

STRAIT TALK: UNITED STATES CONTAINMENT OF COMMUNISM IN THE  
TAIWAN STRAIT

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## **Abstract**

Since the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War, the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have maintained a complex relationship in which the PRC claims that the ROC is a PRC province, even though the ROC has its own two-party democratic system. The political separation of the ROC and the PRC is an exigent concern for the PRC, one that the PRC has threatened using military force to resolve. This thesis examines the military and political aspects of US involvement in the Asia Pacific during the Cold War, and how the United States used its security relationship with the ROC to establish a hegemonic presence and deter PRC aggressions against the ROC.

## Term Guide

**PRC** — People's Republic of China

**ROC** — Republic of China

**US** — United States of America

**PLA** — People's Liberation Army (the PRC military)

**CPC** — Communist Party of China (the PRC political party)

**TRA** — Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 (outlines the US-ROC security relationship)

**DPP** — Democratic Progressive Party (the ROC pro-independence political party)

**KMT** — Kuomintang or Guomindang (the ROC nationalist political party)

**UN** — United Nations

**China** — Refers to the landmass of both Mainland China and Taiwan and the Chinese heritage (traditional culture and traditions)

**Mainland China** — Refers to the landmass that has traditionally been known as China that the PRC government currently controls

**Taiwan** — Refers to the island (previously known as Formosa) that the ROC government currently controls

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

The Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) maintain a complex relationship in which the PRC claims that the ROC is a PRC province, even though the ROC has its own two-party democratic system.<sup>1</sup> The political separation of the ROC and the PRC is an exigent concern for the PRC, one that the PRC has threatened using military force to resolve; however, the United States seeks a peaceful solution to the PRC-ROC situation.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the ROC's complex relations with the PRC, the US-ROC security relationship has been called into question. Why is the United States allied with the ROC? What is the US military's role in protecting the ROC? What has the PRC done in response to US involvement with the ROC? This thesis seeks to examine how the United States initially utilized its relationship with the ROC to contain communist influence in the Asia Pacific. I will primarily be analyzing the military and political aspects of US involvement in the region during the Cold War, such as refusing official recognition of the PRC and military protections of the ROC during the Taiwan Strait Crises.

I hypothesize that the United States maintained a relationship with the ROC from the 1950s through the 1980s in order to contain the developing power of communism in the Asia Pacific. Because the United States acted like a hegemonic state in the region, it deterred PRC aggression and facilitated a stable Cross Strait environment. Although one of the initial reasons for

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<sup>1</sup> Blanchard, Jean-Marc F., and Dennis Van Vranken. Hickey. *New Thinking about the Taiwan Issue: Theoretical Insights into Its Origins, Dynamics, and Prospects*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Kan, Shirley A., and Wayne M. Morrison. "U.S.-Taiwan Relationship: Overview of Policy Issues." Federation of American Scientists. N.p., 11 Sept. 2013. Web. 15 Sept. 2013.

maintaining a relationship with the ROC was the containment of communism, the motivations for this support have evolved over time.

The ROC is an important Asia Pacific ally for the United States because of its status as the first East Asian democracy, the ability of the United States to check the PRC's influence in the Asia Pacific region, and the intelligence and military advantages the alliance with the ROC provides to the United States. The significance of this thesis is to analyze the issues concerning the US-PRC relationship during the Cold War and how it was influenced by the United States defense of the ROC. In order to understand this relationship, one must first understand the background between the United States, the ROC and the PRC.

The island of Taiwan was previously an Imperial Chinese province from 1683 until 1894, after which it was ceded to the Empire of Japan from 1894 until 1945. At the end of World War II, the Japanese surrendered Taiwan to the Kuomintang (KMT)-controlled Mainland China, the previous ROC. On October 1, 1949, Mao Tse-tung<sup>3</sup> led the Communist Party of China (CPC) to take control of Mainland China from the KMT. After the CPC takeover of the mainland, the ROC government led by Chiang Kai-shek<sup>4</sup> fled to Taiwan and seized control of the island. As a result, the Chinese Civil War, which lasted from 1937 until 1949, divided China into two parts: the PRC on Mainland China and the ROC on Taiwan.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the US presence in the region due to the occupation of Japan, the United States did not interfere in the Chinese Civil War on behalf of the KMT. After the outbreak of the Korean

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<sup>3</sup> The first PRC Chairman and leader of the CPC during the Chinese Civil War

<sup>4</sup> The ROC leader from 1928 to 1975

<sup>5</sup> Clough, Ralph N. *Cooperation or Conflict in the Taiwan Strait?* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. Print.

War, not only did communism seem more threatening, but the PRC itself became an adversary. As a result, the United States began defending the ROC.<sup>6</sup>

The United States recognized the ROC as the Chinese state from 1949 until 1978; however, in 1971, the PRC began representing China in the UN, and in 1978, the United States also officially recognized the PRC, rather than the ROC, as the Chinese State. The United States thus began its ambiguous policy of not officially recognizing the ROC, while simultaneously protecting it from PRC aggression.

In 1992, the PRC and the ROC both agreed on a “One China” policy, which describes the current status quo of cross strait relations. This policy states that both governments recognize that there is only one China; however, the PRC and the ROC have different interpretations of this policy. The PRC considers the ROC to be a rogue province, but still part of China. In contrast, the ROC’s two political parties each have their own definitions of one China. The KMT considers China to be one country with two systems: the ROC and the PRC. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) considers China to be the area under PRC control, and the ROC to be its own country.

The PRC’s idea of the “One China” policy was portrayed by the CPC’s leader Jiang Zemin<sup>7</sup> in the “8-Point Proposition” in 1995, which reiterated that the PRC and the ROC need to be reunited because they are both still part of one China. The ROC’s KMT leader responded to this proposition with the “Taiwan Communique No. 66”, and claimed that the PRC should recognize

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<sup>6</sup> Defending the ROC from the PRC threat was easy for the US military. The United States already had a military presence in the region due to occupying Japan. Likewise, because Taiwan is a small island, it was easy to protect with naval carriers.

<sup>7</sup> PRC leader from 1993 until 2003



that although there is one China, it has had two different governments since 1949 and that they both should appreciate their shared Chinese culture.

## **Structure of Thesis**

I begin this thesis with a review of literature that provides an introduction to scholarly literature, Cross Strait issues, and my theoretical framework. This includes my hypothesis that the United States utilized its involvement in the Asia Pacific to contain communism. I discuss Hegemonic Stability Theory and assess the US hegemonic presence in the Asia Pacific. Likewise, I introduce Deterrence Theory, which is how the United States has interacted with the PRC in order to dissuade it from forcing reunification upon the ROC. In order to contain communism in this region, the United States used its hegemonic presence as a tool to deter PRC aggressions.

In the following chapter, I test my hypothesis that the United States utilized its relationship with the ROC to contain the growth of communism in this region during the Cold War. Likewise, the US hegemonic presence deterred PRC aggression and assisted in creating a stable Cross Strait region. As a result, the United States used its relationship with the ROC, hegemonic presence, and deterrence of the PRC in order to contain communism in the Asia Pacific. This chapter will be the core of my argument.

In my next chapter, I discuss potential future scenarios concerning US and PRC goals in the Asia Pacific. I assess that the United States continues to provide protections to the ROC in order to maintain its influential presence in the region, and that the United States achieves this through its support of the ROC democracy and US arms sales to the ROC. Likewise, I predict that the PRC desires to become the Asia Pacific hegemon. Because this chapter assesses the future

stability of the Asia Pacific, these scenarios cannot be tested; however, they are important to take into account due to future stability in the region.

My final chapter is a conclusion chapter. It finishes this thesis with a series of deductions that come from both my research and analysis, including why the ROC has strategic value for the United States, and recommends policy concerning the future in the Asia Pacific region.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

In this chapter, I will review existing scholarly literature and theory pertaining to how the United States worked to contain Chinese communism during the Cold War. This section is structured into two parts that discuss hegemony and deterrence, which are both tools that the United States used to contain communism.

#### Hegemony

What are the United States and PRC intentions in the Asia Pacific region? I hypothesize that the US hegemonic presence stabilized the region during the end of the twentieth century and assisted in containing communist influence. Likewise, the US hegemonic presence deterred PRC aggression during this time, an issue that will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

The United States has been considered to be the world's preponderant power, resulting in the ability to influence numerous regions of the world, including the Asia Pacific. After World War II, Japan lost its position as the Asia Pacific hegemon. Because the United States maintained its military presence in the Asia Pacific, it not only supplanted Japan as the regional hegemon, but prevented other East Asian powers from becoming the hegemonic state.

According to the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the hegemon is the main beneficiary and also the primary provider of externalities to other states.<sup>8</sup> Mearsheimer claims that regional hegemony go to great lengths to stop other great powers from becoming hegemony in their region of the

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<sup>8</sup> Brilmayer, Lea. "American Hegemony: Political Mortality in A One-Superpower World." *Yale University Press*. (1994). Pg. 18

world; likewise, he claims that the United States operates according to this logic.<sup>9</sup> In regards to the Asia Pacific region, as long as the United States remains a powerful presence, it prevents the PRC from expanding its own influence.

