unification by suggesting to Taiwanese citizens, inaccurately and dangerously, that the island has the wherewithal to defend its autonomy forever, that the Chinese will forget about their claim, or that Japan and the U.S. are likely *forever* to keep the island from being Chinese.

The most dubious aspect of current U.S. policy is the notion that Beijing and Taipei will negotiate all the terms of their peaceful reunification by themselves. America cannot effectively mediate this dispute, but Taipei owes the U.S. (and itself) a timely effort to make a truce with Beijing if that is possible, and Beijing leaders owe themselves a better policy than continuation of a civil war that would kill people whom they consider fellow Chinese. Peace will be

preserved, if the PRC has no particular occasion to break it. Chinese weaknesses currently still preserve it. But any future concurrence of a security-minded leadership in Taipei with a reformist leadership in Beijing (if politics in those Chinese capitals produces such a conjunction more or less randomly) would provide an opportunity to stabilize cross-strait relations. If such a chance is available before the PLA builds up to a point that Beijing superpatriots could successfully launch a military confrontation against Taiwan and the U.S., then future historians will record Washington's policy as an even greater success than it has been thus far. But if serious PRC military pressure for unification occurs after that point in time, America faces large losses (in its China policy and reputation for deterrence, though not in a military defeat).

Washington has been very standoffish, certainly in public and probably in private, about Beijing-Taipei negotiations. This policy has given Taiwanese citizens false signals about what Washington is in fact likely to do, if the present stalemate in the strait persists for another quarter century or so. In fairness to them and in view of U.S. interests, Washington could confirm that many of its own forecasters reach the conclusions similar to those reached by analysts in both Taipei and Beijing: The island will have some leverage to determine its political fate within China for some years into the future, but not indefinitely. The substantive terms of unification are likely to depend on whether a seriously reformist government exists in Beijing at the same time that a government willing to plan specifically for Taiwan rights within China exists in Taipei. In later years, the island's leverage to negotiate acceptable terms will gradually decline.

The U.S. should encourage a mainland-island agreement, as follows:

During a specified long time (perhaps 50 years), Beijing could forswear the use of military force against Taiwan, and Taipei could forswear the pursuit of independence from China. The two sides could also reiterate their vows to continue talks toward potential later agreements.

Taipei's and Beijing's existing "private" foundations for cross-strait ties could negotiate this, since they avoid the symbolic issues of stately pride that are not yet resolvable and would otherwise sabotage any possibility of agreement. For the sole purpose of heading off possible misunderstandings about truce violations, the foundations might refer to a nongovernmental third party's list of the current diplomatic liaisons claimed by each side, without legitimating these in any way and without any need to include this academic list in their agreement.

Such a truce seemed nearly feasible in 1995 because its terms are consistent with Jiang Zemin's eight points and Lee Teng-hui's six points of that year. PRC conservatives were able to use Lee's Ithaca visa as a reason to prevent such an accord, which would give a long-term advantage to potential reformers in PRC domestic politics. Such a truce would be less subject to sabotage by Beijing reactionaries and Taipei separatists if it included provisions about advance notice of military exercises, and perhaps even a "hot line"—but the agreement would be most negotiable if not too detailed, and this is not an essential part of the proposal.⁷⁹ Questions about flags, official titles, legal validities, and all other symbolic issues would have to be postponed, because any attention to them would make even a temporary truce impossible to negotiate.⁸⁰

The prior existence of a truce, however, would make these issues more feasible to negotiate calmly later.

Beijing leaders would not sign unless the truce provided at least broadly that it would be followed by subsequent talks about possibilities for more practical moves toward unification—but the assent of both sides would, of course, be needed for changes within the truce period. Taiwan leaders could more easily sign if informal talks indicated that a federal arrangement were from the outset at least a potential option for China's future state form—but if this possibility were pressed too early, it would quickly involve stately symbols that would make the truce negotiation fail.

The suggestion for fifty years is partly based on the accident that Hong Kong documents specified that length of time.⁸¹ A truce agreement might specify a date whose role would be like the 1997 expiry of the New Territories lease, which greatly delayed Beijing's moment for implementing its claim there (and rectifying a colonial situation that all Chinese considered illegitimate, even though it was accepted then on a temporary basis). Such a date should also embolden Taipei leaders to concur, because it would allow time for China to change. The ending date should also raise the confidence of Beijing leaders in this plan, because it would suggest a definite albeit remote occasion when they could presume that a more modern China's general status in the world would conduce to some kind of further unification. For Taiwanese, the truce would provide medium-term security, which would actually become long-term because of China's later changes. The alternative for Taiwanese is a severe eventual security problem—plus unintended long-term political support for precisely the Beijing hardliners who most want to bring them to heel.

America has no rightful role in defining any specific provisions of a Beijing-Taipei agreement, and it could easily be a foreign scapegoat for either side if it became a direct negotiator. But U.S. interests will be less vulnerable to costly attacks by both Chinese and Taiwanese superpatriots if some truce can be declared in the strait. There is circumstantial evidence that American officials may already have begun to act on behalf of these interests.⁸²

Auxiliary policy recommendations—primarily for the United States—may be arranged in the order of the factors listed above to indicate the cause that the policy aims to affect.

To influence factor 1, the U.S. should continue the policy of “constructive engagement” with China, in order to raise the likelihood that reformist leaders (new versions of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang) will emerge in Beijing and admit that the “two systems” concept in Taiwan's case includes a serious military component for several decades. An illiberal Beijing leadership might not allow Taiwan to retain the coercive power necessary to assure medium-term home rule. In that case, no agreement would be reached. But the PRC elite is not a monolith; it may later include even more obvious reformers. Washington should engage *all* PRC elites, trying to expand the political resources of growth-oriented reformers especially, while also trying to show American respect for Chinese patriotism among Party and PLA conservatives insofar as their actions do not contravene the interests of the United States. Fortunately, realistic pragmatism is a robust tradition in Chinese diplomacy. Americans can explain, in this idiom, why the U.S. will pursue its interests and why these do not contravene Chinese interests.

