

The Chinese-Taiwanese Conflict

Possible Futures of a Confrontation between China, Taiwan and the United States of America

Lee J. Hunkovic
IN 520 Analytic Methods
American Military University

As the World Wars were in the previous century, an armed confrontation between the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and the United States could prove to be one of the most defining events in world history. There are few countries in the world which do not have political and economic ties with China and the United States and who would not be directly or indirectly affected by such a conflict. If China and the United States go to war, the outcome will decide the new global balance of power, of whether the United States retains its supremacy or if the People's Republic of China surpasses it. The stakes of this potentially volatile situation for the United States are very high and its conclusion will determine America's new place in the world, politically, economically and militarily.

Introduction:

The Chinese-Taiwanese Conflict began in 1949, after the Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Tse-Tung, overthrew the nationalist government of the Republic of China (ROC). It was during this time that President Chiang Kai-shek of the ROC and his political party, the Kuomintang (KMT), were forced to flee with soldiers and civilians loyal to them to the Chinese island of Taiwan and reestablish the Chinese nationalist government. In 1950, the Chinese Communist Party established the People's Republic of China (PRC) and invaded Taiwan, to unify all of China under their rule. Their plan failed, when the United States sent naval forces and successfully defended Taiwan.

Since then, both countries have existed in a state of neither complete independence nor integration, of neither war nor peace. Military hostilities and tensions between the two countries have risen at times, such as in August 1958, when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) bombed the Taiwanese islands of Kinmen and Matsu and when China tested ballistic missiles off the coast of Taiwan in March 1996 (Lynn, 2005). Relations have somewhat improved at other times, with China's retreat from strict Communism and embracing of Western economic policies

(Lynn, 2005). Regardless of these fluctuations in relations, Taiwan has developed a democratic government and stellar economy that is independent on the PRC, yet both countries have many mutual economic interests, with billions of dollars invested in each other's businesses.

Despite the de-facto independence in Taiwan and a sustained cessation of violent hostilities between the two countries, the PRC has never given up on its dream of reuniting all of China under its rule. There has been a massive buildup of military forces on the Chinese side of the Taiwan Strait. This has been especially true in recent years, following Beijing's March 2005 passing of an Anti-secession Law regarding Taiwan, stating in no uncertain terms that if Taiwan attempts to declare full independence from China or if peaceful means of achieving reunification are exhausted, then China will use force to take back Taiwan.

By no surprise, the Taiwanese government has often refused to simply accept the Chinese government's intimidation to reintegrate. In 2002, Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian, of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party or Pan-Green Party made the statement that "each side of the Taiwan Straits is a country" and in February 2006, he called the Taiwanese National Reunification Council's National Reunification Guidelines "absurd products of an absurd era", statements that caused Beijing to accuse him of being a provocateur and a troublemaker. Under him, it seemed apparent that Taiwan has no intentions whatsoever of being absorbed back into China and that the likelihood of war between the two countries was ever increasing.

With the Taiwanese election of President Ma Ying-jeou on May 20, 2008, diplomatic relations between Beijing and Taipei have noticeably improved, as he has agreed, at least in theory, to reintegration. Whether President Ma is simply pacifying the Chinese to gain time to further a Taiwanese national defense capable of repelling a Chinese invasion or is sincere about reunification remains to be seen. In any case, with President Ma in office and his

(surprisingly now) pro-unification Kuomintang or “Pan Blue” Party in power, the chances of war between China and Taiwan seem to be dramatically reduced.

The United States has committed to defend Taiwan if attacked by China in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, in which President Carter officially began diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China and also gave token recognition to their “One China Policy” and its agenda of reunification. Instead of maintaining a significant deployable military force in the region, the U.S. has sold billions of dollars worth of arms to Taiwan, from small arms, to ships, fighter aircraft and Patriot Missiles. Deputy Secretary of State and former Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte reiterated America’s commitment to the defense of Taiwan in September 2008, as well as to resume arms sales, despite the political changes that have recently occurred.

Despite the arms sales to Taiwan and vows to defend it if attacked, the United States also has significant economic ties to both China and Taiwan and has been trying to maintain the status quo of the current situation. The position of the U.S. in this currently nonviolent conflict is precarious; it is economically codependent with China and Taiwan to a slightly lesser extent, as all three countries conduct billions of dollars worth of trade with one another and are invested in each others economies, however, China and the U.S. are military adversaries and the U.S. has vowed to defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion. Considering the current military and economic situations of the United States, with a war being fought on two fronts and in the midst of a severe economic crisis, the U.S. would greatly prefer that no disruptions to the state of relative peace between China and Taiwan occur.

Given these sets of circumstances, China, Taiwan and the United States have much to gain and even more to lose if an armed conflict erupts in the Taiwan Strait. All three countries have political, economic and national security issues involved, the Taiwanese have their

freedom and for some, their existence at stake and the United States and China are both in competition economically and militarily to be the greatest superpower in the world. All three countries have vowed to militarily defend their national interests, however, the prospects of going to war for any of the three are perilous indeed.

Given the complexity of the situation and the historical implications for all three countries if hostilities commence, an analysis of all possible permutations of a China-Taiwan-United States conflict and their relative likelihood to one another would be greatly beneficial. While many articles have given detailed accounts of the situation and the perspectives of the countries involved, few if any have delved into an alternate futures analysis of what could potentially be the largest conflict since World War II. Such an analysis is certainly justified and would have much to offer the academic, as well as strategic national defense and intelligence communities, as the United States cannot afford to miscalculate the China-Taiwan situation or take a poorly planned course of action. The national interests and position of America as the most powerful and influential country in the world are at stake.

Literature Review:

Numerous works of literature exist, pertaining to the China-Taiwan-United States situation, its implications and its possible outcomes. The first such article, by Erica Lynn, analyzes the dispute using a Game Theory Approach. Lynn (2005) gives a history of the conflict, notes the Chinese Anti-secession Law of 2005, which clearly states that China will attack if Taiwan tries to secede or if efforts towards peaceful reunification fail. She then announces her use of the Game Theory Approach, using the options of cooperation or non-cooperation for each player, to rate the desirability of possible outcomes from the perspective of each actor.

Beginning with Taiwan, Lynn (2005) states that the best situation for Taiwan would be to unilaterally declare independence from China and have China not invade. She lists the benefits of this situation for Taiwan as gaining access to world organizations such as the UN and being able to set up trade links with greater ease and states that being able to achieve these ends without disrupting the economy or losing lives in a war would be much more desirable, since its people invest heavily in Chinese stocks. Lynn (2005) additionally states that keeping the U.S. as an ally, to establish stronger defensive capabilities would also be beneficial. She gives eight points to the situation in which Taiwan declares independence with the help of the U.S. and China and seven to the same situation without U.S. support.

Lynn (2005) then states that if the United States honors its commitment to defend Taiwan, the next best option for Taiwan would be to continue to exist in its states of de facto independence from China, where its citizens have freedom, but have no real diplomatic recognition. This scenario receives six points with U.S. help and five without. The next worst scenario for Taiwan, according to Lynn (2005), would be to gain independence after a costly war with China, which earns four points. She then states that without U.S. intervention Taiwan would in all probability lose a war with China and sustain huge economic damage and loss of life, therefore, going to war without U.S. help earns only one point for Taiwan and that three and two points are given for Taiwan being reincorporated into China with and without U.S. support, respectively, since the U.S. could negotiate more preferable terms of surrender for Taiwan.

Moving on to China, Lynn (2005) begins by stating that the best situation for China is to reincorporate Taiwan into the mainland without bloodshed, since doing so would boost Chinese nationalism without the cost of war. She then states that China will gain the most points if it can accomplish this goal despite U.S. intervention, as China would experience a valuable boost in self-esteem by intimidating a country backed by the world's leading superpower. Lynn (2005) then states that the next best scenario for China is to maintain its current relations with Taiwan,

who has become one of its most important trading partners, which would six points if the U.S. abandons its commitment to protect Taiwan and five if the U.S. does not. She then states that China's next best option is to go to war with Taiwan, as China cannot afford to lose Taiwan without a fight because doing so would inspire separatists in other regions of China to revolt, a situation that earns four points if the U.S. does not get involved and three if it does, as American involvement would be far costlier for China. Lynn (2005) goes on to state that the worst situation for China is if Taiwan secedes without a fight, which would make China appear weak, earning the lowest score of one point.

Moving on to the United States, Lynn (2005) begins by stating that the U.S. has a vested interest in protecting Taiwan, since Taiwan is a democratic republic with a market economy in close proximity to China, making it invaluable to the U.S. as a strategic ally. She further states that if Taiwan were to gain independence, the U.S. might be allowed to re-establish its military presence in Taiwan as insurance against an ever more powerful China. Therefore, Lynn (2005) states that the best situation for the U.S. is if Taiwan secedes from China without going to war, preferably without U.S. involvement. She then states that the next best option is to preserve the current China-Taiwan relations and benefit from trade with nations while staying out of the dispute, to not be accused of hegemony by the international community. She rates this scenario as earning six points for the U.S. staying uninvolved and five points for involving itself in it.

Lynn (2005) then states that the next best scenario for the U.S., earning four points, would be to make good on the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and intervene militarily if the PLA attacks Taiwan, because not doing so would show weakness. She states that the U.S. earns three points for assisting Taiwan if China reincorporates it into the mainland without a fight. Lynn (2005) then states that the worst scenario for the U.S. would be to allow China to crush the Taiwanese government, as the U.S. is the major stabilizing force in the world today and allowing

such to happen would make the U.S. appear weak and lose credibility in the eyes of the world. She gives this final scenario one point.

Lynn (2005) then gives her conclusions, that all three countries will gain more from militarily defending their interests and that based on this fact, the chances for war are highly likely. She then states that in order to avoid a war with mainland China, the U.S. must manipulate the game that it is playing, by helping Taiwan modernize its armed forces without pushing China into declaring war. She states that this scenario will upgrade the situation in which Taiwan and China go to war without U.S. intervention from one to four points. Giving a sum total of options, Lynn (2005) states that in this new game the U.S. earns eighteen points for choosing to assist Taiwan and eighteen for not, which gives the U.S. no obvious inclination to choose either options and eliminates it from the game. She concludes by stating that this game is advantageous, because it shows no tendency for a large, costly war between the U.S. and China, however, given the tendency for China to go to war with Taiwan, the U.S. must continue to devote itself to stabilizing the situation through careful diplomacy, in hopes of the conflict being settled peacefully.

While this article was written in 2005, when Chen Shui-bian was President of Taiwan, relations between the two countries were poor and war was looking like a very real possibility, despite the fact that Sino-Taiwanese relations have improved since the election a Ma Ying-jeou, the weighting of options that the three countries in this conflict have before them is sound. By defining possible scenarios that could occur in the conflict and assigning points to the most desirable outcomes for each actor, it is possible to define different courses of action that each country may take out of their own self-interest, as well as rate their likelihood. This article gives a good starting point to plotting the simplified scenarios that may occur in the China-Taiwan-United States conflict, as well as to rate the relative likelihood of those scenarios.

Marquand (2004) gives information about the Taiwan-China situation that is useful to the pairwise analysis of different scenarios, by giving reasons for and against China invading Taiwan, as well as benefits and liabilities for each scenario. Despite the fact that the article was written in 2004, after the re-election of President Chen Shui-bian, who is no longer in power, its rationale provided for and against military aggression on behalf of the Chinese is nonetheless virtually unchanged. The shift of power back to the Kuomintang in Taiwan, with the election of President Ma in June only alters the relative likelihood of war, the status quo or peaceful reunification of the two countries, not the information provided in this article for and against the different courses of action for China.

After giving an outdated synopsis of the political situation between the two countries, Marquand (2004) delves into the reasons why an attack by China against Taiwan is unlikely. His first reason is that China has slowly developed currency as a mainstream state, which it could lose if it takes military action against Taiwan and if such a conflict escalated, China could lose its more than \$50 billion a year in direct investment, which would jeopardize its booming east coast manufacturing infrastructure. Marquand (2004) notes further economic liabilities of attacking Taiwan would be the possible loss of its \$60 to \$100 billion a year trade surplus with the U.S., which could lead to political pressure from the banking and manufacturing sectors in China.