In order for the United States to become the regional hegemon of the Western Hemisphere, it had to expel the influence of other great powers from the region while also expanding its own influence. According to Mearsheimer, for the 115 years after its 1783 independence, the United States pursued regional hegemony through an expansionist policy referred to as “Manifest Destiny.” In addition, United States leaders also enforced the “Monroe Doctrine” in order to expel European powers from the Americas.<sup>10</sup> Due to past trends, the United States also prevented the PRC from becoming the regional hegemon by containing its territorial growth. Without US influence, the PRC could have already become the regional hegemon, which would have ultimately resulted in the United States being pushed out of this region.

The United States initially did not intend to influence Chinese affairs, which is shown during the Chinese Civil War when Truman reiterated,

“The United States has no desire to obtain special rights or privileges, or to establish military bases on Formosa at this time. Nor does it have any intention of utilizing its Armed Forces to interfere in the present situation. The United States Government will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China. Similarly, the United States Government will not provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa.”<sup>11</sup>

Because communism became a threat to the United States and its allies in the Asia Pacific region, the United States changed its stance and became directly involved in the Korean War. As

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<sup>9</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. "Taiwan's Dire Straits." *National Interest* 130 (2014): 29. *MasterFILE Premier.*, Pg. 33

<sup>10</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. “The Gathering Storm: China’s Challenge to US Power in Asia.” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* (2010).

<sup>11</sup>Truman, Harry S. “Statement On Formosa”, 5 January, 1950

a result, the PRC was prevented from forcing reunification upon the ROC due to the beginning of US military protections to the ROC.

In his article, Zhongqi makes a point that the United States has an ambiguous policy towards the Cross Strait situation. Although the United States does not recognize the ROC as its own state, it provides military protections and sells weapons to the ROC. Zhongqi claims that the United States favors ROC independence and shows this through weapons sales to the ROC.<sup>12</sup> Zhongqi also says that preventing reunification is the primary reason that the United States established this relationship with the ROC;<sup>13</sup> however, he does not acknowledge that the United States continues weapons sells in order to uphold the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), maintain the alliance with the ROC, and lobbying efforts from defense contractors. Another factor that Zhongqi failed to take into account is United States' own incentives. For example, according to Cohen, the United States considered the ROC to be critical in the struggle against the spread of communism during the Cold War. By establishing this relationship, the United States prevented the PRC from forcing communist ideology onto the ROC.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, Zhao also showed that one of the motivations for the United States to maintain this relationship with the ROC results from the PRC's emergence as a world super power and a desire to be able to contain this power.<sup>15</sup>

Another motivation for the United States containing the PRC was due to the potential loss of intelligence capabilities and a military presence in the region. Mearsheimer claims that the PRC

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<sup>12</sup> Zhongqi, Pan. "US Taiwan Policy of Strategic Ambiguity: A Dilemma of Deterrence." *Journal of Contemporary China* 12.35 (2003): 387-407. Web.

<sup>13</sup> Zhongqi, Pan. "US Taiwan Policy of Strategic Ambiguity: A Dilemma of Deterrence." *Journal of Contemporary China* 12.35 (2003). Web.

<sup>14</sup> Cohen, Warren I. *America's Response to China: a History of Sino-American Relations*, 5th ed, New York: Columbia UP (2010), 191-205.

<sup>15</sup> Zhao, Suisheng. *China-U.S. Relations Transformed: Perspectives and Strategic Interactions*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.

would prefer the removal of the US presence in the Asia Pacific, and replace the United States as the hegemonic presence. This is portrayed when he says, “the PRC will try to dominate Asia the way the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere, which means it will seek to reduce, if not eliminate, the American military presence in Asia.”<sup>16</sup> As a result, the United States has incentives to maintain its relationship with the ROC because it can assist in balancing power in this region in multiple ways. First, Mearsheimer claims that the ROC’s location would be a strategic base if conflict erupted in the South China Seas. Second, he claims that the US commitment to the ROC gives it credibility in the region. By maintaining this alliance, the United States shows its other East Asian allies that it will protect its allies in this region.<sup>17</sup> Mearsheimer also notes that the United States could forsake its relationship with the ROC in order to prevent a Sino-American war because of the possibility that it could escalate to nuclear levels.<sup>18</sup> Although the relationship with the ROC assists in securing the US presence in East Asia, Mearsheimer claims that the United States would forsake this presence if tensions escalated to a possible Sino-American war.

Although Mearsheimer makes several valid points, such as maintaining this relationship because the ROC’s location is strategically close to the PRC, showing other East Asian allies that the United States will uphold its promises, and also preventing a conflict between nuclear powers all influence this relationship, he does not acknowledge that the United States could likely be continuing this relationship with the ROC in order to contain the PRC’s influence in the region. Likewise, he does not address that it is the US hegemonic presence that maintained a stabile Cross Strait region during the end of the 20th century, due to its deterrence of PRC aggression.

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<sup>16</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. "Taiwan's Dire Straits." *National Interest* 130 (2014): 29. *MasterFILE Premier.*, Pg.29

<sup>17</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. "Taiwan's Dire Straits." *National Interest* 130 (2014): 29. *MasterFILE Premier.*, Pg.34

<sup>18</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. "Taiwan's Dire Straits." *National Interest* 130 (2014): 29. *MasterFILE Premier.*, Pg.35

Bernkopf discusses the potential threat that the PRC could be for the United States if it reunified with the ROC. At the beginning of her research, she addresses the possibility of a non-military reunification between the PRC and the ROC due to the ROC's economic reliance on the PRC.<sup>19</sup> Despite this, Bernkopf also claims that,

“After more than a decade of political and social transformation, the ROC public increasingly perceives itself as something other than simply Chinese...On the island, as on the mainland, shifts in attitudes, generations, and historical circumstances created a new ROC nationalism – a potent force for local unity based on a Taiwan identity...Once celebrated equally on both sides of the strait, the idea of one China no longer commands unquestioned agreement in the ROC.”<sup>20</sup>

As one may convey from this excerpt, willing reunification has become less likely over time due to the ROC populace developing a non-Chinese nationalism by establishing a new identity that is Taiwanese.

If the ROC did peacefully reunite with the PRC, how would this impact the US security presence in Asia? Bernkopf answers this question by saying, “Anything that helps the PRC grow stronger, including unification with the ROC, would not be in US interests.”<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Bernkopf addresses the PRC's discontent with the United States when she says, “the alleged threat advanced by the “rise” of the PRC grows out of the PRC's anti-Americanism and yearning for regional hegemony”.<sup>22</sup> The PRC has a desire be a stronger presence in the Asia Pacific; however, the US-ROC alliance prevents this from happening because the United States continues

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<sup>19</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 16

<sup>20</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 17-18

<sup>21</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 23

<sup>22</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 20

to maintain a hegemonic presence in the region. This is shown when she writes, “Beijing unsurprisingly sees evidence everywhere that Washington has been maneuvering to keep Taiwan separate from the PRC,” and that the United States has particularly achieved this through military support of the ROC.<sup>23</sup> As a result, in recent years, the PRC considers the United States to be containing its own growing influence through the US-ROC relationship.

According to Bernkopf, one of the reasons that the United States should not support Cross Strait reunification is that, “A strong and assertive PRC, even if democratic, would complicate Washington’s diplomatic and security calculations, impinging on its position and alliances in East Asia.”<sup>24</sup> In regards to the geostrategic implications of the situation, this could impact US-Japanese relations. Bernkopf claims that Japan’s fears of the PRC attacking the ROC and impacting Japan due to its proximity to the ROC would be relieved. This could result in alleviating tensions between Japan and the PRC, and potentially Japan becoming less tolerant of US bases on its soil.<sup>25</sup>

Bernkopf claimed that a PRC-ROC reunification would also result in a strategic loss of intelligence capabilities for the United States. After the United States recognized the PRC in 1979, it stopped using the ROC as a base for aerial reconnaissance; however, it did not end other collection programs conducted from the ROC, such as extensive listening posts and human intelligence operations.<sup>26</sup> As a result, if the PRC reunited with the ROC, these programs would

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<sup>23</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 19

<sup>24</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 20

<sup>25</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 22

<sup>26</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 23



end and handicap the US intelligence process and defense efforts by obstructing information gathering.

The PRC's recovery of the ROC could result in the PLA projecting its naval and air power beyond the coastal waters, and might be tempted to contest the US military presence in the region and strive for greater force projection capabilities.<sup>27</sup> The United States has acted in such a way to prevent this from occurring because by obtaining the ROC, the PRC could cause further instability in the South China Seas region. For example, by unifying with the ROC, the PRC would also gain greater proximity to the Senkaku-Diaoyu islands,<sup>28</sup> which could threaten stability in the region.