Relatedly, the U.S., for its part, already has a one-China policy and can best aid Taiwan's security by *privately* assuring Beijing that the purpose of the TRA is to raise confidence that "Taiwan people will rule Taiwan," not to protect the island's options of future independence from China. The PRC must for legal reasons reject any U.S. role in this; so it would serve no purpose to comment about the TRA's purpose in public—even though it actually aids a practical aim of Chinese unification.

Three policy recommendations are designed to influence factor 2. First, Americans should attempt also to engage all leaders on Taiwan, even on the necessarily disappointing unofficial basis. If reformers reappear on the Beijing scene, American interlocutors should ask Taiwan leaders—especially the explicit or implicit advocates of Taiwan independence—to consider more publicly the Taiwanese people's own long-term security interest in reaching an agreement with Beijing that contains military guarantees that "Taiwan people will rule Taiwan." After some decades, PRC politics will probably modernize to a point that a confederal arrangement will then be the best available option even for Taiwan autonomists. They can obtain that only by taking a functional attitude toward identity, asking what it does for themselves. If their self-constructed identity prevents a truce with China, that is a problem they should weigh. Unless Taiwanese subvert the U.S. interest in East Asian peace, Americans can assure them that the defense provisions of the TRA will remain valid.

Second, right now a Beijing-Taipei truce is probably unfeasible, and China remains an illiberal state. So current U.S. policy need not soon change in any respect. But Americans can make clear that Taipei leaders' gradualism cannot substitute for a separate U.S. assessment of unification terms that Beijing may later offer. The important aspect of a cross-strait truce would be the reliable enforcement of its provisions in the medium term—not whether it is preceded by a major convergence in China toward Taiwan's income levels or toward democratic procedures (which would be almost as important to the U.S. as to Taiwan). If very slow confidence-building remains Taipei's prerequisite for reunification, then it will remain easy for PRC conservatives and Taiwan separatists to subvert. PRC reformers, who might eventually offer Taiwan a fair deal, are weakened by Taipei's gradualism and crypto-separatism. Leaders on Taiwan who represent the long-term interests of their constituents (rather than the short-term interests of themselves) should be looking for the earliest occasion when they face PRC leaders who could offer a bargain that includes enforcement mechanisms in exchange for unification. Taiwan leaders for a few years will still have the ability to give a major domestic political boost, within the PRC, to Beijing leaders who might agree to acceptable truce terms for Taipei. But if the leaders of Taiwan wait indefinitely long, they squander this resource as the economic and military balance slowly shifts against them. If real reformers reemerge in Beijing during the next few years, Americans should urge Taipei decision makers to use any such opportunity before they lose it.

Third, Taiwanese leaders and people have known for nearly a decade that U.S. constructive engagement with China, which benefits Taiwanese in many ways, requires an avoidance of U.S. obligations to recognize Taiwan as an independent state. Taiwan according to international law meets the criteria for being a state, but this fact is separate from the island's own long-term security interests that are more important. Taiwan officials' efforts to join organizations of states is understandable, and these basically symbolic projects might occasionally (not usually) be useful as "bargaining chips" if they can be abandoned in exchange for more practical

benefits. But the U.S. some time ago agreed with the PRC not to support such efforts, for reasons that actually serve Taiwan very well. Taipei's degree of success in raising its international status has correlated over time with PRC threats to the island's security.⁸³ In mid-1997, there was angst in Taipei because the Cook Islands recognized the PRC—and joy because Chad switched back to the ROC. In real terms, these events mean precisely nothing. Taiwan will somehow survive without the help of the Cook Islands. Chad will not save the ROC. Taipei politicians are as irrational about symbols of sovereignty as Beijing politicians are about tourist visas for Taiwan leaders. Taiwanese know that the foreign country of greatest importance to their future does not recognize their government—and if it did, the island's long-term security situation would probably be worse. The UN membership issue for Taiwan is now irremediable outside of a unification agreement (and even within one, it is far less important than practical defense) because of Beijing's Security Council veto and because of KMT mistakes in the early 1970s when separate Chinese states might well have been seated in the General Assembly (which would, as Chang King-yuh has argued, truly have helped prospects for unification by building confidence in Taiwan). This history is now irretrievable. The U.S. interest is to support Taiwan's semi-sovereignty only within an actual or legal Chinese federation, until the Chinese and Taiwanese both have political structures in which they can work out their problems without the U.S. Even Beijing intellectuals say that "Taiwan people will rule Taiwan." If an army protects that principle, formal sovereignty would only be an ornament.

In terms of policy recommendations influencing military superiority in the Taiwan Strait (factor 3), four observations come to mind. First, some containment of China is not only consistent with U.S. economic, social, and political engagement with China, it is a crucial pillar of the engagement policy. Maintaining a clear armed superiority for the U.S. in East Asia is prerequisite to fruitful non-military interaction with China as an emerging power. PLA adventurism must not be allowed to dominate Chinese patriotism. In the 1930s, the U.S. made mistakes in its Japan policy that must not be repeated in China policy during the 2000s. The constitutional independence of the PLA from the State Council should be publicized as backward until it evolves toward a form such that civilians even more surely control China's military professionals, although the PLA's recent technocratic profile under Jiang Zemin is helpful.⁸⁴ Encouraging a moderate Chinese army will require both U.S. strength and U.S. self-restraint. If Taiwan is threatened militarily during the period defined above when the U.S. will protect it, American forces should again be ordered near the island to let PLA leaders clearly understand, with publicity at the minimum needed to convey this message clearly, that they would not win an engagement against the island.