From a national security standpoint, Marquand (2004) states that Chinese military action could also destabilize Asia, giving nationalist factions in Japan “every excuse they need”, according to one Japanese scholar, to develop the nuclear weapons capability that many in Tokyo are already in favor of. He lists another economic liability of invasion as the possibility that the Japanese would do everything in their power to redirect the markets of Asia, including their own, away from China, even at the expense of losing their own money in trade. A further economic and national security risk that Marquand (2004) notes is the possibility that Russia

could use Chinese aggression as an excuse to sell oil exclusively to Japan, as Russia is not desirous of China developing quickly into a superpower and China reportedly [as of then] only has a 20-day reserve and is 75 percent reliant on Middle Eastern oil, which could have disastrous repercussions. Additionally, he notes that China has no desire to destroy its relationship with the U.S.

Marquand (2004) then addresses reasons why China might attack Taiwan. He begins by stating that time is not on Beijing's side, as economic integration has not forced Taiwan into reintegration and politically, Taiwan is becoming more, not less, self-contained and democratic, a situation that remains despite the outcome of the June 2008 elections. He also notes that [as of 2004] Taiwan is planning to amend its constitution and restructure its government, plans which are viewed askance in a communist party structure not known for adaptability or negotiating questions that can be solved by power. He also states that the Chinese military is "nearly ready" for a strike.

Marquand (2004) also states that some China watchers say that the internal dynamics at the top are forcing Beijing to take action and that China's leaders cannot agree on much other than the necessity to reacquire Taiwan. He states how it is argued that internal factional struggles in Beijing are forcing decisions based on patriotism, even if privately leaders are opposed to military action. Marquand (2004) goes on to quote Mr. Mitchell, a fellow member of the Christian Science Institute for Security, stating, "Taiwan is one of the two pillars of Beijing's legitimacy. Regaining Taiwan brings an end to historical humiliation" and that "For the Chinese psyche, the unity of the nation is equated to national greatness."

Marquand (2004) states that another case for invasion would be the rationale that China can launch its forces because the Americans did so in Iraq. He also notes that the Chinese believe that the U.S. is too busy in Iraq to get involved over a small Pacific Island. Marquand

(2004) also quotes Yan Xuetong, a Chinese Tsinghua University professor who is a top advocate for military action, who argues that a military venture that brings Taiwan to the negotiating table would get limited international attention, “something like [the] Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” He ends his article by noting that the inverse of the previous argument is also getting credence, that despite the fact that the world would react badly to a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, “everyone will get over it,” according to one expert, a point that pro-military thinkers are banking heavily on.

While the prospect of a breakdown in diplomacy and war between China and Taiwan have been dramatically reduced since the June 2008 elections and election of President Ma, who at least rhetorically is pro-unification, the factors in favor of a Chinese invasion should by no means be discarded, as the current situation could easily reverse if the Kuomintang loses power to the Democratic Progressive Party in 2012. Presently, the factors against invasion for China are overwhelming, as tensions, as well as the fiery rhetoric between the two countries have ceased and the Chinese are certainly not foolish enough to go to war over a situation that, as of now, they can rectify without the use of force. As previously stated, it is necessary to carefully note the reasons both for and against invasion for China, as while the Taiwanese political situation may change, heavily weighing upon the likelihood of either war or diplomacy prevailing, the factors for and against each option will be expected to remain virtually unchanged.

Wang (2008) gives reasons that weigh against the likelihood of a Chinese invasion. He begins his article by quoting Roy Kamphausen, director of the National Bureau of Asian Research and a U.S. military expert, stating that China should take a careful look at the various scenarios that could occur if it decides to attack Taiwan and that “Taiwan’s armed forces are increasingly capable of responding to military threats posed by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).” He further quotes Kamphausen, stating that there has been some dramatic progress in

Taiwan's military capability in the last seven to eight years and that "That should be a cause of increasing confidence for Taiwan's armed forces".

Wang (2008) gives more quotes from Kamphausen, stating that regarding the rapid modernization of the PLA, they are seeking a strategy to delay the arrival of U.S. forces in the Western Pacific, specifically in the Taiwan scenario. Wang (2008) also notes the assessment of Chang Ching, a navy captain and instructor at the War College of National Defense University, who questions whether the PLA's main focus will be the invasion of Taiwan or denial of access to the U.S. He then refers back to Kamphausen, who said that the PLA will strike both at the same time, but also notes that China would have to contemplate that decision, because "striking the U.S. would definitely change the international security situation."

Wang (2008) continues on with his quotes from Mr. Kamphausen, who states that the U.S. is not responsible for responding to a Chinese attack on Taiwan, nor is its support for Taiwan unconditional. He also quotes him as stating that the U.S. has no policy choice but to work with China, adding that his assessment on the rise of China's military power is that China does not think that it needs to compete with the U.S. in the region. Wang (2008) concludes his article by giving one last quote from his interview with Kamphausen, who finishes by stating that China "is desirous of a military befitting its status as a regional leader and rising global leader."

While the majority of this article appeared to indicate that China has more reasons not to invade Taiwan and risk a war with the United States, it additionally gives weight to the favoring of negotiation and diplomatic pressure on behalf of the Chinese government towards Taiwan, as a war would be a Pyrrhic victory at best and a historical disaster and defeat at worst, under the current conditions. Currently and into the near future, it would appear that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be a foolhardy course of action, especially given the daunting prospect of a direct confrontation with the United States. The People's Liberation Army is not ready as of yet to

invade Taiwan and expect an easy victory, let alone take on the United States military as well, therefore, diplomatic pressure towards Taiwan to reintegrate, as well as towards the United States to support this course of action are their best option.

While tactical scenarios, particularly how China would go about with an invasion of Taiwan are not the focus of this research, they are nonetheless useful for creating indicators of an imminent Chinese invasion, as well as of Taiwan's intentions to declare independence. Additionally, how China would go about with an attack on Taiwan, whether by conducting a massive invasion or through low intensity warfare and covert operations would alter the options that the United States has at its disposal. Additionally, a course of action such as provocation and a declaration of independence on behalf of Taiwan could very possibly alter the diplomatic courses of action for the United States, as well as whether or not they commit military forces to the conflict. All of these factors additionally have the potential to create transposition, which will be addressed later in this study.

World News Connection (2006) gives three relevant scenarios of how China could go about invading Taiwan, each with different implications for United States policy towards China, as well as military intervention. The first scenario listed is a low-intensity conflict scenario, in which China's special warfare forces covertly invade Taiwan. Chinese special forces are believed to number between one-hundred and one-thousand and would infiltrate Taiwan in small boats, submarines and helicopters with the aid of military intelligence groups operating in the island and target not only Taiwanese politicians and military leaders, but also power plants, traffic hubs, early warning systems and command control facilities. World News Connection (2006) states that the objective of these operations would be to foster fear and anxiety among the Taiwanese, by destroying the base of the Taiwanese government and could also be used to pave the way for a massive attack by Chinese armed forces.

The second relevant scenario that World News Connection (2006) lists would be an invasion of Taiwan in an all-out manner, in which China would deploy its full military. They state that the Chinese objective would be to attack swiftly in order to deter military intervention from third countries, including the U.S. This possibility is considered by the article to be the worst-case scenario.

The third relevant scenario that World News Connection (2006) lists is a preemptive attack by Taiwan on China. They state that Taiwan could interpret a joint Chinese military operation of army, navy and air forces as an imminent attack by Beijing and order its forces to attack Chinese forces in the Taiwan Strait, in addition to air bombing and missile attacks on southern China's ports airports and missile bases, as well as ships in China's territorial sea and costly attacks on Chinese submarines by Taiwanese special forces. This scenario could possibly alter the American diplomatic and military response to a Chinese-Taiwanese war.

World News Connection (2006) then addresses American responses to each scenario, which notably vary. They conclude that all three scenarios suppose a situation in which the U.S. will be unavoidably involved in the regional conflict, due to the Taiwan Relations Act. World News Connection (2006) then also states that due to geographical distance, the U.S. finds it difficult to respond quickly to the potential conflict, especially since its military is stretched thin in Iraq. They also state that the U.S. cannot predict the consequences of using nuclear weapons or putting excessive military in the conflict in a hurry. World News Connection (2006) then states that their report settles for predicting the U.S. response to the conflict by classifying it in four stages: deterrence, crisis stability, war fighting and war termination and analyzing.

World News Connection (2006) then addresses these options that the United States has for each of the previously listed scenarios. They state that the first scenario of a low-intensity conflict, would be difficult for the U.S., in that it would not be able to easily step in, presumably

because covert operations are difficult to attribute to the party responsible, especially if plausible deniability is maintained. World News Connection (2006) also states that while the U.S. is expected to be proficient in intelligence in the early days of such a conflict, after intervening, conditions would make it difficult to secure a quick victory and the U.S. would be taking the risk of having to engage in street warfare as in Iraq.

World News Connection (2006) addresses the U.S. response to the second relevant scenario involving a massive Chinese invasion, stating that this is the worst case scenario and possibly a nuclear war. They state that the U.S. is thought to be able to target China with its nuclear weapons to end the conflict quickly, but that their report cautions that the ensuing political repercussions after a nuclear war could be serious. They also state that the U.S. might have to risk a long-term dispatch of its forces in Taiwan in the case of a conventional war.

World News Connection (2006) also states that the scenario of Taiwan attacking is equally difficult to respond to as the one involving a low-intensity conflict. They state that this would be so because once a war breaks out in the Taiwan Strait, unless it ends with a one-side victory, nobody will surrender. They also state that while the deploying of responding forces in a massive scale by the U.S. might guarantee winning for Taiwan, it would take the tremendous cost of a long-time dispatch of its forces and a very unstable post-war situation.

While this article once again addressed strategic and tactical issues, which are not the focus of this study, they are very valuable for the establishment of indicators of a conflict between China and Taiwan. The first scenario involving the deployment of Chinese special forces into Taiwan to carry out covert operations to eliminate key members of the Taiwanese government, military and attack early warning stations could be an excellent indicator that a surprise attack is in order, as well as the third, where the Taiwanese attack a Chinese joint forces exercise, which may or may not be a stealth attack. The indicators that will be addressed

later that these situations would present could give warning of an imminent war, especially if it is not the massive conventional invasion that the United States expects from China and is the most prepared for.

A crucially important part of the analysis to examine the chances for transposition, as well as the establishment of indicators, is a knowledge of the Chinese perspective on the situation, particularly, what actions they will not tolerate from the Taiwanese. Studying the Anti-Secession Law, as well as other rhetoric from Chinese leaders, particularly Hu Jintao, as to which actions on behalf of Taiwan would lead to their going to war is enlightening, as well as paramount, because the tone of these proverbial lines in the sand can also potentially give insight as to whether China's primary objective for Taiwan is really forcing reintegration or merely preventing secession. While political rhetoric, particularly from the Chinese, who have a rich history of strategic deception, can never be taken at absolute face value, it is nonetheless invaluable, to establish the intentions of governments, which can be used to weigh the pairwise comparisons, as well as establish indicators of whether war is on the horizon or diplomacy will prevail.

Xu (2007) wrote his article shortly before the 2008 Taiwanese Presidential elections and begins his article by stating that while neither the Kuomintang or Democratic Progressive Party being a sure win in the election, from the mainland's perspective, peace and stability are at stake across the Strait no matter which party wins. He then states that upholding peace and stability is the motivating force behind the mainland's policy response. Xu (2007) then states that as far as China is concerned, Cross-Strait peace and stability hinge on the one-China principle.

Xu (2007) then states that in order to make this concept applicable to reality, the mainland has set the "1992 consensus" as the political requirement and that the "magic" of the

“1992 consensus” is that it is the only formula involving the one-China principle that both sides have accepted and cannot make any further provisions on and that it leaves a “creative ambiguity” about the political meaning of one China. He explains this ambiguity, as being that Taiwan insists that one China is the “Republic of China”, whereas the mainland, as a concession, holds that in Cross-Strait talks and negotiations, it does not need to touch on the political meaning of one China. Xu (2007) reveals that this inconclusiveness of the consensus is what made it possible to hold the Wang-Koo meeting in Singapore in 1993.

Xu (2007) then delves into some of the Taiwanese political candidates vying for the presidency in 2008, mentioning that if the KMT wins the election, it will be possible to reactivate the “1992 consensus” and that Cross-Strait dialogue and negotiations can resume, which will lessen tensions between the two sides, although not tangible results will probably be achieved in the short term. He also mentions that if the DPP wins the election, it will not accept the “1992 consensus”, but will pursue the “consensus” that now exists in the DPP, the “Resolution on Taiwan’s Future” that was adopted on May 8, 1999, which says that Taiwan is “an independent sovereign country” that is called the “Republic of China”. Xu (2007) also mentions the position of the DPP is that any change in the present state of “independence” must be decided through a referendum conducted among all of the residents of Taiwan.