One has to ask why each involved actor in the Cross Strait tensions — the PRC, the ROC, and the United States — have not allowed for this issue to reach a final outcome? According to Ross, the PRC has three sets of interests in the ROC which encourage the PRC to maintain its influence over the ROC. These interests are security, nationalism and domestic politics.<sup>29</sup>

In regards to security, if the ROC became independent and another power established a military presence on the ROC, this could be a security threat to the PRC due to its close proximity to the island. For example, the United States could likely reestablish its previous

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<sup>27</sup> Bernkopf Tucker, Nancy. "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should The United States Care?." *Washington Quarterly* 25.3 (2002): 15-28. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 21

<sup>28</sup> These are uninhabited islands that are part of a territorial dispute between the PRC, the ROC, and Japan. The islands are 170 kilometers from the closest Taiwanese and Japanese islands and are 330 km from the PRC. By reuniting with the ROC, the PRC would have a stronger claim over the territory. Currently, the ROC does not participate in the dispute as much as the other two regions due to their superior militaries.

<sup>29</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 70

military outposts in the ROC. Likewise, intelligence outposts could be utilized against the PRC due to the ROC's proximity to Mainland China.

Ideological values such as nationalism encourage the populace to support the government; likewise, the issue of nationalism is important to the PRC. If there was a PRC-ROC reunification, the ROC people would need to identify as Chinese, rather than Taiwanese, to assist in maintaining a stable relationship between the two regions. Recently, a movement of Taiwanese nationalism has become widespread in the ROC, and even resulted in protests, such as the "Sunflower Movement".<sup>30</sup>

The issue of nationalism leads to the third reason — domestic politics.<sup>31</sup> Because the ROC populace has begun identifying as Taiwanese rather than Chinese, there has been more support for the pro-independence ROC political party, the DPP, which is indicated through the recent election of the DPP president. As a result, the ROC political system challenges PRC sovereignty and creates more friction between the two regions.

Mearsheimer and Bernkopf claimed that the PRC desires to expand its influence over the Asia Pacific, and if this occurs, the PRC would expel the United States from this region. I agree with this claim because states that seek or gain regional hegemony seek to prevent states of equal or greater power from having influence in this region. Unlike the authors' opinions, I also assess that the United States acted as the regional hegemon in the Asia Pacific during the end of the 20th century, which according the Hegemonic Stability Theory, resulted in the US hegemonic influence creating a stable Asia Pacific region and deterred PRC aggression towards the ROC.

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<sup>30</sup> This was a 2014 student protest in the ROC. Students protested the ROC's increased relations with the PRC, using slogans such as "the ROC is not part of China" ( 台灣不是中國的一部分 ) and "the ROC is an independent country" ( 台灣是獨立的國家 )

<sup>31</sup> Because the PRC considers the ROC to be a PRC province, ROC-PRC relations are defined as domestic politics

Without the US hegemonic presence, the PRC likely would have been the regional hegemon, making the region more vulnerable to communist influence. Deterrence and hegemony go hand in hand in containing the CPC during the Cold War.

## **Deterrence**

I theorize that the United States maintained its relationship with the ROC in order to contain PRC growth. The PRC aggression towards the ROC caused instability in the region; however, the United States deterred the PRC through its hegemonic presence, which it retained due to its security relationship with the ROC. As a result, hegemony and deterrence were both used as tools to contain communism.

The United States succeeded in deterring PRC influence over the ROC through the threat of the US hegemonic influence in the region and US military superiority, a situation that can be defined by deterrence theory. Deterrence theory is one of the most notable theoretical accomplishments of international studies.<sup>32</sup> Deterrence refers to a situation in which one side threatens to retaliate if the other side takes an action that it considers unacceptable.<sup>33</sup> This implies that the purpose of deterrence is using a threat to prevent one side from doing something. Essentially, it is a method that one side uses to prevent an aggressor from attaining unfavorable foreign policy goals by convincing the aggressor that by doing so, the costs will exceed the value of the initial objective of the aggressor.

“Challengers to the status quo want to avoid military escalation when major powers are expected to intervene in support of their adversaries, and defending states seek outside support to counter threats to their security. Miscalculation by either side can have far-reaching security consequences. State leaders may

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<sup>32</sup> Zhang, Shu Guang. *Deterrence Theory and Strategic Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992, p 2.

<sup>33</sup> Danilovic, Vesna. “Conceptual and Selection Bias Issues in Deterrence”. 2001

engage their country in military hostilities with a stronger military coalition if they underestimate the likelihood of intervention by major powers. Conversely, policymakers from defending states may stand firm in crisis negotiations only to find that, at the brink of war, a major power does not come to their defense as expected.”<sup>34</sup>

Aggressors want to avoid military escalation when major powers provide military support to the aggressor’s adversaries due to the potential high costs of attack. Likewise, the adversary of the aggressor also needs to be cautious due to the possibility that the major power will not provide assistance.

Huth addresses four situations in which states pursue deterrence. These result from combining two dimensions of deterrence policies. These dimensions include deterrence being directed at preventing an armed attack against a country’s own territory (direct deterrence) or that of another country (extended deterrence). Likewise, countries may use deterrent threats in response to a short-term threat of attack (immediate deterrence) or to prevent a short-term conflict and a militarized conflict from occurring (general deterrence). After combining these two dimensions, the four situations which result are a) direct-immediate deterrence, b) direct-general deterrence, c) extended-immediate deterrence, and d) extended-general deterrence.<sup>35</sup> In regards to the Cross Strait conflict, US security protections provided to the ROC are an extended-general deterrence, because they had short-term goals and also prevented a militarized conflict from occurring between the PRC and the ROC.

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<sup>34</sup> Huth, Paul K., “Territory and Group Conflict in International Relations”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (Dec., 1998), pg. 74

<sup>35</sup> Morgan P. 1977. *Deterrence*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, pg. 216

Even if deterrence results in the prevention of a war or crisis, it does not mean the deterrence succeeded. In regards to future conflict, the aggressor could still remain a potential threat. Huth addresses this issue and says,

“Complete success would entail potential attackers backing away from threats of escalation without resorting to any use of force and without securing any demanded changes to the status quo. Complete failure would involve escalation by the attacker, including large-scale attack, or capitulation by the defender to the attacker’s maximum demands as the price for avoiding limited uses of force and defending states offering concessions only on issues of secondary interest to the attacker.”<sup>36</sup>

Although the aggressor might not immediately attack its adversary, the potential for future conflict remains unless the aggressor completely backs away from the situation. In the case of the ROC and the PRC, US deterrence has been successful in the short run; however, the potential for conflict still remains due to the PRC’s desire to reunite with the ROC and its unwillingness to allow the ROC to be internationally recognized as its own state.

Danilovic identifies four outcomes of deterrence - challenger’s acquiescence, defender’s acquiescence, compromise, and war. Three of these are peaceful outcomes; however, they result in different political implications for both sides. This expanded view of outcomes reveals two forms- one violent and one peaceful-of potential failures; likewise, it includes compromise, which involves gains and losses to both sides. The last issue involves how states can initiate conflict due to their opponent’s behavior.<sup>37</sup> Having more potential outcomes besides success and failure reveals that the prevention of war escalation does not guarantee a success; likewise,

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<sup>36</sup> Huth, Paul K. "DETERRENCE AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT: Empirical Findings And Theoretical Debates." *Annual Review Of Political Science* 2.1 (1999): 25. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015., pg. 28

<sup>37</sup> Danilovic, Vesna. "Conceptual and Selection Bias Issues in Deterrence". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. February 2001. vol. 45, no. 1, pg. 98

compromise is a more likely to occur when a third party power is involved. The ROC and PRC tensions since the 1950s have continued in a state of high tensions; however, because of the US stabilizing presence, these tensions did not escalate due to the potential costs.

Ross describes the superiority of US military capabilities in comparison to the PLA, which assists in deterring PRC aggression. Although the PRC has recently developed its military capabilities, the United States “can inflict a rapid and punishing attack against the PRC forces while emerging from war with minimal casualties”.<sup>38</sup> As a result, war with the United States would be detrimental to the PRC. By losing in a conflict to the United States, the PRC would be weakened and no longer be one of the strongest actors in East Asia.

The United States is not the only state that uses deterrence in the region. Ross claims that the reason the ROC has not moved towards independence is because of PRC deterrence. PRC military capabilities exceed the ROC’s, and an attack against the ROC could negatively impact the ROC’s political status quo. The ROC’s democracy is “young and fragile”, and as a result, it is unclear whether “the ROC’s democracy could long survive intensified PRC-ROC conflict”.<sup>39</sup> Even if the United States provides protections to the ROC, Ross claims that the political structure in the ROC could “nonetheless lose all that is work defending”.<sup>40</sup> As a result, even though the PRC is deterred from initiating conflict, the ROC is also deterred from declaring independence, which could cause conflict initiation.