Second, in order to clarify what America will and will not do militarily in the Taiwan Strait over the long term—and to clarify that America supports Beijing reformers and China's claim to Taiwan after they are more successful domestically—the U.S. should try to limit naval face-offs with Beijing only to those that may be necessary. The confrontation in the spring of 1996 was very necessary because of PRC provocation. Beijing militarists may well try to test the U.S. periodically in such events. PRC armed instigations mainly help Chinese politicians who wish to boost themselves on xenophobic platforms. Anti-Western hawks in China will try on occasion to make nationalist reputations for themselves by provoking the U.S. to send aircraft carrier groups near the Taiwan Strait. The American President must respond to such sorties, so long as Taiwanese do not also undermine the U.S. interest in peace. A democratic China or an enforceable Beijing deal for Taipei will eventually end this necessity, and the President can be

explicit about those limits.

Third, the upcoming and already-scheduled deliveries of U.S. aircraft to Taiwan will extend the period during which Taipei and Beijing might (if the sequence of policy succession in both Chinese regimes is lucky) reach a truce allowing for potential unification. Future sales should depend on criteria that stress the U.S. interest in East Asian peace—which is a crucial condition in the 1982 communiqué. To that end, the value of these weapons in building Taiwan’s confidence for reaching some agreement with the PRC should be stressed in private conversations with Beijing. Specific indications of mainland moderation toward Taiwan or of island separatism could reduce this supply line. Indications of permanent Beijing commandism or permanent Taipei separatism would hurt the prospects for peace, and the U.S. need not apologize for having interests in moderate leaderships in both capitals.

Fourth, Americans can point out the long-term security need for Taipei to test the candor of statements such as Ye Jianying’s 1981 statement that Taiwan “can retain its armed forces” after unification. If Gen. Ye’s military suggestion did not mean something quite different from the kind of “system” that now exists in Hong Kong, it would be unclear why he raised the matter of Taiwan’s army at all. U.S. interlocutors could encourage leaders in both Beijing and Taipei to explore this issue seriously. If these questions can be answered in a timely and careful manner, Taiwan would have security, China would have unification, and the U.S. and other countries would not have to break their currently fruitful links with both. Even if no truly reformist regime emerges in Beijing, this matter is worth a good deal of discussion to help normalize the security pattern in the strait during the next several years.

Finally, in terms of exogenous contingencies (factor 4), it should be noted that there will be no way fully to isolate the success or failure of U.S. policy in the strait from dumb contingent chances that nobody can control or foresee. An arrival of reformist government in Beijing with security-minded government in Taipei could spell success for U.S. policy. A conservative government in Beijing with autonomist government in Taipei threatens long-term U.S. policy. Events in other countries such as Korea, Indonesia, or Japan could also affect Beijing’s, Taipei’s, and Washington’s outlooks in ways that are not totally predictable. Machiavelli suggested that fortune be seized, not just followed. U.S. passivity about the evolution of the dispute across the Taiwan Strait will continue to be justified only if Beijing and Taipei remain opposed to a security arrangement looking toward Chinese unification. Any improvement of attitude in either capital would call for more active American encouragement of a negotiated truce between them.

Conclusion: Taiwan and the Practical Value of Chinese Democracy

The answer to the question in this essay’s subtitle is “yes.” China will for some time remain militarily weak at the point of application against Taiwan, and this gives the island’s leaders a short while to solve their China problem—but only if they are willing to put separatist symbols aside. The recommendations above presume the aptness of a long-term, resource-economizing basis for the policies of all parties. Taipei and Beijing intellectuals (though not the citizens they claim to represent) often prefer to see these issues less practically. Both groups should understand that U.S. concern for the long-term establishment of democratic politics in a country

as large as post-revolutionary China is not just idealistic meddling, it is *Realpolitik* in America's concrete interests as well as theirs.

This essay's approach to Taiwan's China problem is not an appeal that the U.S. should "abandon" the island. Washington would truly abandon Taiwan by pretending it had a policy it would not sustain. The U.S. needs measures to serve the interests of Taiwan's and China's people in practice, whenever doing so will also serve American interests. This means a one-China policy in the long run. An elected U.S. president could not abandon the people of Taiwan to a Beijing leadership that wants to continue to prove its toughness by silencing its critics on the Chinese mainland, unless the arrangement involved concrete provisions to assure that Beijing could not similarly silence its critics on the island.

Even Taiwan separatist statements, *lèse-majesté* though they may seem to the PRC's pre-democratic intellectual elite, do not necessarily mean the implementation of such views. Only if they were implemented, not just said, would Taiwan's security problem come back to haunt the island. Beijing's leaders have yet to admit that China is large and manifold. They will never really unify their country, North with South, East with West and Far West, until they concede China's variety in more practical ways than they have yet done. This is a testable situation, more than it is an American opinion. China already has an actual federal state, implicitly in many PRC provinces and more evidently in Hong Kong, despite the lack of a federal constitution. If the terms go further, to acknowledge for some decades the legitimate purpose of Taiwan's army, this state could accommodate its "lost province," too.

President Jiang Zemin has said that "Chinese do not attack Chinese," but Beijing's leaders have not yet detailed the means by which they should expect anybody to believe this. Chinese have certainly attacked Chinese in living memory (1989, 1966–1969, 1945–1949). If PRC leaders are serious, they will define guarantees and be able to unify their country. Whether or not Taipei's leaders take up such an offer, the American President could at that time make an independent judgement of the available terms. If conditions can be implemented so that they substantially assure the continuance of Taiwan's liberal system, at least for several decades after which China will predictably evolve a political structure to tolerate a greater variety of Chinese elites on the mainland, then America's commitment to Taiwan's people will have been fulfilled. The U.S. is interested in seeing a timely and just finish of this conflict.

If no plausibly guaranteed terms for Taipei emerge from Beijing within the next five to fifteen years, then a hot or cold Sino-American war is quite likely after that. From the Chinese viewpoint, a problem is that the U.S. would not lose such a conflict. From the American viewpoint, unwillingness to fight for the preservation of a democratic polity whose evolving identification did not violate U.S. interests would in the long run be even more expensive than the direct costs of war. If Japan responded to any ill-advised Chinese invasion, or to American isolationism, by building up its own military potentials in a forward manner, this could mean later trouble for China (and perhaps also for Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia). To maximize net U.S. benefits, Washington's policy should tilt toward Taipei if leaders there become more plausibly Chinese, and toward Beijing if leaders there become clearer about ways to assure that within a unified China "Taiwan people will rule Taiwan." Such a policy is in the substantive interests of democracies and of Chinese unification, although not in the interests of Beijing authoritarians or Taiwanese nationalists.