Xu (2007) later in the article mentions Ma Ying-jeou, stating that if he won, the two sides across the Strait should be able to implement the five “common aspirations and prospects for Cross-Strait peace and development”, as announced in the press communiqué signed by Lien Chan and Hu Jintao in April 2005. He lists them as reopening talks on the basis of the 1992 consensus, reaching a peace accord, promoting the “three direct links” fourth discussing the issue of Taiwan’s participation in international activities and establishing a platform for regular exchanges between the two parties, which has already been put into practice. Xu (2007) notes that the KMT has included the five “prospects” into its working agenda.

Xu (2007) then get to the most revealing part of the article, stating that if Ma Ying-jeou were the winner, his basic position on the Cross-Strait relationship would be the maintenance of the status quo—"the status quo of the Republic of China". He states that the status quo should not be changed unilaterally or by nonpeaceful means. Xu (2007) goes on to claim that neither independence nor reunification is the immediate priority.

Xu (2007) then states that no matter which party wins the 2008 elections in Taiwan, the mainland's Taiwan policy would remain "peaceful reunification, one country two systems." He further states that the most recent and authoritative exposition of the policy is President Hu's "Four Nevers" of March 2005, which are to "Never swerve from the one-China principle; never give up efforts for a peaceful solution of the Taiwan issue; never change the policy of pinning hope on Taiwan compatriots; and never compromise on the struggle against secessionist forces in Taiwan" and that the code of conduct is the Antiseccession Law. He ends his article by stating that maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait by containing secessionist activities in Taiwan would remain the mainland's policy priority after the 2008 election.

While the author of this article is clearly biased, as he is a reporter in the People's Republic of China, where people are not allowed to speak against government policies and much of his article is nothing more than pro-Beijing political propaganda, some of his points were very revealing, particularly about the issues that Beijing would not be willing to compromise on regarding Taiwan and their claim that their objective is the maintenance of the status quo, rather than coercing Taiwan into being annexed. Despite much of the self-serving rhetoric justifying Chinese aggression and intimidation towards Taiwan that this article contained, it is very useful to establish indicators of action on behalf of Taiwan that could cause China to use military force, particularly the violation of the Antiseccession Law or President Hu's "Four Nevers". For the meantime, this article makes it abundantly clear that Beijing considers Taiwanese President Ma to be a facilitator and ally, which dramatically lessens the prospects for

Chinese military action against Taiwan before 2012 and alters the weighing of alternate scenarios during the pairwise comparison process.

Actors and Perceptions:

A war between China, Taiwan and the United States has the potential to escalate into a nuclear conflict and a third world war, therefore, many countries other than the primary actors could be affected by such a conflict, including Japan, both Koreas, Russia, Australia, India and Great Britain, if they were drawn into the war, as well as all other countries in the world that participate in the global economy, in which the United States and China are the two most dominant members. If China were able to successfully annex Taiwan, the possibility exists that they could then plan to attack Japan and begin a policy of aggressive expansionism in East and Southeast Asia, as well as the Pacific and even into India, which could in turn create an international standoff and deployment of military forces to contain the threat. In any case, if China and the United States engage in a full-scale conflict, there are few countries in the world that will not be economically and/or militarily affected by it. However, China, Taiwan and United States are the primary actors in this scenario, whose actions will determine its eventual outcome, therefore, other countries will not be considered in this study.

China:

China is undoubtedly the country in this conflict that has the most influence over how it will eventually unfold, particularly, whether or not it turns into a military conflict. While China's apparent obsession with such a small country for the simple reason that they use to be part of Chinese territory nearly sixty years ago might seem irrational to an observer with a superficial understanding of the situation, the loss of Taiwan could have dangerous political and national security concerns for the country. The Taiwan issue has become a crucial issue of territorial integrity to Beijing, as well as a symbol of the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party; if

Taiwan successfully gains its independence, other renegade provinces may attempt to break free as well and the government in Beijing may be viewed as weak by its own people, which could incite revolts and civil unrest. The Chinese government's worst fears are that the loss of Taiwan could begin a downward spiral for China, leading to the loss of territory, party power and China's military superiority in the region.

Political:

Despite the push towards state-sponsored capitalism and the loosening of some restrictions on trade and travel for Chinese citizens, the Chinese Communist Party still rules its country in an autocratic, authoritarian fashion. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, breakaway provinces, challenges to the government and civil unrest have been dealt with quickly and forcefully, with occasionally infamous results, such as the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989. Definite resentment exists between some members of the Chinese populace who favor democracy and the dictatorial Chinese government, as well as between Beijing and renegade provinces, such as Tibet and the largely Muslim Xinjiang province.

The Chinese Communist Party has been struggling in recent years to balance its very successful move towards capitalism and modernization with maintaining its Marxist ideals, with Westernizing itself enough to attract international investment and trade without giving its citizens enough freedoms to be able to question and challenge the party's power and legitimacy. China's economic future depends on further international investment and being able to present itself as a modernized mainstream state to the world, while maintaining its power over renegade provinces and factions within its borders. This dilemma has caused a degree of infighting within CCP ranks and caused the party to resort to patriotism as a point of agreement. Taiwan has become the focal issue of the CCP, as they view being able to reacquire Taiwan as a move that would strengthen party unity, end a historical humiliation, cause renegade elements within

China to abandon their challenges to party legitimacy and allow China to reach its greatest point in history.

Economic:

Contrary to political and national security concerns, China's booming economy and lucrative trade and international investment in its country are very strong incentives to avoid any military action towards Taiwan. If China were to attack Taiwan, trade and investment from the United States, who are business partners, but military rivals with the PRC, could come to an end, which would significantly damage the Chinese economy. If the world were to see Chinese military aggression towards Taiwan as the gross brutalization of a smaller country by a much larger and more powerful one, akin to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, China could quickly not only find other countries ceasing trade with and investment in Chinese companies, but find them reinvesting their capital with Japan instead, permanently stopping China's meteoric economic rise. Additionally, despite their rivalry, Taiwan is a very valuable trading partner with China and each country has tens of billions of dollars invested in each others' economies, which would only serve to worsen the economic impact if a Cross-Strait war were to break out. Given the currently dire world economic situation, an unprovoked attack of Taiwan could not only cost China its position as one of the economic titans of the world, but cause depression within the PRC, giving the CCP an entirely new set of problems to address.

Therefore, from this perspective, China has a vested interest in either maintaining the status quo with Taiwan, which allows each country to have a working compromise, despite political rhetoric on both sides or being able to place diplomatic pressure on Taiwan to peacefully reunite. The uncertainty of militarily invading Taiwan, especially with the prospect of military intervention on behalf of the United States quite frankly makes an invasion far too risky to contemplate, as the negative impact on the Chinese economy would be certain. Therefore, a

war with Taiwan is a losing prospect for China and would be wise to avoid unless determined to be absolutely necessary.

National Security:

Despite its small size, Taiwan holds much strategic value to the PRC. If it were to establish full independence, Taiwan would be free to not only challenge to power of China and gain UN membership, but would also be free to establish much close military ties with the United States, which would quite possibly include an American military presence in Taiwan, eighty miles from the coast of China. This presence could also include strategic weaponry, including a nuclear arsenal capable of hitting anywhere within the PRC and would effectively end any ambitions of China expanding its territory into the Pacific or Southeast Asia. Such a scenario would have grim national security implications for the PRC.

China's national security issues could possibly go beyond the loss of Taiwan and American military encroachment, if Taiwan were able to gain full independence. After being defeated by a tiny country with a fraction of the military might as the PLA, the PRC could find itself facing a chain reaction of breakaway province trying to secede, including Xinhua and possibly even Tibet. Furthermore, while the international standoff with North Korea over its nuclear program has officially ended, the next leader after the reportedly ailing Kim Jung Il could see a weakened China as an opportunity to resume the development of a nuclear arsenal, which would leave China in a precarious national security situation if relations with North Korea were to deteriorate in the future.

In other words, the national security concerns for China regarding Taiwan are potentially grave. If China were to lose Taiwan, at best, its ability to expand into the Pacific would be curtailed and it would most likely find itself encroached upon by the U.S. military and at worst, it could find itself losing other territories, in a similar fashion to the Soviet Union at the end of the

Cold War and facing a nuclear arsenal or arsenals just beyond its borders, which would effectively end any reign of military supremacy that the PRC currently enjoys. If such were to occur, the CCP could easily lose control of their country, given their loss of power and territory and be in no position to make any demands of the United States on any issues, including the democratization of China, as the U.S. could gain a first-strike nuclear capability against them. Considering these facts, the People's Republic of China may not be desirous of a war with Taiwan under the current conditions, but absolutely must militarily defend their interests if an attempt at secession occurs, as failing to do so could reduce their formerly powerful nation to a fraction of its former self, as well as incite revolution within the country and a possible overthrow of the CCP.

Taiwan:

Taiwan is a country that has been fighting for its independence against the People's Republic of China since its government, the Republic of China, relocated to it in 1949. While the PRC to this point has failed to retake Taiwan, due to intervention by the U.S. Navy in 1950, the PRC has grown more powerful and amassed more military might over the decades. While China is not yet ready to invade Taiwan and expect a sure win, it has a decisive military advantage, with battleships, warplanes, approximately one-thousand rockets and a four million man army that is deployable to fight a war with Taiwan, independently of other Chinese military campaigns. The only factors that have kept China at bay for this long are Taiwan's geography, which creates a chokepoint that the Chinese would have to negotiate and would take massive casualties in, a superiorly-trained military that is equipped with American armaments and the pledge of the United States to defend Taiwan against Chinese aggression, which is almost certainly the decisive factor.

While these provisions have kept Taiwan from being taken over by China to this date, China is militarily gaining on Taiwan. The Taiwanese people favor independence by a vast majority, somewhere in the range of eighty-percent of the populace, yet none of them want to see their country destroyed and themselves and their fellow citizens killed in a war with China. The Sino-Taiwanese Conflict have forced the Taiwanese people to decide between freedom and the risk of war, death and possible imprisonment, if their country were to be forcefully reabsorbed into China.

Therefore, while most favor freedom and many would like to have their own sovereign country, few favor outright provocation of China. Steadfast Taiwanese patriots and those who wish to avoid war often clash and the two dominant political parties, the KMT and the DPP favor the maintenance of the status quo with China or reunification and complete separation from China and independence respectively. The dominant political party in Taiwan has a very large role in deciding the fate of that country, as well as the Chinese reaction to their decision to pursue an agenda towards reunification or independence.

Political:

Taiwan has a two-party political system that holds free elections every four years, earlier in each year than the United States holds its presidential elections. Its two dominant political parties are the Kuomintang or "Pan Blue" Party, who are the former party of the Taiwanese national founder Chiang Kai-Shek and the Democratic Progressive Party or "Pan Green" Party. Party members of the Kuomintang, who regained power in June 2008, differ between favoring the maintenance of the status quo with China and a peaceful reunification with the mainland, while the Democratic Progressive Party favor breaking completely free from Chinese influence and establishing a completely independent country, even at the expense of a war with China. President Ma Ying-jeou is a member of the KMT and favors an eventual peaceful reunification

with the mainland, but in the short term, favors re-establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing and the maintenance of the status quo. The previous President, Chen Shui-bian, who is currently serving a prison sentence for alleged corruption, was well known for provoking Beijing, by making comments that Taiwan was indeed a separate nation, abandoning the reunification council, that he accused of being “ridiculous” and pushing Taiwan towards a probable war with China for independence.

While the relations between Taiwan and the PRC have noticeably improved since the election of President Ma in June 2008, neither political party has any clear advantage in elections, politics in Taiwan are heated and often become violent and the Taiwanese are split on most critical political issues. Therefore, political predictions are generally only relevant until the next presidential election. While the Kuomintang has historically enjoyed political dominance in Taiwan, with the exception of the time period from 2000 to 2008, the 2012 election could go to either party and the result of it will weigh heavily on the which scenario comes to be between China and Taiwan, as by 2012 the Chinese military will be presumably more powerful and possibly ready for a military offensive.

Economic:

Taiwan and China are heavily invested in each other's economies and Taiwan does much lucrative business with the United States as well. While Chinese capital investment in Taiwan would cease if a war broke out and Taiwanese investors in Chinese firms could potentially lose their shares, if Taiwan were victorious in achieving independence, the United States would then most likely begin to favor trade arrangements and economic investments with Taiwan over China. Furthermore, international investors would be free to continue to invest in Taiwan if they were able to achieve independence.