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<sup>38</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 70

<sup>39</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 74

<sup>40</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 74

Ross claims that the United States does not have vital security or political interests in regard to the ROC and the PRC issue and does not care about the solution as long as it is a peaceful one;<sup>41</sup> however, he also reports that the United States should undergo a few measures in order to ensure that it maintains the current East Asian status quo. First, the United States must continue to act as a deterrent to the PRC by using force to protect the ROC.<sup>42</sup> By doing so, the PRC would be unwilling to attack the ROC and cause instability in the region. Second, the United States should remain ambiguous in the cross strait situation.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the United States continues to support the ROC's self-defense in order to preserve its sovereignty, but opposes a ROC declaration of independence, which pacifies the PRC. Likewise, according to Ross, the United States should not oversell arms to the ROC.<sup>44</sup> This could result in increased tensions with the PRC, because the PRC could think the United States supports the ROC's independence. Likewise, it is the US military and not the ROC's that acts as a deterrent to the PRC.

Chan discusses the possibility of the United States acting as a deterrent to the PRC by claiming that, "there is little doubt that it (the United States) wishes to forestall a PRC invasion of this island and, as such, represents a case of extended deterrence".<sup>45</sup> As one may see from the excerpt, Chan also concludes that US involvement in Cross Strait issues results in intentional

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<sup>41</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 75

<sup>42</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 75

<sup>43</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. Pg. 75

<sup>44</sup> Ross, Robert S. "The Stability Of Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *National Interest* 65 (2001): 67. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 75

<sup>45</sup> Chan, Steve. "Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait." *World Affairs* (2003). Vol 166, Issue 2. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 110

deterrence in order to insure “regional peace and stability”<sup>46</sup> and also ROC's autonomy and human rights issues in the PRC.<sup>47</sup>

Chan does not discuss other motivations for the United States protecting the ROC, and instead focuses on causes of the tensions. For example, he reports that the ROC and the PRC are reluctant to disclose private information to one another, because the other side could use it against them.<sup>48</sup> This influences commitment problems between the two regions because they cannot trust one another to uphold a treaty if one was created.<sup>49</sup> As a result, the ROC and the PRC have been unable to create a treaty acceptable for both sides.

Chan also claims that although the challenger (the PRC) expects a major setback on the battlefield (such as US intervention), it could still launch an attack. “One can lose on the battlefield and still “win” in the sense of forcing the other side to rethink the probability of its success”.<sup>50</sup> As a result, Chan portrays conflict as a sense of negotiation. Because the ROC and the PRC have not had conflict in many years and are now being deterred from fighting, this negotiation has not continued.

Ross and Chan both claimed that the United States acts as a deterrent to the PRC, a situation that I agree with; however, Ross claims that the United States’ only motivations for this deterrence is due to wanting to prevent military actions of the PRC against the ROC. Likewise,

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<sup>46</sup> Chan, Steve. “Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait.” *World Affairs* (2003). Vol 166, Issue 2. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 110

<sup>47</sup> Chan, Steve. “Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait.” *World Affairs* (2003). Vol 166, Issue 2. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 119

<sup>48</sup> Chan, Steve. “Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait.” *World Affairs* (2003). Vol 166, Issue 2. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 113

<sup>49</sup> Chan, Steve. “Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait.” *World Affairs* (2003). Vol 166, Issue 2. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 114

<sup>50</sup> Chan, Steve. “Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait.” *World Affairs* (2003). Vol 166, Issue 2. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. Pg. 120



Chan also does not list the motivations of US deterrence to the PRC. Although the United States might have had several motivations for maintaining a presence in this region, one of these is containing PRC influence. Through acting as a stabilizing hegemon in the region and maintaining its relationship with the ROC, the United States succeeds in deterring PRC aggressions, and as a result, containing the CPC.

## Chapter Three

### Test: The US Containment of Communism

After World War II, the United States strived militarily, economically, and diplomatically to counter communist influence, specifically that of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The United States achieved this through creating a military presence in regions vulnerable to communist influence. The United States prevented the PRC from attacking the ROC; however, this tactic did not succeed in all cases, such as in Vietnam. Because of the increase of communism's influence during the Cold War and the Korean War, the United States utilized its relationship with the ROC to contain the spread of communism's growing influence.

What has been the extent of US influence in the Asia Pacific region? This explorative study addresses reason for US continued presence in the region after the end of War World II. Initially, the reason for the US presence in the region was due to the occupation of Japan; however, the reason changed after the outbreak of the Korean War when the spread of communism threatened the Asia Pacific. By acting as a hegemonic presence, the United States had a stabilizing effect on the region and was able to deter CPC influence; however, this effect diminished as a deterrent to the PRC since the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises, which resulted in the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Initially, the United States did not intend to drastically influence the Asia Pacific and focused on affairs with the Soviet Union since that was the primary threat of the time. For example, during the Chinese Civil War, the United States did not support the KMT against the CPC; likewise, after the KMT fled to the ROC, President Truman decided that the United States would not be involved in the conflict. In January 1950, Truman announced that "the United States Government will not provide military aid or advice to the PRC forces or the ROC. The United

States has no intention of utilizing its armed forces to interfere in present conflict in China.”<sup>51</sup>

The United States did not intend to defend the KMT from defeat by the CPC, and distanced itself from Chinese domestic affairs during the Chinese Civil War.

Truman’s stance on the PRC-ROC conflict changed later that year due to the outbreak of the Korean War and the desire to contain the spread of communism. In response to PRC military support of North Korea, the United States intervened in the Korean War on behalf of the ROC and South Korea by sending its Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait.

The outbreak of the Korean War resulted in communism not only becoming recognized by the United States as a threat to democracy, but the PRC becoming an US adversary. The Korean War facilitated the security relationship between the United States and the ROC, and initiated the US containment of communist influence in the Asia Pacific. Likewise, since the Korean War, the United States acted to contain the PRC’s influence in order to prevent the spread of communism.

The United States justified its involvement during the Korean War due to the “Domino Theory”, which claimed that if one country in a region became communist, then the other countries in the region would follow. Eisenhower described this theory when he claimed,

“Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Spanier, John W. *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (1959): 55.

<sup>52</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight D. Press Conference. April 7, 1954.

Although the United States was already occupying Japan after World War II, the Domino Theory further motivated the United States involvement in the region in order to contain the spread of communism. The Korean War would later influence US relations with other states in the region that were vulnerable to communist influence.

In addition to participation in the Korean War, the United States also exercised similar involvement during the Vietnam War. By deploying troops and supplies to support the South Vietnamese government, the United States participated in extended deterrence in order to contain communism. During the Vietnam War, the United States actively opposed the spread of communism and the Soviet supported North Vietnamese government. This opposition to communism in the Asia Pacific, such as in places like Vietnam and the Korean Peninsula, is shown when Truman addressed the outbreak of the Korean War and said,

“The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa (the ROC) by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area. Accordingly I have ordered the 7th Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa....The determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations.”<sup>53</sup>

Truman makes it clear that he considers the growth of communism to be a threat to the United States and its allies in the Asia Pacific. He addresses the issue once more after the start of the Korean War when he said,

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<sup>53</sup> Truman, Harry S. “Statement by President Truman on the Situation in Korea”. 27 June 1950.

“This attack has made it clear, beyond all doubt, that the international Communist movement is willing to use armed invasion to conquer independent nations. An act of aggression such as this creates a very real danger to the security of all free nations.”<sup>54</sup>

The Korean War and the Vietnam War demonstrate the US containment policy of communism not only towards the Soviet Union, but other states in the region as well. In regards to the PRC, the United States utilized its relationship with the ROC in order to contain the CPC’s influence.

Although the other members of the United Nations began recognizing the PRC in 1972, the United States continued to refuse to have formal relations with this communist state. In an attempt to contain communism, then United States obstinately continued to official relations with the ROC rather than the PRC. It was not until 1971 that President Nixon finally visited the PRC and set the precedent for the “Shanghai Communiqué” of 1972. This communiqué normalized relations between the United States and the PRC in order to reduce international tensions. Despite the normalization of Sino-American relations, the “Shanghai Communiqué” did not clarify the status of the nationalists and the ROC, and the United States continued official recognition of the ROC.

Through the “Shanghai Communiqué”, the PRC reiterated that it is the only legal Chinese government and the ROC is merely a rogue province. The United States acknowledged that “there is one China and the ROC is part of China”; however, the United States also wants the PRC-ROC issue to be settled peacefully.<sup>55</sup> As a result, even though the United States finally agreed to begin relations with the PRC, it refused to acknowledge its sovereignty over the ROC.

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<sup>54</sup> Truman, Harry S. “Truman Address on Korea”. 19 July, 1950.