The message of this essay may seem realistic to the point of asperity toward people on Taiwan who do not wish to be Chinese. Yet it is an interpretable fact about Taiwan that 98 percent of the island's people are Han Chinese. There is no sure reason why this anthropology gives the PRC a rightful claim to Taiwan (any more than Germany, for example, has such a claim to Austria).⁸⁵ But the issue relevant to security is whether the Beijing leaders will be convinced this anthropological circumstance has no political importance. A realistic estimate of that probability must be low, given China's increasing power. Taiwanese should face this circumstance. It is a general fact of the human condition that all people must do many things they would prefer to avoid. A list of these unintended constraints on identity, which every individual faces even in the course of a perfectly normal life, would be both maudlin and obvious. Nobody has just a single identity. Do non-Chinese Taiwanese wish among other things, for example, to be democrats? If so, they can comprehend the view of liberals from other countries like the U.S. that any democrat on Taiwan has an unusual opportunity to help bring foreign peace (and incidentally, better government) to the largest national population on earth—whether or not they primarily identify with that nation.

A parallel responsibility applies to educated Chinese in the PRC who want to force Taiwanese into being their own compatriots. If they think that the only function of modern development is to raise the power of nation-states and of the educated intellectuals who become bureaucrats in the governments of rich countries, then actual modernization is likely to disappoint these neo-mandarins. Most ordinary people, educated or not, want to use their new wealth and power for their own benefit, not just for the benefit of a state elite.⁸⁶ Ordinary people want to think their own acquiescence, not somebody else's definition of wisdom, is the factor that legitimates rulers. National governments can do some things for individuals and families, but there is much else they cannot do.

Truly Chinese traditions are far more ecumenical and realistic than an exclusive emphasis on nation-state identity would suggest. Modern global norms are also more diversified than an exclusive stress on identifying with any single size of group would suggest. So Chinese patriots may later comprehend that a dollop of laxity about identification among Taiwanese, who (like Hong Kong people) have earned their own wealth through hard work, will lead not just to more national strength through individual initiatives but also to happier families and local networks throughout China. If nationalists are loyal to their state alone, they commit a kind of treason to many of their other networks, including their families.

The time window for serious terms of a Beijing-Taipei truce leading to a likelihood of unification may not have opened yet. So the U.S. need not make any substantial change of its current policy until its analysts think Jiang Zemin and Lee Teng-hui or their successors could lead their systems to an initial agreement. Taipei leaders are not yet ready to face down advocates of Taiwan independence squarely. Beijing leaders are not yet sufficiently critical of Party "princelings" who refuse to acknowledge the political costs of PRC failures between 1957 and 1989 particularly.⁸⁷ These PRC conservatives are unlikely to offer serious terms to the people on Taiwan. They rightly believe that Beijing in the very long run can obtain almost any conditions that China wants on the Taiwan issue; but PRC diversification may, before then, bring new Chinese leaders who could agree to terms that Taiwan's leaders would benefit from accepting. If that happens, Washington must make clear to both Taipei and Beijing that it is

very interested in seeing a truce between them.

China would suffer major losses by trying to settle its claim coercively. An even more reformist, more representative, and less exclusivist group of leaders is overdue in Beijing, and a more far-sighted leadership might be elected in Taipei if Taiwan voters face their actual situation. Americans are not Chinese or Taiwanese and cannot negotiate the cross-strait dispute. Through all available channels, however, Americans can make clear the U.S. view that China's unification with verifiable guarantees to Taiwan is on the democratic agenda.

Notes

The author expresses personal thanks to many friends, including Michael Doyle, James Moriarty, Michel Oksenberg, and Shelley Rigger, who aided his thinking on this paper even though they are in no way responsible for the result.

1. Recent Beijing statements to Taipei sporadically suggest that the "one China" to which Taiwan belongs is not necessarily the PRC but may be a future jointly agreed China—so long as the island is part of it. The hope to keep peace in East Asia is linked to the U.S.-Japan alliance, which is increasingly questioned by Chinese even though independent Japanese military development could become anti-Chinese. Also, China might oppose continued U.S. military presence in Korea after unification there. A wide-ranging pessimistic argument covering U.S. reasons to contain Chinese militarism is Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Knopf, 1997). A Chinese edition of this book was quickly published in Taiwan as *Jijiang daolai de Zhong-Mei chongtu* (Taipei: Maitian, 1997). A different interpretation is Andrew J. Nathan and Robert Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: Norton, 1997). A PRC view, written by a scholarly advisor of President Jiang Zemin, is Liu Ji, "Making the Right Choices in Twenty-First Century Sino-American Relations," *Journal of Contemporary China* 7:17 (March 1998), pp. 89-102.

2. The term "war" in this essay refers to any bellicose step—not just an invasion (which is unlikely to occur quickly across the Taiwan Strait) but also a blockade. Journalistic accounts are collected in Shen Min, *Taihai zhanzheng da yuyan* (Predictions about War in the Taiwan Strait) (Taipei: Dujia, 1997).

3. Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly* (New York: Ballantine, 1984).

4. This assertion, like many others here, is based on the author's interviews in the U.S., China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. PRC leaders have suggested that unification with Taiwan would come after the Macau transition of 1999—and perhaps after a further period during which China builds up its military ability to obtain terms probably without using force (presuming the government on Taiwan does not declare independence or obtain means to guarantee autonomy permanently). Taiwan analysts, in various bodies, privately confirm a view that relative PRC-Taiwan military growth also forecasts a tilt in the PRC's favor after approximately 2005 or 2010, barring unforeseen changes in defense technology or further major aid from other countries. This does not mean that the PRC would necessarily press its Taiwan claims by coercion soon, although it might do so. Local politics in Beijing and Taipei would affect such a decision, and a truce between them would delay or obviate it.