If war did occur and Taiwan lost and was reabsorbed into China, the government of the PRC would then own the Taiwanese firms, but they would be expected to remain open for business. While a war with China would be a losing proposition for Taiwan economically, fighting for the survival of their nation, as well as themselves, would be a greater concern for Taiwan. Nonetheless, it is not in the interests of Taiwan from an economic standpoint to provoke the mainland and risk a war.

National Security:

The national security issues facing Taiwan could hardly be greater. The Taiwanese are fighting for the survival of their nation and the freedom of their people, from living in under an autocratic and often oppressive regime. Whether the Taiwanese government pursues a more conciliatory stance towards China and reunification or takes the risks of war to pursue independence, Taiwan's professionally-trained and modernized military, armaments provided by the United States, including ships, fighter jets and Patriot Missiles and the American commitment to militarily defend it are the only bargaining chips that Taiwan truly has against the PRC. Taiwan would most likely sustain terrible losses in a war against the forces of the People's Liberation Army, regardless of the outcome and despite the fact that they would be expected to fight well and inflict great losses against the PLA, the Taiwanese military would in all likelihood eventually fall to the massive Chinese military, without military support from the United States. Therefore, for the sake of preserving the freedom and lives of their people, the Taiwanese government is heavily dependent on continued American military support, to honor their commitment made in the Taiwan Relations Act to defend Taiwan if China attacks.

The United States of America:

The United States occupies a precarious position in the Sino-Taiwanese Conflict. It is a strategic ally of Taiwan and its greatest proponent, a strategic enemy with the PRC and trading

partners with both countries, heavily invested in each of their economies. The credibility of the United States is at stake, as it has vowed to defend Taiwan. Therefore, if Taiwan is allowed to be taken over by the Chinese, American credibility would be lost and in the future, when the U.S. asks for favors from other countries in exchange for committing to their protection, they could be expected to dismiss such as empty promises. However, America is currently in no position economically to fight a war against the PRC and only the U.S. Navy and Air Force could be expected to be deployed in any great numbers to Taiwan. If a conflict broke out, as the U.S. military is heavily engaged in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army and Marine Corps could not spare any significant number of additional troops to the defense of Taiwan, except for possibly Special Forces units. Therefore, the United States has a great interest in seeing the status quo of the China-Taiwan situation maintained, as the U.S. cannot afford another war under the current conditions, least of all against the massive PLA, yet allowing Taiwan to be taken over is unacceptable.

Political:

Under the current political administration, that has less than one month left in office, support for Taiwan remains firm. The Congressional Taiwan Caucus has one hundred forty nine members and is the second-largest caucus in the House of Representatives and as of 2007, 53.5 percent of Americans felt that the United States has a responsibility to defend Taiwan against a potential attack from China (Black, 2007). Also, President Bush has remained firm in reiterating America's commitment to defend Taiwan against any military aggression from China.

However, the current administration has less than one month left in office. Also, America is in the midst of a severe economic crisis, which has become the most important issue to voters and the military is stretched thin between fighting a war on two fronts. President

Obama, who will take office in January, has not stated his position on whether the United States will continue to honor its commitment to defend Taiwan that was made during the Taiwan Relations Act or if it will back away from military campaigns and engagements that are anything less than vital towards its survival, in the interest of rescuing its own economy. While the majority of Americans believe that Taiwan has a right to freedom and self-determination, they have grown tired of war and are much more fearful of the worsening economic crisis than China's aggressive posturing towards Taiwan. Therefore, not only is continued support towards the military defense of Taiwan no longer certain under the current conditions, but President Obama, when he takes office, will play a large role in determining whether America maintains its commitment towards the defense of Taiwan into the future, if it resorts to diplomatic pressure to maintain the status quo and discourage aggression on behalf of China or if it begins to take a more neutral stance on the issue.

Economic:

The American economy is in terrible shape. After losing an estimated forty percent of its market value, which has led to an international chain-reaction and a global recession, the political and economic leaders of the United States have been desperately struggling to keep the crisis from worsening into a second Great Depression. Despite their antagonistic political relationship, the United States and the PRC conduct tens of billions of dollars in trade each year and the U.S. does billions of dollars worth of trade with Taiwan as well.

Therefore, considering these facts, a war between China and Taiwan, especially with American military involvement, is a losing scenario from an economic standpoint, regardless of the outcome. While America would shift its most preferred nation status from the PRC to Taiwan if Taiwan were to gain full independence and pursue a greater trade relationship with them, it would still be damaging its relationship with its other trading partner, which means that it

would still suffer economically. If China were to reabsorb Taiwan with little resistance or before America could intervene, America would still suffer an economic loss in the short term, as trade with China would go on, but Taiwan would be no more. In either case, the economic loss of a Cross-Strait war would almost certainly guarantee that the American economy further declines and the U.S. would enter a second Great Depression, making it a terrible scenario under the current conditions. Therefore, America has an even greater interest in avoiding a war between the PRC and Taiwan, even if it were to mean losing Taiwan and degrading America's image and credibility.

National Security:

The tiny island of Taiwan has significant value to the United States from a national security standpoint. It currently serves as a buffer zone between the PRC and Japan, an American ally and if it were to become completely independent, it would almost certainly welcome an American military presence, which would be a powerful force to guard against aggressive Chinese expansionism into the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Also, if an American presence were to be established in Taiwan, particularly with strategic armaments such as missiles to shoot down Chinese ICBMs, early warning telemetry capabilities and even strategic nuclear armaments, China would be in no real position militarily to ever threaten the United States or its allies, such as Japan, with its nuclear arsenal or military. In such a scenario, the United States would have the upper hand over the PRC, strategically and tactically.

On the other hand, if Taiwan were to fall to the PRC, Japan, a United States ally and valuable trading partner, could very well find itself in the same position that Taiwan is currently in, militarily encroached upon by the Chinese and in danger of being conquered. China is believed to be not only vying to be the dominant power in East Asia, politically, economically and especially militarily, but also trying to surpass the United States as the greatest superpower

in the world. In the interest of not being surpassed as the most powerful and influential country in the world, as well as seeing democratic allies of the United States being taken over by an oppressive regime with no regard for civil liberties nor human rights, the U.S. has a great interest in putting an end to China's military ambitions. Militarily defending Taiwan if necessary is the greatest chance for the U.S. to accomplish this objective, as despite their massive military buildup, China cannot expect to be victorious against a combined American and Taiwanese military force.

Research Design:

The three most commonly used techniques for predicting alternate futures and/or designating the most desirable courses of action are the Analytic Hierarchy Process or AHP, the Delphi Technique and the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction, commonly known as the LAMP. For the purposes of this study, the LAMP will be utilized to construct the alternate futures and rate their likelihood against one another, as it is the only of the three analytical methods that addresses the identification of all alternate courses of events that are possible. While the LAMP does borrow elements from the other two methods, such as using the pairwise comparison technique from the AHP, it is the only method of the three that documents the perceptions of the actors involved, acknowledges that "free will" makes the circumstances of situations unpredictable and always subject to change and takes into consideration how such turns of events can and will influence the events that occur afterwards. Therefore, in determining the possible directions that an ongoing international dispute could take, it is clearly the best choice.

The China-Taiwan-U.S. Situation is a perfect example of the appropriateness of using the LAMP technique to analyze a dynamic and changing situation, due to the fact that the current situation between the three actors is notably different from one year ago. When Chen

Shui-Bian was still the President of Taiwan, China was preparing for an eventual war, as President Chen was making pro-independence statements and openly berating the concept of reunification and the United States was pressuring China against military aggression, however, one year later the odds for war have dramatically decreased, with the Kuomintang having regained power in Taiwan and Taiwanese President Ma is on friendly terms with Beijing and the United States having experienced both an economic crisis and political shift, which means that they will be less likely to voluntarily enter another war. Therefore, in the interest of fully accounting for foreseeable changes as well as accounting for the alternate futures that those changes will lead to, the LAMP technique is appropriate and will be used in this study.

To put the LAMP technique into perspective, it is a comparative, qualitative method that identifies the actors and perceptions of a situation, their courses of action that can be pursued, documents focal events that can change differing scenarios into other alternate scenarios and generates indicators that can be used to identify which course of action is or is about to present itself. The method notably shuns quantitative measures, both in its analysis and its rating of scenarios, as its authors state that “in the international arena, attempting to predict future events using traditional quantitative methods...is a losing proposition; the potential array of possible alternate futures based on the interactions of sovereign nations, each with their own unique perspectives and political agendas, makes the process of quantitative prediction almost as unreliable as assigning probabilities to future weather conditions.” (Lockwood and Lockwood, p. 23). The twelve steps of the LAMP Technique are the following:

1. Determine the issue for which you are trying to predict the most likely future.
2. Specify the national actors involved.
3. Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question.
4. Specify all *possible* courses of action for each actor.
5. Determine the major scenarios within which you will compare the alternate futures.

6. Calculate the total number of permutations of possible "alternate futures" for each scenario.
7. Perform a "pairwise comparison" of all alternate futures to determine their relative probability.
8. Rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of "votes" received.
9. Assuming that each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms of its consequences for the issue in question.
10. State the potential of a given alternate future to "transpose" into another alternate future.
11. Determine the "focal events" that must occur in our present in order to bring about a given alternate future.
12. Develop indicators for the focal events.

The LAMP technique is perfectly suited towards the China-Taiwan-U.S. Conflict, due to the fact that there are a number of alternate scenarios that could result from it and the dynamics of the situation have already changed considerably, for two of the three actors. The AHP is not well suited, due to the fact that it would only consider the factors that would be used to determine the best course of action for the United States, which could easily change, depending on the dynamics between China and Taiwan, in addition to our own, rendering the results useless. The Delphi is equally ill-suited for anything other than generating warning and determining something such as whether or not China is about to invade Taiwan, but is of no use to determine the rest of the possibilities for the conflict. Therefore, once again, the LAMP is the technique that is applicable to this research.

The LAMP does not take into consideration every possible political, military and situational development that could possibly occur, as the authors note that it does not give the gift of prophecy. However, it does allow for the exploration of all of the major scenarios that could possibly come to be, which allows strategists, diplomats and tacticians to take the existing base of knowledge that the LAMP provides and use the findings as a starting point to develop plans for the individual nuances of a breaking situation. Such is far preferable to reactively

trying to create plans for a situation that was neither expected nor planned for. Given the profound political, economic and national security concerns that the China-Taiwan situation poses to the United States, the U.S. government cannot afford to pursue the wrong course of action.

The potential sources of bias that need to be accounted for in this study are the fact that during the pairwise comparison, for some of the scenarios that are very similar in their relative likelihood, this author will be using his own intuition to determine the more likely of the two, as a tie is not an option. While this author has devoted previous research to the China-Taiwan-U.S. Conflict, he has no way of knowing the exact intentions of the actors involved, from the U.S. President-elect, to the Chinese and Taiwanese leadership; a degree of speculation will be at play during the analysis of the relative likelihood of the scenarios. Fortunately, the LAMP technique overcomes the inability of the researcher to know the intentions and plans of the actors involved by accounting for all of the likely and foreseeable scenarios, which means that if surprise events occur and alter the dynamics of the situation, they only serve to cause transposition to occur and the resulting scenario is nonetheless accounted for.

Potential Courses of Action for the Actors in the Scenario:

China, Taiwan and the United States all have the most significant power to determine the outcome of the conflict between the three nations. While there is virtually no limit to the different political, strategic, economic and military tactics that those nations could possibly use to promote their interests and attempt to shift the situation towards an outcome that they favor, their major choices in the conflict, devoid of any diplomatic or military jockeying are indeed limited. All three countries involved in the conflict have the ability to either go to war to defend their interests, use diplomatic pressure to promote their interests without engaging in a costly military conflict or to simply concede their position, if the other options become too costly or an opponent has secured an imminent victory and they do not wish to be defeated. While some of

the permutations of these three variables may at face value seem to be impossible, they must nonetheless be accounted for at the very least, as vision into the future is not possible, events that may seem absurdly unlikely could possibly come to be and not addressing them would constitute bias and possibly invalidate this research.