<sup>55</sup> Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China. February 28, 1972.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger addresses the United States motives for the “Shanghai Communiqué” and claims that it not only is to prevent Soviet influence,<sup>56</sup> but also discourage forceful reunification between the ROC and the PRC.<sup>57</sup>

In 1979, the United States and the PRC finally formalized diplomatic relations through the “Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations”. As a result, the United States also agreed to end formal state relations with the ROC and to remove the US military presence from the island. Despite this development, the US official position regarding the ROC remained ambiguous; however, the ROC became an important ally in regards to US anti-communist ideology.<sup>58</sup>

Although the United States agreed to remove its military from the ROC, it also made another agreement with the ROC, the “Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979”, which is considered to be the primary security of the United States to the ROC. This act maintains peace in the Asia Pacific region by protecting the ROC from military threats, specifically those from the PRC. According to the TRA, “any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means is a threat to the peace and stability of the Western Pacific area and is of grave concern to the United States”.<sup>59</sup>

The TRA’s security protections to the ROC ensured that United States would maintain influence in the region. Likewise, the TRA shows US determination to continue protections of

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<sup>56</sup> The PRC and the Soviet Union had tensions during this time. As a result, the United States began relations with the PRC in order to encourage a decrease in Sino-Soviet cooperation. Although the CPC was a threat, the Soviet Union presented a bigger threat in regards to spreading communism

<sup>57</sup> Kissinger, Henry A. “China: Containment”. Washington Post. 13 June, 2005  
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/152/25775.html>

<sup>58</sup> Kuntić, Dario. "The Ominous Triangle: China-Taiwanthe United States Relationship." Croatian International Relations Review 21.72 (2015): 239-280. Political Science Complete. Web.

<sup>59</sup> “Taiwan Relations Act “(TRA) of 1979.

the ROC against PRC aggression, and also prevent the spread of communism to the ROC.

Kuntić describes the TRA as a method to contain communism when he claims,

“The ROC became a deflector shield against “red China” and communism in general. . . .the ROC remained deeply integrated in the US sphere of influence. . . .the US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act that would demonstrate US determination to continue military support to its informal ally (the ROC).”<sup>60</sup>

Pak Nung and Yue Wai further discuss the reasons for maintaining support for the ROC when they claim, “Since WWII, US national security policy has been consistent in implementing the containment policy.”<sup>61</sup> By increasing the US presence in the Asia Pacific, the United States achieved in containing the PRC’s influence.

The United States began further participating in extended deterrence through arms sales in 1982 with the United States and the PRC agreeing upon the “Joint Communiqué on Arms Sales to Taiwan between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China”. This communiqué was intended to end US arms sales with the ROC and stated that the United States “does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to the ROC, arms sales to the ROC will not exceed previous levels supplied, and it intends gradually to reduce its sale of arms to the ROC.”<sup>62</sup> However, the Reagan administration ensured that there was a loophole — no deadline of arms sales. The Reagan administration sent a presidential letter to the ROC that consisted of six points that outline US-ROC relations. Because of these “Six Assurances”

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<sup>60</sup>Kuntić, Dario. "The Ominous Triangle: China-Taiwanthe United States Relationship." *Croatian International Relations Review* 21.72 (2015): 239-280. Political Science Complete. Web. 19 Apr. 2016.

<sup>61</sup>Pak Nung, Wong, and Yue Wai Kay Ricky. "U.S. China Containment And Counter-Containment In Southeast Asia." *African & Asian Studies* 13.1/2 (2014): 33-58. Humanities International Complete. Web. 19 Apr. 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China. 17 August 1982.

(1982)<sup>63</sup> between the United States and the ROC, the United States avoided putting a time limit to arms sales with the ROC, and the United States has been able to provide arms to the ROC during the entirety of its separation from the PRC by primarily selling defensive weapons to the ROC rather than offensive ones.<sup>64</sup> By doing so, the United States simultaneously upheld the TRA, which emphasizes that weapons sales to the ROC should be defensive rather than offensive, while also insuring that the PRC does not attack the ROC and expand its influence.

The two communiqués between the United States and the PRC recognized the PRC as the legitimate Chinese government; however, the TRA and the “Six Assurances” are defense pacts that guarantee US security protections to the ROC. Defense pacts are essential parts of extended deterrence and can be described when Johnson writes,

“Defense pacts include an explicit extended general deterrence threat. Potential challengers are placed on notice: Under specified circumstances, if a member state is attacked, her ally will join the conflict to defend her, and the potential challenger should thus expect to fight the ally also in a multilateral conflict.”<sup>65</sup>

This quote describes the United States protections of the ROC during the Cold War and how it utilized this relationship to contain the growth of communism in the Asia Pacific during the post-World War II society through its deterrence of the PRC. By refusing to acknowledge the PRC’s government, the United States undermined PRC sovereignty in the region. Likewise, the United States also contained the growth of communism through extended deterrence of the

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<sup>63</sup> (1) The U.S. will not set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan; (2) The U.S. will not consult with the PRC concerning arms sales to Taiwan; (3) The U.S. will not act as mediator between China and Taiwan; (4) The U.S. will not revise the TRA; (5) The U.S. will not alter its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan; (6) The U.S. will not pressure Taiwan to enter into negotiations with China.

<sup>64</sup> Cole, Michael. "War in the Taiwan Strait: Would China Invade Taiwan?" *The National Interest*. N.p., 22 Aug. 2014. Web. <<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/war-the-taiwan-strait-would-china-invade-taiwan-11120>>.

<sup>65</sup>Johnson, J.C. ( 1 ), B.A. ( 2 ) Leeds, and A. ( 2 ) Wu. "Capability, Credibility, And Extended General Deterrence." *International Interactions* 41.2 (2015): 309-336. *Scopus*®. pg. 314



PRC. On one hand, the United States formally recognized the PRC and acknowledged that the ROC is not an independent state, while simultaneously guaranteeing security protections to the ROC and its intentions to defend it against forced reunification with the PRC. On the other hand, the United States actively protected the ROC from the PRC during the three Taiwan Strait Crises, which will be discussed in the next section of this thesis. The TRA states that the United States will continue arms sales and military cooperation with the ROC, which indicates that the United States desires to maintain its presence in the region. Likewise, this hegemonic presence also results in the containment of the PRC's influence, and by extension, the containment of communism.

The US hegemonic presence in Asia Pacific region resulted in the ability to deter the PRC from a ROC attack. As a result, according to Hegemonic Stability Theory, the US hegemonic presence during this time, the Cross Strait region remained without conflict during the time between the Second and Third Taiwan Strait Crises. The US presence deterred PRC aggression and the PRC instead focused on internal rather than external security; however, in the 1990s, the PRC became discontent with US hegemony, resulting in the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Although the United States initially occupied Japan after World War II, its presence in the region was extended due to the outbreak of the Korean War when communism threatened the region. As a result, the United States allied with the ROC in order to establish itself as a hegemonic state, and used this tool to deter the PRC and contain the CPC's influence.

## **The First Taiwan Strait Crisis: 1954-1955**

### **A. Situation**

The United States actively worked to contain communism in the Asia Pacific, and did so by using tools, such as its hegemonic presence to deter PRC aggression against the ROC. The three Taiwan Strait Crises are predominant examples of US extended deterrence of the PRC through its protections of the ROC. The First Taiwan Strait Crisis is the initial occurrence of the US policy of extended deterrence in the Cross Strait region.

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis started even as the Korean War began to subside. The CPC intended to reunite the PRC and the ROC, while the KMT wanted to regain control of Mainland China. This situation resulted in tensions over the strategically located Quemoy<sup>66</sup> and Matsu islands in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>67</sup> Both islands are approximately 100 miles west of Taiwan.

After Chiang Kai-shek and the nationalists fled from mainland China to Taiwan, Chiang established troops on these two islands. Once the United States removed the Seventh Fleet from the Taiwan Strait in 1954, the KMT attempted to retake Mainland China by launching attacks from these strategic locations. In response, the PRC began shelling these islands.<sup>68</sup>

### **B. US Response**

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<sup>66</sup> The Chinese name for this island is Jinmen. It is located two miles from the PRC city of Xiamen in the Fujian Province

<sup>67</sup> The Chinese name for this island is Mazu. It is located ten miles from the PRC city of Fuzhou in the Fujian Province

<sup>68</sup> "MILESTONES: 1953-1960". US Department of State, Office of the Historian. Web. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

After the KMT fled to Taiwan, the United States did not attempt to protect it; however, this situation soon changed due to the Korean War in 1950. The Korean War was the first militarized Cold War conflict and began the containment of communism in the Asia Pacific region. As a result of the war outbreak, the Truman administration sent the Seventh Fleet<sup>69</sup> to the Taiwan Strait to “preserve international peace and security.” Truman also stated,

“In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa (Taiwan) by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area. Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa.”<sup>70</sup>

This shift did not guarantee that the United States would use military force to defend the ROC; however, it demonstrated US aggressive intentions and commitment of the United States in defending the ROC from the PRC, and by extension, defending the Asia Pacific from the spread of communism. As a result, the PRC delayed its attack on the ROC in favor of supporting North Korea.

As the Korean War began to subside and after the Eisenhower administration began in 1953, the United States ended its naval blockade that protected the ROC. In 1954, the PRC began attacks against Matsu and Quemoy in response to ROC aggression, and the United States responded by forming the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, which was created to unify the region against communist influence, and began treaty talks with the ROC.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>US Navy fleet that is part of the US Pacific Fleet and anchored in Yokosuka, Japan. The fleet participated in all major operations of the Korean War.