5. Ch'ü Ming, *2010 nian liangan tongyi: Zhonggong maixiang haiquan shidai* (Unification of the Two Shores in 2010: The Era When Chinese Communism Leaps to Sea Power) (Taipei: Jiuyi, 1995). Earlier speculations are in *Guofang baipishu* (National Defense White Paper), Taiwan Research Foundation National Defense Research Small Group, ed. (Taipei: Taiwan Yanjiu Jijinhui, 1992). Several 1992 contracts with American and French companies, whose political context involved the international reaction to the deaths in Beijing on June 4, 1989, are very important in calculations of future PRC strength. An overview is presented in Chong-pin Lin, "The Military Balance in the Taiwan Straits," *China Quarterly* 146 (June 1996), pp. 577-95.

6. See Lynn White, *Unstately Power: Local Causes of China's Economic Reforms and Unstately Power: Local Causes of China's Intellectual, Legal, and Political Reforms* (both Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

7. See Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The Fifteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party," *Asian Survey* 38:3

(March 1998), pp. 231-64.

8. The word “democracy” in this essay refers to the liberal kind only; participatory but illiberal states (e.g., Hitler’s or Mao’s) are not included—nor are ancient democracies in which participation was very limited. The seminal essay on this in recent years was Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12:3-4 (Summer and Fall, 1983), pp. 205-35 and 323-52. This provides a definition of liberal states and surveys historical conflicts. If there have been any wars between liberal states in the past two centuries or so, they have been minor. Peru-Ecuador skirmishes over the boundary in sparsely populated Amazonia may be a case—but this conflict has been sporadic, inconclusive, and not costly for either side. The British-Icelandic “Cod War” may have cost a single death whose causes are moot. Democracies can have serious disputes, but they avoid real wars.

9. This formulation, as improved by definitions that cited sources give, avoids critiques of the democratic peace hypothesis that are mentioned later in the text. It does not preclude hesitant or relapsed authoritarian processes. The PRC is not an established democracy, but there would not be nearly so much interest in China’s potential for that state form if the country were weaker. PRC diplomats have been invited to visit some prestigious democratic and proto-democratic clubs on spec.

10. Jack Levy pronounces the democratic peace hypothesis “as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations.” See “Domestic Politics and War,” in R. I. Rothberg and T. K. Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 88.

11. “Excerpts from President Clinton’s State of the Union Message,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1994, p. A17. Phillip Saunders gave the author this and the following reference.

12. Refinements of the democratic peace conjecture are summarized in Henry S. Farber and Joanne Gowa, “Politics and Peace,” *International Security* 20:2 (Fall, 1995), pp. 123-46.

13. This is relevant to the PRC—and suggests a danger for Taiwan. See Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security* 20:1 (Summer 1995), pp. 5-38; but see Andrew Enterline, “Driving while Democratizing: A Rejoinder to Mansfield and Snyder,” *International Security* 20:4 (Spring 1996), pp. 183-207. When writing this paper, the author had not yet seen Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: Norton, 1997).

14. It is possible to make a general argument that the main issue in traditional Chinese political culture is who may sit at decision tables. Compare Susan L. Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chapter 9.

15. Based on Phillip Saunders, “The Democratic Peace and New Democracies,” a paper to be published by a doctoral student at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University.

16. A classic is E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America* (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden, 1960).

17. Quotations in Patrick Tyler, “Clinton Bets the Farm on China,” *International Herald Tribune*, July 2, 1997, p. 6.

18. Suggestions about the aftermaths of centralizations by Cromwell, Napoleon, Stalin, Franco, and others are made in Lynn White, *Unstately Power: Local Causes of China’s Intellectual, Legal, and Political Reforms*.

19. See Table 1, World Bank, *World Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press, any recent year). Oil sheikdoms are exceptions to the hypothesis about authoritarianism being unviable in rich countries—as is the city-state of Singapore (i.e., 3 million Chinese next door to Indonesia with 200 million Muslims, a government that is widely deemed corrupt, and a Chinese minority of 3 percent who own 65 percent of the nonstate wealth); so the exceptions are in odd circumstances. Another econometric exercise, computing a “human development index” rather than GDP/capita, corroborates the political hypothesis better by including health and education measures along with an income statistic. Anyone who doubts that socioeconomic measures have political implications should look at the data in United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press, any recent year), Table 1.

20. In March 1996, the prominent conservative Lin Yang-kang opined that U.S. ships sent near Taiwan were interfering in Chinese affairs. The complexity of the island’s politics may be illustrated by the fact that Lin’s family origin is Taiwanese.

21. The portions fluctuate somewhat, but the February 1997 telephone survey gives numbers broadly confirmed by many other mid-1990s researches. In this poll, 9 percent of Taiwan adults wanted independence as soon as possible, and 13 percent wanted the status quo now and independence later. Fully 21 percent wanted the status quo indefinitely, and just 5 percent wanted unification as soon as possible. But 22 percent wanted the status quo now, with unification later—the government’s public position. The most popular option, garnering 25 percent, was to retain the status quo now but to postpone the decision about sovereignty until later (and another 5 percent apparently would not respond). See the poll by the Centre for Public Opinion and Election Studies, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, with a sample size of 1,231, reported to this writer by Dr. Chong-pin Lin. A 1993 survey offered just three options but renders a generally similar story if the “postponers” on the more refined six-option surveys are distributed equally among the three categories: 36 percent for unification, 37 percent for status quo, and 26 percent for independence; see Shyu Huoyan, “Reasoning and Choice in Taiwan’s Gubernatorial Election,” paper for a conference at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, February 1996.

22. See Leng Tse-kang, *The Taiwan-China Connection* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), p. 13 and passim.