Major Scenarios:

The two most major scenarios that could occur in the China-Taiwan-United States Conflict are either war or peace. Peace can involve any different scenario permutation of diplomatic pressure or concession between the three actors involved, including the current situation in which all three countries are placing diplomatic pressure on one another, yet have no immediate interest in war. If war were to break out, needless to say both China and Taiwan would be involved, the only variables in the situation would be whether or not the U.S. comes to the aid of Taiwan or if Taiwan chooses to concede, in the interest of not being eventually decimated. The United States has no interest in pursuing a war against China, therefore its role would be a reaction to events between the other two actors and while Taiwan may desire independence, unless they were to acquire some dramatic capability to allow them to defeat the Chinese, they would be foolhardy to pursue a war with China. Given these circumstances, China will have the greatest influence on whether or not war or peace prevail in the Taiwan Strait. In any event, while the decision of any country to go to war will almost certainly cause transposition to occur, by influencing a scenario to become an alternate one, which will be addressed later, all of the possible permutations of these variables will be accounted for in this study.

Permutations of Behavior:

As defined in the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction, the equation for determining the number of possible scenarios that are possible in a conflict is $X^Y = Z$, with X representing the number of actors involved, Y the number of choices that each actor has and Z

the number of resulting possible scenarios between those actors, given the circumstances.

With China, Taiwan and the United States constituting three actors and each actor having three choices, the resulting equation is $3^3 = 27$ or twenty-seven alternate futures that are possible.

For the next steps, a table will be constructed of the different permutations of options to illustrate the twenty-seven possible scenarios and then, they another will be made showing the pairwise comparisons.

For the tables below, the following abbreviations will be used:

W=Going to War DP=Diplomatic Pressure C=Concede

Table 1: Alternate Future Permutations

Alternate Future #	China	Taiwan	United States
1	W	W	W
2	W	W	DP
3	W	W	C
4	W	DP	W
5	W	DP	DP
6	W	DP	C
7	W	C	W
8	W	C	DP
9	W	C	C
10	DP	W	W
11	DP	W	DP
12	DP	W	C
13	DP	DP	W
14	DP	DP	DP
15	DP	DP	C
16	DP	C	W
17	DP	C	DP
18	DP	C	C
19	C	W	W

20	C	W	DP
21	C	W	C
22	C	DP	W
23	C	DP	DP
24	C	DP	C
25	C	C	W
26	C	C	DP
27	C	C	C

Pairwise Comparisons for the Alternate Scenarios:

Having now plotted each of the alternate scenarios that could occur in the current conflict being studied, it is now possible to conduct pairwise comparisons for each alternate future. By proceeding down the list and comparing each scenario to each subsequent one and rating each time which scenario has more relative likelihood, it becomes possible to determine which scenario, based on the perceptions and understanding of the situation of the researcher, without any preconceived bias. After compiling the numbers of relative likelihood for each scenario versus the others, the researcher can then list them from the highest rank to the lowest and have an ordered list of the scenarios, from the most to the least likely, for the purpose of analyzing at least the scenarios that have any imaginable likelihood of occurring.

The equation for determining the necessary number of pairwise comparisons is $X = (n-1) + (n-2) \dots + (n-n)$. In this case, the number of comparisons, X, is equal to 351, which is the result of n, the number of possible scenarios, which is 27, placed into the equation, which works out to $26+25+24\dots0$. When complete, the total score of the scenarios when pairwise compared to the other scenarios will be equal to 351, if completed correctly. The following table is the result of the pairwise comparison that have been conducted in this study:

Table 2: Alternate Future Pairwise Comparisons

Alternate Future #	China	Taiwan	United States	Score
1	W	W	W	21
2	W	W	DP	18
3	W	W	C	16
4	W	DP	W	13
5	W	DP	DP	21
6	W	DP	C	19
7	W	C	W	14
8	W	C	DP	21
9	W	C	C	17
10	DP	W	W	11
11	DP	W	DP	14
12	DP	W	C	13
13	DP	DP	W	9
14	DP	DP	DP	26
15	DP	DP	DP	23
16	DP	C	W	10
17	DP	C	DP	25
18	DP	C	C	24
19	C	W	W	8
20	C	W	DP	6
21	C	W	C	5
22	C	DP	W	7
23	C	DP	DP	3
24	C	DP	C	1
25	C	C	W	4
26	C	C	DP	2
27	C	C	C	0

Sum Total: 351

Ranking the Alternate Futures:

Now that the alternate futures have been pairwise compared, it is possible to determine the appropriate rank for the highest scoring and therefore most likely scenarios. This is accomplished by simply organizing the results of Table 2 from the highest to lowest scoring scenario. From that point, the appropriate narratives can be constructed for the scenarios that have a reasonable likelihood of occurring. The following table contains the ranked alternate futures:

Table 3: Alternate Future Pairwise Comparison Ranking

Alternate Future #	China	Taiwan	United States	Rank
14	DP	DP	DP	26
17	DP	C	DP	25
18	DP	C	C	24
15	DP	DP	C	23
5	W	DP	DP	21
8	W	C	DP	21
9	W	W	W	21
6	W	DP	C	19
2	W	W	DP	18
9	W	C	C	17
3	W	W	C	16
11	DP	W	DP	14
7	W	C	W	14
4	W	DP	W	13
12	DP	W	C	13
10	DP	W	W	11
16	DP	C	W	10
13	DP	DP	W	9

19	C	W	W	8
22	C	DP	W	7
20	C	W	DP	6
21	C	W	DP	5
25	C	C	W	4
23	C	DP	DP	3
26	C	C	DP	2
24	C	DP	C	1
27	C	C	C	0

Sum Total: 351

With this ranking of the alternate futures complete, some trends become apparent. All three countries involved are the most likely to use diplomatic pressure as their primary course of action if unprovoked and of the three countries, China is the most likely to initiate an armed conflict. While Taiwan and the United States are about equally likely to resort to war if Taiwan is attacked, Taiwan is slightly more inclined in the overall rankings to take military action than the United States. Given its current economic hardships, its military stretched thin in a war on two fronts and its recent political shift, the U.S. is likely to favor diplomatic pressure, followed by a hands-off approach to a military confrontation between the two countries and war only as a last resort, as the certain cost of even a small-scale war with China at the present time would dramatically outweigh any of its possible benefits. Understanding the relative probability of these scenarios is insightful, as it not only allows one to illustrate the more likely ones into foreseeable futures, but also gives a perspective of the chances for war and peace, devoid of the political grandstanding of the countries involved and opinions of the authors who write articles on the situation.

Analysis of Alternate Futures:

Scenario 14: The status quo of the current situation continues, with China trying to convince Taiwan to be annexed, through a mixture of intimidation and diplomacy, the United States vowing to defend Taiwan if attacked by China but urging it not to declare independence and Taiwan fluctuating between agreeing to reunification and calls for complete independence. All three countries continue their mutually lucrative trade arrangements. While diplomatic relations between China and Taiwan and China and the U.S. fluctuate between almost cordial and less-than-friendly and political rhetoric ranges from a conciliatory to a provocative tone, all actors silently agree that continuing the mutual financial gains and economic interdependence of all sides is a far more desirable scenario to the economic consequences, military losses and uncertainty of war. This scenario received 26 votes during the pairwise comparison, beating all other scenarios and identifying it as the most likely scenario of all.

Scenario 17: With the June 2008 election of President Ma Ying-jeou in Taiwan, who is the most hospitable towards the idea of reunification than any other president in Taiwanese history, the Chinese see a unique opportunity. President Hu of China aggressively pursues a reunification agreement with Taiwan and after the Taiwanese drive a hard bargain for the guarantee of their basic human rights and the maximum amount of liberty that can be allowed under Chinese law, President Hu agrees to their terms and a reunification date is set. Realizing that it is the will of the Taiwanese government, if not the Taiwanese people, the United States brokers the deal between the two countries and takes great pride on its successfully persuading China to guarantee the Taiwanese a basic set of liberties, as well as the fact that it was able to peacefully reconcile the situation after decades of conflict. In a similar fashion to the peaceful reunification of Hong Kong with the mainland in 1998, Taiwan rejoins China and China and the United States end up on far more friendly terms than in decades past. This scenario received 25 votes.

Scenario 18: With the June 2008 election of President Ma Ying-jeou in Taiwan, who is the most hospitable towards the idea of reunification than any other president in Taiwanese history, the Chinese see a unique opportunity. President Hu of China aggressively pursues a reunification agreement with Taiwan and after the Taiwanese drive a hard bargain for the guarantee of their basic human rights and the maximum amount of liberty that can be allowed under Chinese law, President Hu agrees to their terms and a reunification date is set. The United States is pleased to see that both countries have managed to reach an agreement for peace on their own, which relieves the U.S. of its military obligation to protect Taiwan at the expense of a war with China and takes a hands off approach during the negotiations, reasoning that the two countries can broker the best deal for themselves. In a similar fashion to the peaceful reunification of Hong Kong with the mainland in 1998, Taiwan rejoins China and China and the United States end up on far more friendly terms than in decades past. This scenario received 24 votes.

Scenario 15: While the status quo of the situation between China and Taiwan remains the same, with both countries placing diplomatic pressure on the other, the United States, with its plummeting economy, multiple wars and political shift, decides to relinquish its direct involvement in the China-Taiwan Conflict. With careful timing, when the situation between the other two countries appears to be stable, the U.S. announces its neutrality in the conflict and declares that it is a matter of self-determination between China and Taiwan. Despite the fact that the U.S. has withdrawn its military commitment from Taiwan, China wisely does not invade, as they know that Taiwan has no real chance of being able to militarily defeat them to gain independence and they do not wish to alienate their trading partners. China and Taiwan begin a new round of negotiations and maintain their diplomatic pressure on one another, with the United States having abandoned the situation entirely, out of greater concern for its own interests. This scenario received 23 points.

Scenario 5: After carefully reading the political situation in Taiwan, with President Ma Ying-jeou being sympathetic to Beijing, as well as the political, economic and military situation in the United States, China capitalizes on a one-time opportunity to invade Taiwan with little chance of significant armed resistance. China mounts a sneak attack against Taiwan and President Ma desperately pleads for China to cease its aggression, as well as the United States, noting that failure to cease its attack on Taiwan will permanently damage the relationship between both countries. While the future of this quickly changing situation remains uncertain, China has caught Taiwan and the U.S. unwilling and unable to fight for their positions and is in a position of great advantage over both. This scenario received 21 votes.

Scenario 8: After carefully reading the political situation in Taiwan, with President Ma Ying-jeou being sympathetic to Beijing, as well as the political, economic and military situation in the United States, China capitalizes on a one-time opportunity to invade Taiwan with little chance of significant armed resistance. China mounts a sneak attack against Taiwan and President Ma, realizing that his country is about to be crushed, surrenders. After being caught off guard, the United States realizes that their military intervention is too late and that trying to oust the Chinese from Taiwan instead of defeating them in the Taiwanese Strait would simply be too costly, but nonetheless angrily pursues China to halt their aggression, noting that their relationship will be permanently damaged if they do not. However, such diplomatic pressure towards Beijing amounts to little more than hot air, as China has militarily defeated Taiwan in a dramatic fashion with little resistance and openly defied the United States. This scenario received 21 votes.

Scenario 1: China invades Taiwan, after believing that President Ma would not militarily defend his country and that the United States would not honor its commitment to defend Taiwan after its political shift and the fact that it is too preoccupied with its wars and economy. These assumptions, however, prove to be erroneous. Taiwan mobilizes its military and defends

herself with ferocity and the United States, appalled and enraged at the situation, honors its commitment to defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion and commits its formidable naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, which are largely uncommitted in its other two wars. The situation quickly escalates and the outcome of it is uncertain. This scenario received 21 votes.

Scenario 6: After carefully reading the political situation in Taiwan, with President Ma Ying-jeou being sympathetic to Beijing, as well as the political, economic and military situation in the United States, China capitalizes on a one-time opportunity to invade Taiwan with little chance of significant armed resistance. China mounts a sneak attack against Taiwan and President Ma desperately pleads for China to cease its aggression, but does not order the military defense of Taiwan. The United States, after seeing that Taiwan will not take up arms towards its own defense, decides that Taiwan is a lost situation not worth pursuing at the cost of a war with China and abandons its commitment to defend Taiwan. While the United States takes limited comfort in the fact that it has avoided the undesirable prospect of war with China, it has been shown to be powerless and the future of Taiwan appears bleak indeed. This scenario received 19 votes.

Scenario 2: China invades Taiwan, after believing that President Ma would not militarily defend his country and that the United States would not honor its commitment to defend Taiwan after its political shift and the fact that it is too preoccupied with its wars and economy. The first of these assumptions, however, proves to be erroneous. Taiwan mobilizes its military and defends herself with ferocity, keeping the Chinese invasion at bay for at least for the time being. While the United States is angered at this situation, it simply cannot afford another war, but it does place aggressive diplomatic pressure on Beijing to halt their invasion or else the relationship between the two countries may be permanently damaged and their business relationship may be jeopardized. While they have been militarily abandoned and their future is uncertain, the

Taiwanese military continues to fight the Chinese invaders to a stalemate, determined to hold Taiwan to the last man. This scenario received 18 votes.