<sup>70</sup> “Statement by President Truman on the Situation in Korea.” June 27, 1950. Web. [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/programs/taiwan/timeline/sums/timeline\\_docs/CSI\\_19500627.htm](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/programs/taiwan/timeline/sums/timeline_docs/CSI_19500627.htm)

<sup>71</sup> “MILESTONES: 1953-1960”. US Department of State, Office of the Historian. Web. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

During the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, the United States did not re-deploy US fleets to the Taiwan Strait. Instead, the United States signed the “Mutual Defense Treaty.” This treaty is a bilateral security agreement that lasted until 1978<sup>72</sup> and guaranteed US-ROC cooperation against communist powers in order to reduce communist influence in the Asia Pacific Region. Likewise, the United States also signed the “Formosa Resolution”<sup>73</sup> in 1955, which guaranteed US defense of the ROC if a PRC attack threatened it.<sup>74</sup> This legislation did not include the islands of Quemoy and Matsu that the PRC had already begun attacking; however, as a result of this resolution, the PRC stopped bombing the islands in 1955.<sup>75</sup> Although the United States already withdrew the Seventh Fleet from the Taiwan Strait, it still intervened diplomatically in order to deter PRC attacks and insure that the PRC did not defeat the ROC.

By agreeing to these initial protections of the ROC, the United States began its policy of extended-deterrence in the Cross Strait region. As a result, even before the United States formally recognized the PRC, it began containing CPC influence in the Asia Pacific. Without US deterrence, the PRC could have defeated the ROC and expanded its influence at an early stage. If this occurred, the United States might not have established an extensive presence in the Asia Pacific, and the PRC could have been the regional hegemon.

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<sup>72</sup> It ended when the United States formally recognized the CPC as the rightful Chinese government rather than the KMT

<sup>73</sup> The name of this treaty was derived from the former name of the island of Taiwan, which was Formosa. This was the name given to the island in 1542 by Portuguese sailors. This name was used by English speakers until the early 20th century.

<sup>74</sup> “MILESTONES: 1953-1960”. US Department of State, Office of the Historian. Web. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

<sup>75</sup> “MILESTONES: 1953-1960”. US Department of State, Office of the Historian. Web. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

## **The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis: 1958**

### **A. Situation**

In 1956 and 1957, the PRC and the ROC began to coexist in a non-violent environment; however, this situation changed in 1958 due to two factors. First, the PRC considered the increase in US-ROC relations to be a threat to PRC national security.<sup>76</sup> Second, the PRC chairman, Mao Tse-tung, launched the “Great Leap Forward”.<sup>77</sup> The Great Leap Forward was an initiative to fasten the PRC’s economic growth by transforming society and liberating the island of Taiwan from the ROC.<sup>78</sup>

Due to the Great Leap Forward initiative, the PRC once more began shelling the islands of Matsu and Quemoy in order to “liberate” the Chinese people on Taiwan from ROC rule. The attack began with the PRC shelling Quemoy, which resulted in ROC retaliation by returning fire.

### **B. US Response**

The United States took advantage of the increased tensions between the ROC and the PRC in order to once more engage in extended deterrence of the PRC and contain communist influence. While the United States refused to issue a public statement of intent to defend Quemoy from the PRC, it did respond to these attacks by upholding its obligations in the “1954 Mutual Defense Treaty”. This treaty did not guarantee military support if Quemoy was attacked,

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<sup>76</sup> The US did not force the ROC to demilitarize Quemoy and Matsu and the US provided weapons to the ROC

<sup>77</sup> This was an economic and social campaign by the CPC from 1958 to 1961. It was meant to use industrialization and collectivization to rapidly transform the PRC into a socialist society. This campaign is considered to have failed because it is considered to have caused the Great Chinese Famine, a widespread famine, which resulted in the deaths of approximately 20 to 43 million Chinese.

<sup>78</sup> “MILESTONES: 1953-1960”. US Department of State, Office of the Historian. Web. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

and the US government later stated that “the basic policy of the American government was that it would help defend the Offshore Islands (Quemoy and Matsu) only if necessary for the defense of Taiwan.”<sup>79</sup> The Eisenhower administration responded by reinforcing naval vessels to protect ROC supply lines and deter attacks against the island of Taiwan; however, the United States did not actively participate in attacks against the PRC. The US government authorized the vessels to “prepare to assist in the event of a major assault against Quemoy.”<sup>80</sup> Although US policy continued to work under a system of communist containment, the United States simply used its policies and the threat of its superior military to deter the PRC from attacking the ROC. As a result, the United States avoided conflict, while simultaneously containing communism in the region.

The US presence and decision to defend the ROC indicated its desire to deter the PRC from launching a large attack against the ROC; however, tensions continued and the PRC announced “their claim to a twelve-mile limit, which would put all of the Offshore Islands within their territorial waters.”<sup>81</sup> Likewise, the Soviet government also warned the United States that an attack against the PRC would be considered an attack against the Soviet Union and could result in a third World War.<sup>82</sup> The threat of the Soviet Union likely had an adverse effect on the United States because, despite these warnings, the United States continued with its deterrence of the

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<sup>79</sup> Halperin, M.H., “The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History (U)”. Memorandum, RM-4900-ISA Part 1 (Abridged). Department of Defense. December, 1966. Pg. 5.

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> Halperin, M.H., “The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History (U)”. Memorandum, RM-4900-ISA Part 1 (Abridged). Department of Defense. December, 1966. Pg. 7.

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> Halperin, M.H., “The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History (U)”. Memorandum, RM-4900-ISA Part 1 (Abridged). Department of Defense. December, 1966. Pg. 10.

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> Halperin, M.H., “The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History (U)”. Memorandum, RM-4900-ISA Part 1 (Abridged). Department of Defense. December, 1966. Pg. 13.

[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_memoranda/2006/RM4900.pdf)

PRC through protections of supply lines to Quemoy and Matsu. Although the Soviet Union disapproved of US actions, the United States continued defending the ROC. These actions indicated the US desire to contain communism in the Asia Pacific.

Due to the resulting Cross Strait stalemate and desire not to combat the United States, the PRC and ROC reached a ceasefire within a few months. The US military presence and support of the ROC in the Second Taiwan Missile Crisis deterred the PRC and resulted in an end to the conflict. The United States actively deterred the PRC from attacking the ROC, which contained PRC influence over the Taiwan Strait. Without US deterrence, this conflict could have likely escalated and led to fighting on either Mainland China or Taiwan, and resulted in a KMT or CPC defeat. Likewise, this crisis further established the US status of a stabilizing hegemonic state in the region.

## **The Third Taiwan Strait Crisis: 1995-1996**

### **A. Cornell and Increased Tensions**

After the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, United States began its formal recognition of the PRC, and continued security protections to the ROC. The gap in-between the first two Taiwan Strait Crises and the third crisis indicate the success in the US extended deterrence of the PRC through its security relationship with the ROC. After the first two Taiwan Strait Crises, the United States utilized its influence as the hegemonic state in the region to maintain a stable environment. By providing security protections to the ROC, specifically those highlighted in the TRA and the “Six Assurances”, the United States achieved in dissuading the PRC from attacking the ROC and prioritizing internal affairs rather than external ones. By the 1990s, the PRC began to be discontent with US hegemony, and portrayed this through its aggressive actions against the ROC.

It was not until Cross Strait tensions increased in 1995 that the United States used its military to demonstrate its commitment to these agreements. The US reaction to the increased tensions demonstrate the US containment policy of CPC influence. These tensions resulted in the 1995-1996 Taiwan Missile Crisis and originated from an invitation that Cornell University extended to Lee Teng-hui in 1995. Lee was the president of the ROC and the KMT Chairman from 1988 until 2000, and is referred to as the “Father of the ROC Democracy”.

Although the US State Department initially refused to grant Lee a visa, the US House of Representatives voted in unanimous favor of granting President Lee a visa to the United States, and the Senate followed with an almost unanimous vote of its own (there was one dissenter).



The Clinton administration claimed that a visit by Lee “would have serious consequences” and that “a visit by a person his title, whether or not the visit were termed private, would be seen by the PRC as removing an essential element of unofficially in the US-ROC relationship.”<sup>83</sup> Although the Clinton administration repeatedly stressed that it had not changed its stance on the “One China” policy and despite the PRC government’s warnings, President Clinton finally reversed the ban preventing high ranking ROC officials from visiting the United States and granted Lee a visa.<sup>84</sup>

The PRC government promptly announced its response to the visa by claiming, “If the United States clings to its erroneous decision it will inevitably cause severe damage to Sino-American relations. For that it should bear all the consequences.”<sup>85</sup> After the United States refused to revoke the visa, the PRC government claimed that the United States violated the “One China” principle through acknowledgement of the ROC leader.

By giving the ROC president an US visa, both Sino-American and Cross Strait relations were strained. Sino-American diplomatic visits were cancelled and the PRC recalled its US ambassador. In regards to the ROC, the PRC suspended Cross Strait relations and began military exercises in the Taiwan Strait to display its disapproval.<sup>86</sup> In the 40 years since the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, there had been no conflict between the PRC and the ROC, and the PRC did not force reunification with the ROC, which indicates the US success of acting as the regional hegemon and stabilizing the area through deterring the PRC. By the 1990s, Cross Strait aggressions grew once more despite the US hegemonic presence, which indicates the PRC

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<sup>83</sup> “Clinton Rebuffs Senate on Letting Taiwan President Visit US.,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1995. Web.