23. Prof. Li Wen-lang in Yang Ching-sung, ed., *Taiwan mingyun Zhongguo ji* (Taiwanese Fate and Chinese Consciousness) (Taipei: Dunli Publishers, 1987), p. 17.

24. See Lynn White and Li Cheng, “China Coast Identities: Region, Nation, and World,” in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel Kim, eds., *China’s Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 154-93.

25. Quoted in *South China Morning Post*, July 13, 1997, p. 9.

26. *International Herald Tribune*, July 22, 1997, p. 4.

27. *South China Morning Post*, July 13, 1997, p. 9.

28. See Hsiao Hsin-huang, “Normative Conflicts in Contemporary Taiwan,” chapter for *Normative Conflicts: The Frontiers of Social Cohesion*, Bertelsman Science Foundation, Germany, May 1996.

29. Felix K. Chang, “Conventional War Across the Taiwan Strait,” *Orbis* 40 (Fall 1996), pp. 599-604, citation thanks to Lin Cheng-yi.

30. The present chapter is academic rather than official; so it uses the term “ROC” (rather than the fashionable “ROCOT” for “ROC on Taiwan”). Romanizations are in *pinyin*, except for Taiwan names that commonly have other spellings.

31. See data above, from a 1997 poll by the National Sun Yat-sen University. These status-quo respondents have different preferences about how the issue of sovereignty ought eventually to be decided (for China, for independence, never, or undecided)—but about four-fifths like the current situation now.

32. Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976).

33. Max Weber distinguishes “ethics of ultimate ends” that aim to hold groups together from “ethics of responsibility” that aim to bring happy consequences. See Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (New York: Basic Books, 1963), pp. 77-128. For interpretations, see Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960), and the chapter on Weber in H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York: Vintage, 1961).

34. Dr. Lin Cheng-yi of the Academia Sinica, Taipei, has told the author that this draft truce was called a *heping xieyi caoan* and was sent to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, which had not yet replied with comments. See also Dr. Lin’s paper on “Confidence-Building Measures in the Taiwan Strait,” which cites a report in the KMT’s newspaper *Zhongyang ribao*, July 19, 1997, p. 10, and Robert A. Manning and Ronald Montaperto, *The People’s Republic and Taiwan* (Washington: Strategic Forum, National Defense University, February 1997), p. 3.

35. Based on conversations in Taipei, August 1997.

36. Expanded slightly from ideas in Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), introduction; see p. 11, and pp. 15-17 on ways nationalism may change.

37. Words too cogent to attribute, from a private letter to the author by a scholar who saw an earlier draft of this essay.

38. Sun Tongwen in Sun Tongwen and Wang Jiaying, *Liang’an guanxi de maodun yü chulu* (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue Yatai Yanjiu Suo, 1996), pp. 215-45.

39. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, pp. 487-88.

40. See Edward Friedman, “Reconstructing China’s National Identity: A Southern Alternative to Mao-Era Anti-

Imperialist Nationalism,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 53:1 (February 1994), pp. 67-87; also Edward Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995).

41. An important aspect of “Taiwan people ruling Taiwan” now involves their freedom of expression. At present, only some on the island express separatist ideas. PRC leaders should come to realize that movement by Taiwan’s government toward Chinese unification may be politically possible only if freedom of speech is maintained there. Fears of censorship help separatism, not unification, in practice. (More on this point, with reference to the same issue in Hong Kong, is below.)

42. “My country, right or wrong” was a view expressed by the American revolutionary Patrick Henry, in the Virginia House of Burgesses two centuries ago. His wish “may she always be in the right” did not alter the conscious blindness of the main statement.

43. To allow legal-sounding explanations for the contingency that the U.S. may defend an island against the government of a country America sees as owning it, the State Department has been slow to define a stance about sovereignty in Taiwan. The U.S. once held the issue was undecided; this position has now become moot unless there is a war, because of agreements with the PRC. No definitive U.S. position was set by Roosevelt’s 1943 agreement at Cairo that Chiang Kai-shek’s troops would accept the Japanese surrender on Taiwan, nor by the peace treaty of San Francisco in which Japan renounced claims (but the ROC was not a signatory), nor by the 1954 U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty, nor by 1958 arguments of a State Department lawyer named Ely Maurer who suggested an eventual UN plebiscite. The Shanghai and Carter-Hua communiqués of 1972 and 1978, which are executive agreements rather than treaties that bind domestic U.S. courts, did “not challenge” or “recognized” a “Chinese” view that Taiwan is part of China. The 1978 wording in the English version is murky, exactly saying one thing while purposely seeming to say another. (Chinese negotiators often talk about “sincerity” when substantive terms are at issue; so American lawyers reply by raising genuine insincerity to the level of a fine art.) America has needed to leave the impression that the U.S. views the island as Chinese, and this has increased Taiwan’s security. Any position becomes less effective legally if it is not consistently asserted; so the previous U.S. ambiguity about whether Taiwan is Chinese seems to have lapsed. The U.S. has acquired a “one China” policy, even though it concurrently enunciates a policy for peace in East Asia. On the earlier situation, see Ely Maurer, “Legal Problems Regarding Formosa and the Offshore Islands,” *U.S. State Department Bulletin*, November 20, 1958, in Jerome Cohen and Hungdah Chiu, eds., *People’s China and International Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 144-45.

44. The variety of nationalisms, even in a single country, is stressed in Michael Hughes, *Nationalism and Society: Germany, 1800–1945* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988); in Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*; and in Edward Friedman, *National Identity*. The main causes of national identification in Puerto Rico clearly relate to non-normative income (rather than security) considerations. Even though the ethnic bases of Puerto Rican nationality are all non-Yankee, very free referenda have defeated or postponed the independence option thus far.

45. Not all these meetings occurred on schedule. Information is from Lin Cheng-Yi, citing a *Resumé of the Koo-Wang Talks* (Taipei: Straits Exchange Foundation, 1993), pp. 43-51.