Scenario 9: After carefully reading the political situation in Taiwan, with President Ma Ying-jeou being sympathetic to Beijing, as well as the political, economic and military situation in the United States, China capitalizes on a one-time opportunity to invade Taiwan with little chance of significant armed resistance. China mounts a sneak attack against Taiwan and President Ma, realizing that his country is about to be crushed, surrenders. After being caught off guard, the United States realizes that their military intervention is too late and that trying to oust the Chinese from Taiwan instead of defeating them in the Taiwanese Strait would simply be too costly. With Taiwan having fallen and the situation completely lost, the United States tries to preserve what little dignity it has left and announces that it has no intention of interfering with the situation, as it has already been settled. China revels in its sweeping and dramatic victory over Taiwan and the United States and enjoys its position as the next up and coming superpower, with aspirations to surpass the United States itself. This scenario received 17 votes.

Scenario 3: China invades Taiwan, after believing that President Ma would not militarily defend his country and that the United States would not honor its commitment to defend Taiwan after its political shift and the fact that it is too preoccupied with its wars and economy. The first of these assumptions, however, proves to be erroneous. Taiwan mobilizes its military and defends herself with ferocity, keeping the Chinese invasion at bay at least for the time being. While the United States is angered at this situation, it simply cannot afford another war and trying to pressure Beijing to halt its attack on Taiwan would be an embarrassing failure. While they have been militarily abandoned and their future is uncertain, the Taiwanese military performs better than expected and continues to fight the Chinese invaders to a stalemate, determined to hold Taiwan to the last man. This scenario received 16 votes.

Scenario 7: After carefully reading the political situation in Taiwan, with President Ma Ying-jeou being sympathetic to Beijing, as well as the political, economic and military situation in the United States, China capitalizes on a one-time opportunity to invade Taiwan with little chance of significant armed resistance. China mounts a sneak attack against Taiwan and President Ma, realizing that his country is about to be crushed, surrenders. However, Beijing seriously misread the continued commitment of the U.S. The United States, infuriated at the situation, honors its commitment to defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion and commits its formidable naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, which are largely uncommitted in its other two wars, believing that China will eventually plan to conquer Japan and then expand into the Pacific. Before the Chinese invaders are able to move the majority of their forces into Taiwan, the battle-hardened U.S. military arrives, determined to push the Chinese back to their homeland. This scenario received 14 votes.

Scenario 11: After having agreed in theory towards reunification to pacify the Chinese, in a completely unexpected move, the Taiwanese declare their independence and war against China, while simultaneously bombing the eastern seaports on the Chinese coast that would be used for an amphibious invasion and the known missile batteries in China. The Chinese, realizing that they are in the bad position of not being able to move their now vulnerable army or retaliate against Taiwan with their own rockets, aggressively pressures Taiwan to halt the attack, furiously citing that 'they had an agreement' and stating that if Taiwan does not stop their aggression that in time 'they will be severely punished'. In a similar fashion, the United States does not want to be forced into an eventual confrontation with the Chinese and is similarly irritated that Taiwan has broken the status quo of the situation and places great pressure on Taiwan to stop their 'provocation', threatening to abandon their military commitment to protect Taiwan if they continue to 'make trouble' in the Taiwan Strait. Whether or not Taiwan eventually halts their aggression and withdraws their declaration of independence remains uncertain, but

for the time being, they have sent a serious message to China that they are not afraid, not to be underestimated and above all else, not willing to be reabsorbed.

Scenario 4: After carefully reading the political situation in Taiwan, with President Ma Ying-jeou being sympathetic to Beijing, as well as the political, economic and military situation in the United States, China capitalizes on a one-time opportunity to invade Taiwan with little chance of significant armed resistance. China mounts a sneak attack against Taiwan and President Ma desperately pleads for China to cease its aggression. However, Beijing seriously misread the continued commitment of the U.S. While President Ma feebly negotiates with the Chinese and waffles on the commitment to mobilize his military forces, the United States, infuriated at the entire situation, honors its commitment to defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion and commits its formidable naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, which are largely uncommitted in its other two wars, believing that China will eventually plan to conquer Japan and then expand into the Pacific. Before the Chinese invaders are able to move the majority of their forces into Taiwan, the battle-hardened U.S. military arrives, determined to push the Chinese back to their homeland. This scenario received 13 votes.

Scenario 12: After having agreed in theory towards reunification to pacify the Chinese, in a completely unexpected move, the Taiwanese declare their independence and war against China, while simultaneously bombing the eastern seaports on the Chinese coast that would be used for an amphibious invasion and the known missile batteries in China. The Chinese, realizing that they are in the bad position of not being able to move their now vulnerable army or retaliate against Taiwan with their own rockets, aggressively pressures Taiwan to halt the attack, furiously citing that 'they had an agreement' and stating that if Taiwan does not stop their aggression that in time 'they will be severely punished'. The United States, not wanting to go to war with China and furious at Taiwan for breaking the status quo and placing the U.S. in such a precarious situation, announces that it will no longer militarily support Taiwan, essentially

washing its hands of the situation. Nevertheless, Taiwan is undeterred and determined to be an independent country. Whether or not Taiwan eventually halts their aggression and withdraws their declaration of independence remains unclear, but for the time being, they have sent a serious message to China that they are not afraid, not reliant on American support, not to be underestimated and above all else, not willing to be reabsorbed. This scenario received 13 votes.

Scenario 10: After having agreed in theory towards reunification to pacify the Chinese, in a completely unexpected move, the Taiwanese declare their independence and war against China, while simultaneously bombing the eastern seaports on the Chinese coast that would be used for an amphibious invasion and the known missile batteries in China. The Chinese, realizing that they are in the bad position of not being able to move their now vulnerable army or retaliate against Taiwan with their own rockets, aggressively pressures Taiwan to halt the attack, furiously citing that 'they had an agreement' and stating that if Taiwan does not stop their aggression that in time 'they will be severely punished'. The United States, remembering how different the 20th Century could have been if the Soviet Union had been neutralized after World War II and realizing that they have a one-time opportunity to ensure that China can never expand into the Pacific and threaten American allies, commits its formidable naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, which are largely uncommitted in its other two wars, before the Chinese invaders are able to move their Army to prepare their inevitable counterattack. The Chinese, absolutely furious at the 'sneak attack', vow that the situation is not over and that the repercussions will be severe, but do not invade, after remembering their failed attempt in 1950 to take Taiwan when the U.S. Navy intervened and realize that they stand to once again suffer severe losses and defeat at the hands of the better trained and technologically superior American and Taiwanese forces and that such a loss will be a historical humiliation and end Chinese military superiority in the region. Despite the menacing threats from the Chinese, including hints towards a nuclear

option, Taiwan and the United States celebrate their victory and the United States effectively ends China's run towards military superiority in the region and intimidation towards its neighbors. This scenario received 11 votes.

Scenario 16: With President Ma having agreed to reunification with China, at least in theory, Beijing begins an aggressive campaign of diplomacy and intimidation to once and for all ensure that Taiwan is reabsorbed. Believing that the United States would not honor its commitment to defend Taiwan, after its political shift and the fact that it is too preoccupied with its wars and economy, Beijing gives no concessions to Taipei whatsoever, refusing to guarantee any liberties or freedoms and then begins to issue ultimatums and prepare its military for mobilization. Realizing that his people do not want a war with China and not wanting to see his country crushed, as well as face severe retribution himself, President Ma yields and agrees under duress to have Taiwan reunified with the mainland. The United States, sickened at the entire situation, honors its commitment to defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion and surprises both countries when it commits its formidable naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, which are largely uncommitted in its other two wars, due to the fact that it believes that China will eventually plan to conquer Japan and then expand into the Pacific and that America will not abandon a country that is a democratic ally, to be intimidated into surrender by a rogue regime. Before the Chinese military is able to move their forces into Taiwan in a bloodless invasion, the battle-hardened U.S. military arrives, determined to keep the Chinese from ever setting foot in Taiwan. This scenario received 10 votes.

Scenario 13: With President Ma having agreed to reunification with China, at least in theory, Beijing begins an aggressive campaign of diplomacy and intimidation to once and for all ensure that Taiwan is reabsorbed. Believing that the United States would not honor its commitment to defend Taiwan, after its political shift and the fact that it is too preoccupied with its wars and its economy, Beijing gives no concessions to Taipei whatsoever, refusing to guarantee any liberties

or freedoms and then begins to issue ultimatums and prepare its military for mobilization. President Ma desperately pleads with China that reunification can still happen peacefully if his people can have a guarantee of basic liberties, but his words fall on deaf ears. The United States, alarmed at the entire situation, honors its commitment to defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion and surprises both countries when it commits its formidable naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, which are largely uncommitted in its other two wars. The U.S. takes this action due to the fact that it believes that China will eventually plan to conquer Japan and then expand into the Pacific and that America will not abandon a country that is a democratic ally, to be intimidated into surrender by a rogue regime. Before the Chinese Army is able to attack and crush Taiwan, the battle-hardened U.S. military arrives and deploys their forces in defensive positions, determined to keep the Chinese from attempting to invade Taiwan. Realizing that an attack on Taiwan will fail with the American forces in place despite their recent military advances and modernization, China relents and agrees to reopen negotiations. This scenario received 9 votes.

Transposition of Alternate Futures:

The transposition of alternate futures occurs when the actions of one of the actors involved alters the perception of another actor or actors and creates a ripple effect that changes one of the possible future scenarios into another. Not only can transposition alter the occurrence of an alternate future, but it also alters the relative probability of all other futures as well. Regarding the most probable of the alternate futures under the current conditions, the issue of transposition will now be addressed.

Alternate Future 14 and Alternate Future 17 could easily transpose into Alternate Future 1, Alternate Future 2 or Alternate Future 4 if China decides to pursue an opportunistic military invasion of Taiwan, which ironically would lessen the chances of reunification under the current conditions. Alternate Futures 14 and 15 additionally have the potential to transpose into any of

the Alternate Futures 1 through 3 if Taiwan declares independence without provocation from China and into Alternate Futures 1 or 2 if China attempts to coerce Taiwan into reunification or begins to make threats or issue ultimatums to Taiwan. If the United States backs away from its military commitment to defend Taiwan if they are attacked, then the current situation, Alternate Future 14, has the potential to transpose into Alternate Futures 3, 6 or 9, with a lesser probability of 12. This example is revealing, as apparently, American diplomatic pressure towards both sides has served to stabilize the situation by deterring both China and Taiwan from committing any aggression or taking any provocative action towards one another. While it might be tempting to some in the new political administration to gradually shy away from continuing their commitment to the defense of Taiwan, this last example illustrates that doing so may actually have the completely opposite effect, of pushing China, Taiwan or both towards militarism and dramatically increasing the chances for conflict in that region.

Additionally, Taiwan's agreeing to reunification with China is a situation that could transpose more than once into other scenarios, by taking Alternate Future 14 and transposing it into either Alternate Future 17 or Alternate Future 18, where it may remain, but if China feels that too many of the Taiwanese populace are pro-independence and fears that they will form an insurgency, they choose to send their troops to crackdown on Taiwanese resisters, which could turn into military action if the Taiwanese government responds to this action with force of their own, fearing a double-cross, which could then turn Alternate Futures 17 and 18 into Alternate Futures 2, 3 or possible 1. Regarding the relative probabilities of the scenarios to one another, any disturbance to the status quo, whether it would be a Chinese invasion or threats of such, a Taiwanese declaration of independence or the withdrawal of U.S. military support to Taiwan, the balance shifts and Alternate Futures 1, 2, 4, 5, 10 and 11 become more likely, the scenarios in which at least one actor, if not two or all three declare war and the rest resort to diplomatic pressure. It is worth noting that while some people in the United States may think that the U.S. is acting in a self-serving or even hypocritical manner by not outwardly supporting the

independence of Taiwan, but instead using political and economic pressure to enforce the status quo between the other two countries, the current policy of maintaining the status quo has merit, as this section on the chance for transposition demonstrates that any alteration to the balance of power between the three actors will result in an unstable and potentially rapidly-changing situation that will be risky for all actors involved.