<sup>84</sup> Sheng, Lijun, *China’s Dilemma: The Taiwan Issue*. New York, NY: LB. Taurus & Co. (2001): 24.

<sup>85</sup> “China Demand US Cancel Visit by Taiwan’s President.” *New York Times*. May 24, 1995. Web.

<sup>86</sup> Bush, Richard C. *Untying the Knot: Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institute Press (2005): 1. Web.

beginning to focus on external affairs rather than internal ones, and challenging the US presence in the region.

## **B. The PLA Response**

The PRC began missiles tests off of the coast of the ROC to display its disapproval of the ROC's and US actions, but the question remains, why was the PRC's reaction so extreme? I propose that the US presence in the Asia Pacific decreased in deterrence effect during the time since the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, which resulted in an increase in PRC aggressions.

In 1995, the PLA began firing ballistic missiles from the Fujian province<sup>87</sup> directed to landing in the sea within 100 miles of Taipei, demonstrating an accuracy that was not previously experienced with the PRC missiles.<sup>88</sup> For the ROC, these missiles dramatically increased the threat of the cost of war against the PRC.

Soon after the initial missiles tests, the PLA conducted another military exercise, which involved missiles tests and deployment of the PLA Navy and Air Force.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, the PLA conducted additional tests at the end of 1995, including amphibious assault exercises on Dongshan Island, which is south of Taiwan.<sup>90</sup> The PLA conducted these tests to show that it was prepared to attack the ROC if it moved towards independence.

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<sup>87</sup> The Fujian Province is on the southeast coast of China and is the province closest in proximity to Taiwan

<sup>88</sup>These ballistic missiles were Dong-Feng 15 (DF-15 or CSS-6) which were developed by the PRC. They are used by the PLA Second Artillery Corps

<sup>89</sup>These include JIANGHU-class destroyers, live artillery shells, navy fighter planes, and a variety of missiles, such as ship-to-ship, ship-to-air, and air-to-air missiles

<sup>90</sup>Sheng, Lijun. *China's Dilemma: The Taiwan Issue*. New York, NY: I.B. Tauris & Co. (2001): 28.

The crisis elevated even more in 1996 as the ROC elections approached, which were the first democratic elections on the island. The increase in tensions was not only due to the threat of ROC elections, but the opportunity to challenge the US hegemonic presence as well. In response to these tests, President Lee claimed, “it (the PRC) is afraid of the ROC’s first democratic presidential elections and the impact on the Chinese people.”<sup>91</sup> On March 8, 1996, the PLA launched three missiles — two of which hit waters close to the ROC’s largest port, Kaohsiung, and one hit waters close to a Keelung, a port near Taipei.

In addition to these missiles tests, the PLA continued maritime and amphibious assault exercises.<sup>92</sup> Although the 1995 exercises did not stop the ROC from acting as an independent state, the PLA conducted these in an attempt to deter the 1996 elections.

The reason that the PRC responded strongly to these events is explained by Kim when he claims, “Dissatisfied great powers do not like to accept the status quo and want to challenge the rules of the game mainly set up by the dominant power whenever they have enough power to challenge.”<sup>93</sup> Because the PRC made the decision to challenge the United States, the deterrent effect of the US hegemon decreased, which resulted in destabilization of the region once more. Although the United States did not become less of a credible threat, the PRC’s extreme reaction could be attributed to its dissatisfaction with the dominant power, the United States, and the perception of an opportunity to challenge the hegemon.

### **C. The US Response**

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<sup>91</sup>“China to Hold Missile Test off Taiwan,” *CNN World News*, 5 March 1996  
[http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9603/china\\_taiwan/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9603/china_taiwan/index.html). Web.

<sup>92</sup> These exercises involved 300 planes, five guided missile destroyers, four submarines, fighter planes, and approximately 150,000 troops

Copper, John F. *Playing with Fire*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International (2006): 4.

<sup>93</sup>Kim, Woosang. "The Rise Of China And Power Transition Scenarios In East Asia." *Korean Journal Of Defense Analysis* 27.3 (2015): 313-329. Political Science Complete. Web. 28 Mar. 2016.

The militaristic reaction of the United States after the end of the Cold War indicates the US continued desire to contain PRC influence, and this desire evolved to maintain the US hegemonic presence. As previously stated, the regional hegemons go to great lengths to stop other great powers from expanding their influence. Likewise, the United States used its relationship with the ROC to deter the expansion of PRC power and contain its growth.

In 1996, the Clinton administration reacted in order to counteract the PRC threats to the ROC and attempts to deter US support of the ROC by ordering US naval vessels into the Taiwan Strait. The United States did not tolerate PRC aggression towards the ROC, and the US Defense Secretary William J. Perry indicted this when he stated, “Beijing should know, and this (the US fleet) will remind them, that while they are a great military power, the strongest, the premier military power in the Western Pacific is the United States.”<sup>94</sup> Although the PRC attempted to challenge US involvement in this region through a display of force, the United States countered this through an even stronger display. Although the Cold War with the Soviet Union had ended, the United States still acted to contain the influence of the PRC.

In March 1996, the Clinton administration ordered two aircraft carriers and strike groups into the Taiwan Strait in response to PRC aggression. The U.S.S. *Independence*<sup>95</sup> and its strike group were quickly redirected to the ROC. In addition to the supercarrier,<sup>96</sup> the strike team

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<sup>94</sup>Pine, Art. “U.S. Faces Choice on Sending Ships to Taiwan Strait; Military: Washington would like to see tensions abate. But continued pressure by China could force it to act.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1996.  
<http://www.proquest.com/>

<sup>95</sup>The *U.S.S. Independence* is a Forrestal-class aircraft carrier (the first type of supercarrier)

<sup>96</sup> The largest type of aircraft carrier

consisted of a guided missile cruiser,<sup>97</sup> two destroyers,<sup>98</sup> two submarines, one replenishment ship, and over 70 aircraft.<sup>99</sup>

The Clinton administration also redirected the U.S.S. Nimitz from the Mediterranean and led another strike group of five naval vessels into the Taiwan Strait.<sup>100</sup> This strike group consisted of a guided missile cruiser, two destroyers, one submarine, two replenishment ships, and over 100 aircraft. This was the largest fleet assembled in the Asia Pacific region in decades.<sup>101</sup>

The Third Taiwan Strait Crisis shows that the US deterrent to the PRC diminished due to PRC discontent with the US hegemonic presence, and a desire to test the extent that the United States would protect the ROC. The PRC wants to reunite with the ROC, and by default, opposes ROC elections and potential ROC declarations of independence. Without US interference, the PRC would have carried out attacks against the ROC, disrupted the elections, and possibly forced reunification upon the island. By assembling the largest fleet in the Asia Pacific region and deterring PRC aggression, the United States achieved in pursuing its own objectives in the region, such as maintaining influence, supporting the ROC democracy, continuing arms sales, and protecting Asian Pacific allies.

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<sup>97</sup> A guided missile cruiser is a large combat vessel designed to provide air defense to battle groups and amphibious forces

<sup>98</sup> A destroyer is a fast, long-endurance warship that escorts larger vessels in a fleet and defends them against smaller, short-range attacks

<sup>99</sup>Copper, John F. *Playing with Fire*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International (2006)

<sup>100</sup> The *U.S.S. Nimitz* is a supercarrier of the US Navy and one of the largest warships in the world

<sup>101</sup>Copper, John F. *Playing with Fire*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International (2006)

## **Chapter Four**

### **Future Hypothesis: US and PRC Goals in the Asia Pacific**

I assess that the PRC likely desires to become the Asia Pacific hegemon in the future, but cannot due so while the United States retains its influence over the region. This section will discuss how the United States maintains a presence in the Asia Pacific, deters current PRC influence, and the progress of PLA development. Because this section concerns future scenarios, these theories cannot be tested, but are still important to take into account for future research because it concerns stability in the Asia Pacific.

#### **ROC Democracy: US Support despite PRC Disapproval**

##### **A. The ROC's Democratic System and the PRC**

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has continued to remain influential in the Asia Pacific region, specifically in regards to the Cross Strait situation. How does the United States justify continuing the security relationship with the ROC? One of the primary reasons that validate the US presence in the region is the support of the ROC democratic system. By maintaining support for the ROC democracy, the United States rationalizes its continued presence in the region. Likewise, as the ROC's democratic system developed, so have more

anti-reunification sentiment and the desire of the populace to maintain a government independent of the PRC.

The ROC's KMT and DPP have different platforms on the Cross Strait issue. The KMT supports the "One China" policy of 1992, and believes that China is one country with two political systems — the respective governments of the PRC and the ROC. As a result, the KMT supports maintaining a relationship with the PRC in order to uphold the idea that the ROC is an inalienable part of China. In opposition to this ideology, the DPP advocates for ROC independence and wants it to become a state independent of the PRC.