46. The Mainland Affairs Council’s Vice Chair Kao Koong-lian has said, “We no longer challenge China’s representation rights in the international community.” *MAC News Briefing*, Taipei, May 5, 1997.

47. At the end of 1993, Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council reported 12,000 ROC firms investing in the mainland, while the PRC statistic for that time was 25,800 (with a committed investment of \$26.6 billion). See Chu Yun-han, “The Politics of Taiwan’s Mainland Policy,” paper for a conference at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, February 1996, p. 2.

48. “Chairman Ye Jianying’s Elaborations on Policy Concerning Return of Taiwan to Motherland and Peaceful Reunification,” *Beijing Review* 40 (October 5, 1981), pp. 10-11.

49. See *Lianhe bao* (Union News), February 5, 1995.

50. You Ji, “Taiwan in the Political Calculations of the Chinese Leadership,” *The China Journal* 36 (July 1996), p. 123.

51. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, CHI-97-003, January 4, 1997, quoting *Pingguo ribao* (Apple Daily), p. A14, suggests Jiang mentioned the year 2000; but such a quick schedule may be unrealistic.

52. Richard D. Fisher, *Asian Studies Center Backgrounder* (Washington: Heritage Foundation, February 20,

1997).

53. In Taiwan, some politicians said this move was merely administrative streamlining; others said it looked forward to Taiwan independence; still others said its purpose was political more than structural, i.e., to weaken Lee Teng-hui's most promising KMT rival, mainland-born James Soong. The facts would support any of these glosses. See *International Herald Tribune*, July 5-6, 1997, p. 1. Also see *MAC News Briefing*, Taipei, March 10, 1997, p. 1.

54. See *MAC News Briefing*, June 2, 1997, p. 4, quoting a *Central Daily News* interview with the MAC Chairman, Dr. Chang King-yuh.

55. A Taipei interviewee explained that the crucial aspect of the "two systems" idea was that they would after fifty years be amalgamated—but then admitted the term could be interpreted in other ways, and that a confederal arrangement much later might be acceptable. The official ROC response to "one country, two systems" is that China deserves the best system, which is not socialist. This now-standard retort neglects extensive evidence that the PRC is no longer socialist; that government condones the exploitation of workers, reduces budgets for public health and education, and seldom regulates markets effectively. The real problem may be that Deng Xiaoping himself was widely (albeit inaccurately) credited with first thinking up the "one country, two systems" motto. Taipei's rejection may be of him, as much as of the slogan whose meaning could be redefined as federalist and useful to Taiwan. Beijing returns such compliments. After the Ithaca visa, a PRC spokesperson waxed enthusiastic enough to call Lee Teng-hui "scum of the nation . . . thrown into the dustbin of history" (Reuters, August 27, 1997). Perhaps this compensated Marx for the sad dearth of really literary rhetoric from Beijing in recent years. But a gentler approach might have served better the aim of uniting China by reaching an accord with the main leader in the lost province.

56. There is a long history of blind discounts on patriotic military efforts, although the author has not yet found a book comparing these policy errors. In recent years, Pol Pot attacked Vietnam. Nasser started wars against Israel that were ill-advised from the military viewpoint. A DPP author suggests that Taiwan should follow the example of Finland's stout resistance to the USSR (without mentioning that Finland lost territory, that Hitler remained a distraction, or that Stalin had just killed his own best generals); cf. Chang Hsü-ch'eng (Parris Chang), "*Taiwan 'Fenlan hua'?*" (The "Finlandization" of Taiwan?), *Ziyou* (Freedom), Taipei, August 4, 1997, p. 23.

57. This is a free adaptation of ideas in Vilfredo Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, intro. by Hans Zetterberg (New York: Arno Press, 1979). Without reference to Pareto, the usefulness of this distinction between conservatives and reformers is illustrated in another situation by Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

58. For statistics on this trend, and an evaluation of it, see articles the current writer has coauthored with Li Cheng: "The Thirteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: From Mobilizers to Managers," *Asian Survey* 28:4 (April 1988), pp. 371-99; "Elite Transformation and Modern Change in Mainland China and Taiwan," *China Quarterly* 121 (March 1990), pp. 1-35; and "China's Technocratic Movement and the *World Economic Herald*," *Modern China* 17:3 (July 1991), pp. 342-88.

59. The quoted term was made famous in H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths, eds., *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). This was amplified by Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Their predictions of serious change were echoed by few other Russianists, who wrongly imputed a longer-term resilience to the Leninist system.

60. See Reuters, May 25, 1995.

61. Bush explained the F-16 sales would help Taiwan "sustain the confidence it needs to reduce tensions." See *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 28:36 (September 7, 1992), pp. 1556-557, in Lin Cheng-yi, "Confidence-Building Measures," p. 39. See also James Shinn, ed., *Weaving the Net: Conditional Engagement with China* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996).

62. See Samuel P. Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" in *Political Science Quarterly* 99:2 (summer 1984), pp. 193-218.

63. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

64. If Beijing intellectuals are really more interested in Chinese unification than in the non-democratic custom that a kind of statist articulateness (rather than popular consent) confers a right to rule, Hong Kong may help modernize their thinking. Members of Beijing's provisional Legislative Council there pressed for self-contradictory

laws, which are ambiguous about whether officers should arrest people only for causing dangers to public order, or instead for peacefully advocating separatism (e.g., of Taiwan or Tibet). Common law courts may uphold something like the “clear and present danger” criterion, but neither dissident speakers nor the police have been offered legal guidelines in Hong Kong—and the issue will arise there again.

65. An oral source, heard on Taiwan.

66. Wu Nai-teh, “Forming a New Nation: Ethnic Identity and Liberalism in Taiwanese Nationalism,” paper for the XVII Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 1997.