Focal Events and Indicators:

In addition to uncovering a wealth of information about a situation, including the history, actors, perception and possible scenarios and their likelihood of occurring, one of the intentions of the LAMP is to develop the focal events that would cause each alternate future to occur and the indicators that each future is possible. These can be used to give warning of a future before it happens, as well as to allow its reader to correctly assess a situation. The current situation is Alternate Future 14, therefore, it will not require any focal event analysis or the establishment of indicators.

Alternate Future 17: Focal Events and Indicators:

The focal events for this scenario, where China and the U.S. use diplomatic pressure towards one another and Taiwan concedes, would simply be Taiwan's actual agreement to reunification, not simply the willingness to discuss it with China. Agreeing to a deadline would also solidify the occurrence of this scenario. Until an actual agreement was signed with China, this scenario would in reality remain Alternate Future 14.

Focal Events:

- A signed agreement by Taiwan with China to reunite.
- China's adopting more democratic practices and giving its citizens more liberties.
- Beijing's guaranteeing Taipei that its citizens will enjoy the same basic human rights and liberties that they currently do if reintegrated.
- President Hu of China being succeeded by a more democratic, progressive President.

Indicators:

- A vote of the Taiwanese people to determine how many favored reunification with the mainland that determined that the majority of Taiwanese do.
- Increased trips to Beijing by President Ma.
- The achievement of continued progress on the Reunification Council between the Presidents of China and Taiwan.
- The halting of arms purchases by Taiwan.
- Arms reduction efforts on behalf of the Taiwanese government.
- The agreement to a reunification date by the Taiwanese government.

Alternate Future 18: Focal Events and Indicators:

The focal events for this scenario, where China uses diplomatic pressure against Taiwan and both Taiwan, and the United States concede would be Taiwan's actual agreement to reunification, not simply the willingness to discuss it with China, along with the United States' announcement of its neutrality in the diplomatic negotiations for the future of Taiwan.

Taiwan's agreeing to a deadline and the United States' either announcing its neutrality or keeping a hands off approach to the reunification process would also solidify the occurrence of this scenario. For this scenario to differ from Alternate Future 14 and actually come to exist, Taiwan would have to sign or at least agree to a reunification treaty, instead of simply paying lip service to the idea and the U.S. would either have to abstain from any direct involvement in the negotiating process or declare neutrality in the conflict, as long as it remains peaceful.

Focal Events:

- A signed agreement by Taiwan with China to reunite.
- China's adopting more democratic practices and giving its citizens more liberties.
- Beijing's guaranteeing Taipei that its citizens will enjoy the same basic human rights and liberties that they currently do if reintegrated.
- President Hu of China being succeeded by a more democratic, progressive President.
- The United States making no direct effort to have any involvement in the negotiation process between China and Taiwan.

- The United States either directly or indirectly declaring neutrality in the peaceful negotiation of terms between China and Taiwan for reunification.
- The United States alluding to Taiwan that it is time to end the conflict with China and negotiate a favorable treaty for reunification for both countries involved.
- The United States' reassurances that it will not interfere against China when it presses the reunification issue with Taiwan, as long as there is no threat of military force.

Indicators:

- A vote of the Taiwanese people to determine how many favored reunification with the mainland that determined that the majority of Taiwanese do.
- Increased trips to Beijing by President Ma.
- The achievement of continued progress on the Reunification Council between the Presidents of China and Taiwan.
- The halting of arms purchases by Taiwan.
- Arms reduction efforts on behalf of the Taiwanese government.
- The agreement to a reunification date by the Taiwanese government.
- Ambiguous, vague and noncommittal language on behalf of the new American Presidential administration when questioned about the Taiwan issue.
- The halting of arms sales to Taiwan by American defense contractors and the U.S. government.
- Formal announcements on behalf of the United States that it will not interfere in the negotiations between China and Taiwan or at least not unless the threat of military force is used.
- A dramatic expansion of trade partnerships between the United States and China.
- The United States cutting defense spending.
- The United States being preoccupied with and having its military deployed to the limit in its existing wars.

Alternate Future 15:

The focal events for this scenario, in which China and Taiwan maintain their diplomatic pressure against one another, but the United States withdraws from the situation and ceases its diplomatic pressure on China on behalf of Taiwan would simply be the announcement of neutrality on behalf of the United States towards the China-Taiwan situation or simply no longer

attempting to place any diplomatic pressure on China nor trying to interfere in the affairs of those two countries. An announcement of neutrality, nonparticipation in Chinese-Taiwanese negotiations or even the placing of pressure on Taiwan to reintegrate with China on behalf of the United States, while China and Taiwan maintain their positions would identify this scenario as having occurred. For this scenario to become concrete, not to simply be an anomaly in the usual business of the status quo between the three actors, the U.S. would have to take noticeable action to become neutral in the game of diplomatic pressuring between China and Taiwan, whether in speech or in practice.

Focal Events:

- The United States making no direct effort to have any involvement in the negotiation process between China and Taiwan.
- The United States either directly or indirectly declaring neutrality in the peaceful negotiation of terms between China and Taiwan for reunification.
- The United States alluding to Taiwan that it is time to end the conflict with China and negotiate a favorable treaty for reunification for both countries involved.
- The United States' reassurances that it will not interfere against China when it presses the reunification issue with Taiwan, as long as there is no threat of military force.

Indicators:

- Ambiguous, vague and noncommittal language on behalf of the new American Presidential administration when questioned about the Taiwan issue.
- The halting of arms sales to Taiwan by American defense contractors and the U.S. government.
- Formal announcements on behalf of the United States that it will not interfere in the negotiations between China and Taiwan or at least not unless the threat of military force is used.
- A dramatic expansion of trade partnerships between the United States and China.
- The United States cutting defense spending.
- The United States being preoccupied with and having its military deployed to the limit in its existing wars.

Alternate Future 5:

This scenario involves China deciding to invade Taiwan and break the status quo. As the pairwise comparisons indicated, of the three actors involved, China is the most likely to break the status quo and go to war, as Taiwan would be little short of suicidal to provoke a war with China, unless they came into possession of a dramatic tactical advantage to counter the sixteen-to-one odds that they would face against the People's Liberation Army and the United States neither wants nor can afford a war with China at the present time. Although the current situation is noticeably less hostile between China and Taiwan than it was a year ago, situations change, it could just as easily revert and it could then lead to war.

This scenario can create subscenarios within itself, as China could attack Taiwan in either the expected, conventional manner or in the unexpected, unconventional manner, as described in World News Connection. The only reason that China has not successfully taken Taiwan, other than American military intervention, is that the Taiwan Strait is a chokepoint that can be easily defended by the Taiwanese military, who can be expected to fight ferociously, which could easily result in a significant portion of the Chinese military being sent to the bottom of the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, the Chinese would be wise to adapt a military invasion strategy to counteract this tactical disadvantage.

The unconventional, low-intensity conflict option would be the best solution to this dilemma. The Chinese have a rich history of practicing military deception and their generals are all students of Sun Tzu, who literally wrote the book on the practice, therefore, it would be a great advantage to practice deception and then to eliminate key Taiwanese leaders and military command facilities before committing the PLA in its entirety towards an invasion of Taiwan. Chinese Special Forces are believed to be highly capable and would be a great force-multiplier if used in this role. While a conventional invasion could easily turn into a stalemate and a battle of attrition, which would give the United States enough time to commit its military to the conflict and drive back the Chinese invasion, the unconventional, sneak attack strategy could possibly

all but secure Taiwan before the U.S. could mount an effective response. The Taiwanese Army would be of much less consequence if they were never able to receive the signal to mobilize, if their command and control centers were disabled or destroyed. While a conventional invasion could easily still occur, if this author were a Chinese general, he would use the option of unconventional warfare to minimize losses and secure a victory in Taiwan with the least resistance and in the least amount of time possible. If any of the indicators that involve assassination or the disabling or destruction of Taiwanese military command, early warning or naval or air bases occur, as well as the jamming of radio and cellular signals across Taiwan, a Chinese invasion would be considered imminent within twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

Focal Events:

- China's determination that Taiwan is stalling and that the Reunification Council will never gain any tangible results.
- A political shift in Taiwan back to the Democratic Progressive Party.
- Deep internal disputes within the Chinese Communist Party that could lead its members to resort to patriotism to settle their infighting.
- Taiwan's gaining of military might or strategic weapons that could place it on a level strategic playing field with China.
- Taiwan's abandonment of the Reunification Council.
- Taiwan's renewal of calls for independence from China.

Indicators:

- The issuance of threats of military action ultimatums by the Chinese government towards Taiwan.
- An unusual travel pattern of Chinese "civilian" nationals who reside in Taiwan back to China.
- The failure of Chinese and Taiwanese diplomats to come to mutually favorable terms regarding reunification.
- Massive movements of the Chinese Army, Air Force and Naval forces towards the Taiwan Strait.
- Unusual amounts of Chinese assurance that massive military movements towards the Taiwan Strait are merely a "joint exercise".

- The conducting of Chinese military exercises near the Taiwan Strait to practice for deploying their forces under nuclear, chemical or biological conditions.
- The assassination or coordinated assassinations of key members of the Taiwanese political and military leadership or their suffering unexpected fatal “accidents”.
- The bombing or disabling of key Taiwanese early warning military stations and central military commands.
- The bombing or disablement of Taiwanese air bases, airfields and/or naval bases.
- The jamming of radio and cellular signals throughout large portions of Taiwan or at least Taipei.
- Unexpected or unexplained problems with or hacking into Taiwanese defense networks or other forms of cyber attacks.
- The sudden loss of American imagery satellites over China or Taiwan.
- The sudden loss of the power grid in Taipei and across large portions of Taiwan.
- The detonation of an electromagnetic pulse device in Taipei and/or near key military installations in Taiwan.
- A Chinese naval blockade of Taiwan.
- The sudden recall of key Chinese diplomatic personnel from the United States and Japan back to China.
- No altering of Taiwanese reserve armed forces nor defensive deployments or preparations to repel a Chinese invasion.
- Requests for emergency meetings with the President or U.S. Secretary of State by the President of Taiwan.
- No movement of U.S. Navy aircraft carrier groups towards the Taiwan Strait.
- No cancellation of leaves in any of the U.S. military services.
- The United States denouncing the possible Chinese military aggression.
- No redeployment of U.S. military forces from any nearby military bases towards Taiwan.

Alternate Future 8:

This scenario differs from the last only that instead of merely failing to mobilize the Taiwanese military forces and prepare to defend Taiwan, the Taiwanese government

surrenders to the Chinese or flees Taiwan in an act of self-preservation. The indicators for China's intentions to go to war against Taiwan remain, with the exception of the assassination of Taiwanese political leaders, as this might prove to be difficult to accomplish, as well as the addition of indicators that the Taiwanese leadership have no real intention of taking on the daunting Chinese military machine. As stated earlier, there is significant potential for the transposition of Alternate Future 5 into Alternate Futures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 or 8, therefore, many of the indicators may repeat themselves between these scenarios.

Focal Events:

- China's determination that Taiwan is stalling and that the Reunification Council will never gain any tangible results.
- A political shift in Taiwan back to the Democratic Progressive Party.
- Deep internal disputes within the Chinese Communist Party that could lead its members to resort to patriotism to settle their infighting.
- Chinese military advancements that would give Taiwan little to no hope of successfully repelling an invasion.
- The determination of the Taiwanese leadership, either before or during an invasion, that they have no chance of successfully defeating a Chinese invasion.

Indicators:

- The issuance of threats of military action ultimatums by the Chinese government towards Taiwan.
- An unusual travel pattern of Chinese "civilian" nationals who reside in Taiwan back to China.
- The failure of Chinese and Taiwanese diplomats to come to mutually favorable terms regarding reunification.
- Massive movements of the Chinese Army, Air Force and Naval forces towards the Taiwan Strait.
- Unusual amounts of Chinese assurance that massive military movements towards the Taiwan Strait are merely a "joint exercise".
- The conducting of Chinese military exercises near the Taiwan Strait to practice for deploying their forces under nuclear, chemical or biological conditions.

- The bombing or disabling of key Taiwanese early warning military stations and central military commands.
- The bombing or disablement of Taiwanese air bases, airfields and/or naval bases.
- The jamming of radio and cellular signals throughout large portions of Taiwan or at least Taipei.
- Unexpected or unexplained problems with or hacking into Taiwanese defense networks or other forms of cyber attacks.
- The sudden loss of the power grid in Taipei and across large portions of Taiwan.
- The detonation of an electromagnetic pulse device in Taipei and/or near key military installations in Taiwan.
- A Chinese naval blockade of Taiwan.
- The sudden recall of key Chinese diplomatic personnel from the United States and Japan back to China.
- No altering of Taiwanese reserve armed forces nor defensive deployments or preparations to repel a Chinese invasion.
- The fleeing of Taiwan by key members of the Taiwanese political leadership.
- The seeking of asylum in America of key members of the Taiwanese political leadership.
- Desperate appeals on behalf of the Taiwanese leadership towards China to halt military operations.
- No movement of U.S. Navy aircraft carrier groups towards the Taiwan Strait.
- No cancellation of leaves in any of the U.S. military services.
- The United States denouncing the possible Chinese military aggression.
- No redeployment of U.S. military forces from any nearby military bases towards Taiwan.

Alternate Future 1:

This scenario is not only the most dramatic of the three, where all three actors go to war to defend their interests, but also has the largest number of both focal events and indicators involved. Any of the Alternate Futures listed, in which one of the actors involved has not conceded has the ability to transpose into Alternate Future 1, where an all out war occurs.

While the likelihood of this scenario is notably less than in recent years, due to the political shift in Taiwan, any upset to the current balance could lead to this scenario once again becoming a possibility.

Focal Events:

- China's determination that Taiwan is stalling and that the Reunification Council will never gain any tangible results.
- A political shift in Taiwan back to the Democratic Progressive Party.
- Deep internal disputes within the Chinese Communist Party that could lead its members to resort to patriotism to settle their infighting.
- Taiwan's gaining of military might or strategic weapons that could place it on a level strategic playing field with China.
- Taiwan's abandonment of the Reunification Council.
- Taiwan's renewal of calls for independence from China.
- A Taiwanese declaration of independence.
- The United States renewing its commitment to militarily defend Taiwan if attacked by China.
- The United States having enough available military forces, particularly naval forces, to take on the Chinese Army if they attempt to invade Taiwan.

Indicators:

- The issuance of threats of military action ultimatums by the Chinese government towards Taiwan.
- An unusual travel pattern of Chinese "civilian" nationals who reside in Taiwan back to China.
- The failure of Chinese and Taiwanese diplomats to come to mutually favorable terms regarding reunification.
- Massive movements of the Chinese Army, Air Force and Naval forces towards the Taiwan Strait.
- Unusual amounts of Chinese assurance that massive military movements towards the Taiwan Strait are merely a "joint exercise".
- The conducting of Chinese military exercises near the Taiwan Strait to practice for deploying their forces under nuclear, chemical or biological conditions.

- The assassinations or attempted assassinations of key members of the Taiwanese political and military leadership.
- The bombing or disabling of key Taiwanese early warning military stations and central military commands.
- The bombing or disablement of Taiwanese air bases, airfields and/or naval bases.
- The jamming of radio and cellular signals throughout large portions of Taiwan or at least Taipei.
- Unexpected or unexplained problems with or hacking into Taiwanese defense networks or other forms of cyber attacks.
- The sudden loss of American imagery satellites over China or Taiwan.
- The sudden loss of the power grid in Taipei and across large portions of Taiwan.
- The detonation of an electromagnetic pulse device in Taipei and/or near key military installations in Taiwan.
- A Chinese naval blockade of Taiwan.
- The sudden recall of key Chinese diplomatic personnel from the United States and Japan back to China.
- Taiwanese issuance of ultimatums back to China.
- The Taiwanese attempting to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction.
- Taiwanese military exercises to deploy their military forces under nuclear, biological or chemical conditions.
- The activation of Taiwanese military reserve forces.
- The mobilization of Taiwanese military forces into defensive positions to repel a Chinese invasion.
- The movement of U.S. Navy aircraft carrier groups towards the Taiwan Strait.
- The cancellation of leaves in all of the U.S. military services.
- The United States issuing ultimatums to China.
- The redeployment of U.S. military forces from bases in Japan, Korea the Philippines, Iraq and Afghanistan towards Taiwan.

Alternate Future 6:

This scenario differs from Alternate Future 5 only in the regard that the United States essentially abandons Taiwan, choosing its own self-interest over its previous commitments; otherwise, the situation is the same, with China invading and Taiwan trying to use aggressive diplomatic pressure. Once again, many of the focal events and indicators will be the same as other similar scenarios, but this only proves the point that the presence, lack or alternation of even one critical focal event can change one scenario into another. This phenomenon can occur both independently and in conjunction with any transposition that may occur.

Focal Events:

- China's determination that Taiwan is stalling and that the Reunification Council will never gain any tangible results.
- A political shift in Taiwan back to the Democratic Progressive Party.
- Deep internal disputes within the Chinese Communist Party that could lead its members to resort to patriotism to settle their infighting.
- Taiwan's gaining of military might or strategic weapons that could place it on a level strategic playing field with China.
- Taiwan's abandonment of the Reunification Council.
- Taiwan's renewal of calls for independence from China.
- The United States either openly or discreetly abandoning its commitment to defend Taiwan.

Indicators:

- The issuance of threats of military action ultimatums by the Chinese government towards Taiwan.
- An unusual travel pattern of Chinese "civilian" nationals who reside in Taiwan back to China.
- The failure of Chinese and Taiwanese diplomats to come to mutually favorable terms regarding reunification.
- Massive movements of the Chinese Army, Air Force and Naval forces towards the Taiwan Strait.

- Unusual amounts of Chinese assurance that massive military movements towards the Taiwan Strait are merely a “joint exercise”.
- The conducting of Chinese military exercises near the Taiwan Strait to practice for deploying their forces under nuclear, chemical or biological conditions.
- The assassinations or attempted assassinations of key members of the Taiwanese political and military leadership.
- The bombing or disabling of key Taiwanese early warning military stations and central military commands.
- The bombing or disablement of Taiwanese air bases, airfields and/or naval bases.
- The jamming of radio and cellular signals throughout large portions of Taiwan or at least Taipei.
- Unexpected or unexplained problems with or hacking into Taiwanese defense networks or other forms of cyber attacks.
- The sudden loss of the power grid in Taipei and across large portions of Taiwan.
- The detonation of an electromagnetic pulse device in Taipei and/or near key military installations in Taiwan.
- A Chinese naval blockade of Taiwan.
- The sudden recall of key Chinese diplomatic personnel from the United States and Japan back to China.
- No altering of Taiwanese reserve armed forces nor defensive deployments or preparations to repel a Chinese invasion.
- Requests for emergency meetings with the President or U.S. Secretary of State by the President of Taiwan.
- No movement of U.S. Navy aircraft carrier groups towards the Taiwan Strait.
- No cancellation of leaves in any of the U.S. military services.
- The United States denouncing the possible Chinese military aggression.
- No redeployment of U.S. military forces from any nearby military bases towards Taiwan.

Alternate Future 2:

In this scenario, Taiwan and China go to war, but the United States stops short of a military commitment, instead pleading with both sides, but especially China, to cease their

military aggression. As it has for years under the current situation, Alternate Future 14, the U.S. takes on the role of moderator, which means that the focal events and indicators will be identical on the Chinese and Taiwanese sides to Alternate Future one, with the difference being the level and nature of United States involvement. Once again, the differences that determine whether one scenario or another occur are usually as little as one event.

Focal Events:

- China's determination that Taiwan is stalling and that the Reunification Council will never gain any tangible results.
- A political shift in Taiwan back to the Democratic Progressive Party.
- Deep internal disputes within the Chinese Communist Party that could lead its members to resort to patriotism to settle their infighting.
- Taiwan's gaining of military might or strategic weapons that could place it on a level strategic playing field with China.
- Taiwan's abandonment of the Reunification Council.
- Taiwan's renewal of calls for independence from China.
- A Taiwanese declaration of independence.
- The United States renewing its commitment to militarily defend Taiwan if attacked by China.
- The United States' determination to use aggressive diplomacy towards both countries, rather than military force towards China, to deescalate the deteriorating situation between China and Taiwan.

Indicators:

- The issuance of threats of military action ultimatums by the Chinese government towards Taiwan.
- An unusual travel pattern of Chinese "civilian" nationals who reside in Taiwan back to China.
- The failure of Chinese and Taiwanese diplomats to come to mutually favorable terms regarding reunification.
- Massive movements of the Chinese Army, Air Force and Naval forces towards the Taiwan Strait.

- Unusual amounts of Chinese assurance that massive military movements towards the Taiwan Strait are merely a “joint exercise”.
- The conducting of Chinese military exercises near the Taiwan Strait to practice for deploying their forces under nuclear, chemical or biological conditions.
- The assassinations or attempted assassinations of key members of the Taiwanese political and military leadership.
- The bombing or disabling of key Taiwanese early warning military stations and central military commands.
- The bombing or disablement of Taiwanese air bases, airfields and/or naval bases.
- The jamming of radio and cellular signals throughout large portions of Taiwan or at least Taipei.
- Unexpected or unexplained problems with or hacking into Taiwanese defense networks or other forms of cyber attacks.
- The sudden loss of the power grid in Taipei and across large portions of Taiwan.
- The detonation of an electromagnetic pulse device in Taipei and/or near key military installations in Taiwan.
- A Chinese naval blockade of Taiwan.
- The sudden recall of key Chinese diplomatic personnel from the United States and Japan back to China.
- Taiwanese issuance of ultimatums back to China.
- The Taiwanese attempting to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction.
- Taiwanese military exercises to deploy their military forces under nuclear, biological or chemical conditions.
- The activation of Taiwanese military reserve forces.
- The mobilization of Taiwanese military forces into defensive positions to repel a Chinese invasion.
- The United States aggressively demanding that both China and Taiwan back away from their preparations for military action.
- No movement of U.S. Navy aircraft carrier groups towards the Taiwan Strait.
- No cancellation of leaves in any of the U.S. military services.

-No redeployment of U.S. military forces from bases in Japan, Korea the Philippines, Iraq and Afghanistan towards Taiwan.

At this point, the focal events and indicators for the three countries have been adequately covered. For China, the focal events and indicators for either diplomatic pressure or the decision to invade Taiwan have been addressed, as have the same for Taiwan's and the United States' options of diplomatic pressure, warfare or concession. The course of action for China of conceding to Taiwan and the United States has not been address thus far, due to the fact that it is completely unlikely under the current Chinese political circumstances, for China to abandon its greatest national aspirations.

Conclusion:

The situation between China, the United States and Taiwan is stable for the time being. However, the stability of the status quo is delicate. If any change in the current dynamic between the three countries occurs and the balance is upset, war may be the end result.

If a war breaks out in the Taiwan Strait, China is clearly the most likely of the three countries to fire the first shot. This is due to the fact that the absorbing of Taiwan is not only the highest national priority from the standpoint of patriotism and national morale, but also critical to Chinese national security. Taiwan would be little short of suicidal to provoke a war with China and the United States does not wish to be involved in any additional war at this point, as it simply cannot afford one, with its dire economic crisis.

While the United States will quite possibly be more concerned with the preservation of its own national interests in the near future, rather than maintaining its military security obligations and wish to steer clear of the Chinese-Taiwanese conflict, by finding a graceful way to shy away from its military commitment to defend Taiwan; however, the danger of this policy, as the pairwise comparisons showed, is that doing so, at least openly, could have the complete opposite effect, by emboldening China to take Taiwan by force. To make matters worse, this would not only severely undermine the strategic security of other American allies in East Asia,

such as Japan, but also serve to worsen the economic crisis that threatens to severely curtail the funding to the U.S. military. Therefore, the United States has a vested interest in using aggressive diplomatic pressure to maintain the status quo and workable relations between China and Taiwan, by using incentives to keep both countries at the negotiating table, as the Chinese typically do not respond well to intimidation and attempting such will only increase their proclivity towards military aggression.

While the Taiwanese people without a doubt deserve their freedom and human rights, neither of which the People's Republic of China places any value on whatsoever, allowing the situation to deteriorate to the point where Taiwan is at war with China would be doing them an incredible disservice, due to the fact that at this point, America is in a very precarious position militarily and economically and not militarily supporting Taiwan in such a conflict would be leaving them to almost certainly be eventually crushed. Since the United States does nonetheless have a moral and ethical responsibility to do everything in their power to keep this from happening, the best way to accomplish this goal is to do everything possible to keep both China and Taiwan from determining that their negotiations are not being productive and that war is their best option. Attempting to follow any other course of action at the present time, from attempting to militarily coerce China or openly renouncing the United States' security obligation to Taiwan would be a dangerous course of action and a recipe for disaster.

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