67. *Ibid.* The fourth logical possibility is to oppose Chinese unification even after cross-strait sociopolitical convergence, while also opposing Taiwan independence even if it could be defended. Understandably, this don’t-think-about-the-problem-at-all stance received scant support (3 percent in 1996). Dr. Wu Naiteh, who favors a Taiwan autonomist position personally, deserves credit for conducting these carefully constructed surveys from the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei. See his paper for details about the large sample sizes and low rates of non-response.

68. The author is extremely grateful for this and other help to interviewees in Taipei.

69. The first public issues creating the New China Party (Hsintang for short) concerned corruption, not independence; but its leaders, including some Taiwanese, are all ex-KMT members who sharply dislike Lee. The independence party is the Chienkuotang—perhaps best not in *pinyin*, given its zealotry!

70. The ROC Constitution specifies that a presidential candidate with a plurality wins; no run-off election is held to ensure a majority. Lien had a Taiwanese father and a mainland mother. Information in this paragraph came from August 1997 interviews in Taipei.

71. See Wang Xiaobo, *Taiwan qiantu lunji* (Essays on Taiwan’s Future) (Taipei: Bomier Shudian, 1989), e.g. pp. 18 and 321.

72. These are the first substantive words of the inter-party document; see “Consensus Formed at the National Development Conference on Cross-Strait Relations” (Taipei: Mainland Affairs Council, 1997), p. 1.

73. The role of modernization in establishing national identities is stressed by Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

74. Martin Lee Chu-ming, the leader of Hong Kong’s Democratic Party, speaking from the balcony of the Legislative Council building from which his party was being evicted in the early hours of July 1, 1997, implicitly questioned the “one country, two systems” formula by hailing Hong Kong’s own democracy as a beacon to democrats throughout the then-more-unified China, as everyone (even those who dislike it) recognize it could be.

75. Interpreted from figures in David Shambaugh, “Taiwan’s Security: Maintaining Deterrence Amid Political Accountability,” in *Contemporary Taiwan*, special issue of *China Quarterly* 148 (December 1996), p. 1297.

76. Andrew J. Nathan, “China’s Goals in the Taiwan Strait,” *The China Journal* 36 (July 1996), pp. 87-93.

77. This is partly indebted to an oral presentation by Prof. Thomas Christensen at the Center of International Studies, Princeton University, in the spring of 1997.

78. Jonathan D. Pollack, “China’s Taiwan Strategy: Point of No Return?” *The China Journal* 36 (July 1996), p. 112.

79. Any provisions involving law, including those about control of sea and air space in any manner different from current practice, would involve symbolic issues and thus probably scuttle negotiations for such a truce. The diplomatic negotiating formalities would be unusual but arrangeable. If it were thought that ARATS and SEF personnel did not have the expertise for such a negotiation (although its terms are simple), “second-track” diplomats or retired officials might be seconded to the foundations. Of course, the status of the agreement in national or international law would remain unspecified. But the history of modern negotiation is full of examples in which texts have actually encouraged compliance, even when their legal aspects have been totally indeterminate. The “hot line” idea is outlined in a source that Lin Cheng-yi suggested: Peter Kien-hong Yu, et al., “Treaty for Alleviating the Crisis Across the Taiwan Strait,” *Mao yu dun fazhi* (Spear and Shield), Taipei, no. 54 (October 15, 1991), pp. 3-4.

80. Popular Chinese books contain many proposals for flags. Taiwan’s politicians, if they were brave, could gain a lot by agreeing to fly a common (new) flag with the mainland. This symbolic issue is far less important than concrete means to assure Taiwan’s security. Similar or identical flags are used in many Arab or Slavic countries, with no regard to how well they get along. See, for example, speculative new Chinese flag designs (e.g., a red banner with

a circle containing the Republic's white star surrounded by the People's Republic five yellow stars) in sources like Feng Hua-nong, *Taiwan de zhongji mingyun* (The Determinative Fate of Taiwan [trans. in orig.]), (Taipei: Shengzhi Chuban She, 1996), figures 1 and 2. For more, see Wang Jiaying and Sun Tongwen, eds., *Liang'an guanxi maodun yu chulu* (Contradiction and Solution in Relations between the Two Shores) (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue Yatai Yanjiu Suo, 1996).

81. Sixty years would be a more distinctively Chinese cycle, and Beijing intellectuals sporadically stress how patient they are; but any long period would suffice. Forty is perhaps an unlucky number in Chinese. Thirty would probably be enough to produce a far more liberal China, if the Taipei side could be convinced of this on the basis of comparative study.

82. An interviewee reports that on March 11, 1996, two days after Clinton's National Security Advisor Anthony Lake conferred with Vice-Minister Liu Huaqiu in Beijing, his deputy Samuel Berger conferred (officially unofficially) in Washington with ROC National Security Council director Ting Mou-shih. By August 12, 1997, Berger was in Beidaihe conferring with Liu. What these people say to each other is generally not published.

83. David Shambaugh, "Taiwan's Security," p. 1287.

84. See Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The Fifteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Full-Fledged Technocratic Leadership with Partial Control by Jiang Zemin." See note 7 above.

85. The example is chosen because Germany as an emerging power once claimed (and finally took) Austria. What stabilized attitudes in Germany to forget this claim? Total defeat in a world war, which was extremely costly for very many, is a remote possibility also in the China case that involves many issues (for a list of them, see Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, *The Coming Conflict*). But those who espouse such a policy should be willing to bear the costs.

86. This is a call for Chinese patriots to realize a worldwide fact, not a Western opinion. The empirical evidence is summarized on Table 1 of the *Human Development Report*, cited above.

87. On the failures of "princelings" (*taizi*) to win CCP Central Committee seats in 1997, however, see Li and White, *ibid.* Reports of mainland injustices are as popular in Taiwan as is TV footage of Legislative Yuan fighting on the mainland. A thick book details the egregious corruptions of Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong, based on PRC court and newspaper reports: Chen Fang, *Tiannü: Shizhang yaoan* (The Wrath of God: A Mayor's Severe Crime [English trans. on orig. paperback cover, also marked *dalu jinshu*, "prohibited book on the mainland"]) (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1997).