Bush's political analysis of the ROC's two party system and the effect on the ROC's security addresses the DPP-KMT rivalry, specifically how politics in the PRC and the ROC aggravated tensions in the Taiwan Strait. According to Bush, the primary concern of the PRC is that the ROC will move away from unification and towards independence, while the ROC fears that the PRC will constrain it and force it to conform to the PRC's wishes. As a result, both sides reacted in order to protect their individual interests. The PRC began building up its military capabilities in order to dissuade ROC independence, and the ROC fought to expand its international space by pushing to join international organizations.

Blanchard and Vranken address Cross Strait tensions in regard to domestic political variables, which indicate that tensions increased from 2000 to 2008 while a pro-separation DPP president was in office;<sup>102</sup> however, in 2008, the ROC populace elected the previous KMT president, Ma Ying-jiu,<sup>103</sup> for president. During the Ma administration, diplomatic relations

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<sup>102</sup>Chen Shui-bian was the DPP president from 2000 to 2008, and the second president elected under the ROC democratic system

<sup>103</sup> Ma Ying-jiu was the Taiwanese KMT president from 2008 until 2016

between the ROC and the PRC improved due to increased communications and cooperation.<sup>104</sup> For example, in November 2015, Ma Ying-jiu and the PRC leader Xi Jin-ping met, which was the first encounter between high ranking PRC and ROC officials since the Chinese Civil War. Despite the increased political dialogue between the two regions, the PLA continues to develop and deploy assets opposite of the ROC in order to deter its independence. Bush points out that although the PRC has not increased the number of short-range ballistic missiles, the PLA still increases cruise missiles. Likewise, the ballistic missiles are being developed to cause more damage to the ROC, which Bush considers to be more important than the quantity of missiles developed.<sup>105</sup>

### **B. US Support: Deterrence through ROC Democratic Support**

Despite the fluctuations in the relations between the PRC and the ROC, the United States continues to maintain its support for the ROC democratic system; however, it does so within the bounds of the “One China” policy. Why would the United States risk this support of a small island if it upsets the PRC and results in PLA actions? I assess this results from the desire to continue the US extended-deterrence policy towards the PRC. By supporting the ROC and its power transitions, the United States continues to insure that the PRC does not expand its power, that the ROC’s democratic system remains, and that the United States maintains its influential presence in the region.

Although one of primary reasons that the United States continues support for the ROC is because of desire to preserve the ROC democracy, the United States could also use the

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<sup>104</sup> Blanchard, Jean-Marc F., and Dennis Van Vranken. Hickey. *New Thinking about the Taiwan Issue: Theoretical Insights into Its Origins, Dynamics, and Prospects*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012. Print.

<sup>105</sup>Bush, Richard C. *Untying the Knot: Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institute Press (2005): 1. Web.



preservation of the ROC democracy to prevent the PRC from expanding its influence, and by extension, maintaining the US presence in the region. By emphasizing its desire to protect the ROC democracy, the United States appears to have an increased interest and stake in the Asia Pacific. As a result, the United States can justify its Asia Pacific presence and continued recognition of the TRA.

In addition to this, another reason for the United States maintaining its relationship with the ROC is due to its symbolic value. By supporting the ROC's existence, the United States demonstrates its continued ability to thwart PRC's actions. As a result, the United States shows that it still has an influential presence in the Asia Pacific and can manipulate the PRC on an issue of historical, political and cultural importance, and geographic proximity.

The United States utilized the development of the ROC democratic system and applied it to its extended-deterrence of the PRC, a strategy described by Chan when he states, "People, and by extension states, act strategically. They adjust their behavior given their understanding of others' motives and in anticipation of others' reactions to their behavior."<sup>106</sup> Likewise, the United States appropriately adjusted its reasons for continuing support to the ROC, such as maintaining the status quo — the ROC's democracy.

The reason that the United States prioritized maintaining an alliance with the ROC is likely due to asymmetric stakes. Because states directly involved in the region, such as the PRC, tend to have a higher stake in the dispute, they will be more passionate than extended actors, such as the United States, about the dispute. As a result, the PRC could think that its goals in

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<sup>106</sup>Chan, Steve. "Prognosticating About Extended Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *World Affairs* 168.1 (2005): 13-25. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 13

relation to the ROC could be more important than US goals. Chan portrays this idea when he claims,

“The PRC has an easier, prima facie case to show that it has an intrinsic stake in the ROC’s status. In contrast, the United States has to try harder to demonstrate that it feels equally strongly about the ROC and that its professed stake in this island’s fate is not extrinsic to, or derivative of, other, more important goals. There is a difference between fighting for one’s homeland (or professed homeland) and fighting for an ally or protégé.”<sup>107</sup>

There is an indisputable need to have an objective for acting as an extended-deterrent. I assess that the United States emphasizes the importance of the support of the ROC’s democratic system as a reason for maintaining support to the ROC. Although the United States undeniably supports the ROC democratic system, which was portrayed through Congress’ support for the invitation to Cornell, this support is also used to maintain a presence in the region. Because the ROC’s democratic system is now part of the Asia Pacific status quo, the United States justifies its actions through its desire to maintain this status quo.

### **PLA Development: A Response to US Involvement**

I argue that the United States continues to engage in extended-deterrence of the PRC through arms sales, which assist the ROC in maintaining an armed force that will not be easily compelled by a far superior PLA. Likewise, the United States utilizes arms sales to maintain a military relationship with the ROC and continues to deter the PRC from forcing reunification upon the ROC.

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<sup>107</sup> Chan, Steve. "Prognosticating About Extended Deterrence In The Taiwan Strait." *World Affairs* 168.1 (2005): 13-25. *Political Science Complete*. Web. Pg. 16

On one hand, arms sales deter Cross Strait reunification; however, on the other hand, arms sales also encourage the PRC's increased development of the PLA. Shambaugh claims that the reason for the development of the PLA and its military technologies results from the PRC preparing for potential future conflict with the ROC and the United States over Taiwan sovereignty.<sup>108</sup> By modernizing its weapons systems and military, the PRC prepares to combat the United States if necessary and also dissuades the ROC from attempting to obtain sovereignty.

Due to US extended deterrence, the PRC strategically invested into PLA development in case conflict with the United States and Taiwan proves to be inevitable. Blasko describes this development when he says that the PLA has focused on technological development and long-term modernization programs, such as missile development.<sup>109</sup> This focus on military equipment and weapons displays the PLA's intent on reunification.<sup>110</sup>

In addition to military development, the PRC's "2005 Anti-Secession Law" states that the PRC would use force against the ROC if it declared independence from the PRC.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, the Office of the Secretary of Defense's "Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2007" details the PRC's strategy in regards to the PLA in regards to potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>112</sup> As can be indicated from this report, the PRC considers US protection of the ROC to be a potential threat to the PRC. Likewise, I assess that PLA growth discourages the United States from abandoning the ROC, rather than having the contrary effect.

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<sup>108</sup> *Modernizing China's Military Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (2003): 329-35. Web.

<sup>109</sup> Blasko, Dennis. *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century*, New York, NY: Routledge (2006): 2.

<sup>110</sup> Kane, Thomas. *Chinese Grand Strategy and Maritime Power*, Portland, OR: Frank Cass (2002): 70.

<sup>111</sup> Anti-Succession Law Adopted by National People's Congress, People's Republic of China, 14 March 2005.

<sup>112</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China (2007): 31

The United States maintains its relationship with the ROC despite the threat and growth of the PLA in order to maintain the status quo in the Asia Pacific.

The United States continues arms sales to the ROC and has increased sales in recent years, a situation that could be a result of the PRC's vigorous PLA development. Likewise, the United States ignores demands by the PRC to end arms sales. For example, in 2011 and 2015, the PRC threatened sanctions against the United States due to an increase in arms sales to the ROC; however, the United States went through with the sales. Likewise, on December 16, 2015, the Obama administration announced a deal to sell \$1.83 billion worth of arms to the ROC armed forces.<sup>113</sup> In response, the PRC's foreign ministry has shown its disapproval for these sales and warned the United States that it will hurt Sino-American relations. Despite these warnings from the PRC, the United States once more refused to end arms sales to the ROC.

The ROC is not the only territorial issue that the United States uses to deter the PRC. In recent years, the PRC has constructed artificial islands that are in the proximity of the Spratly islands. The Spratly islands have been the subject of territorial dispute between the PRC, Brunei, the Philippines, the ROC, and Vietnam.<sup>114</sup> In response to the development of these artificial structures, in 2015, the US Navy conducted a navigation operation within 6-7 nautical miles of these structures.<sup>115</sup> The United States does not support the PRC's land reclamation in the South China Sea and still strives to contain PRC growth. The evolution of the ROC's government into

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<sup>113</sup> This deal would include the sale of two decommissioned US Navy frigates, anti-tank missiles, Assault Amphibious Vehicles, and FIM-92 Stinger surface-to-air missiles

<sup>114</sup> Group of disputed islands in the South China Sea that lies off of the coasts of the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam. These islands are uninhabited, but desired by these countries due to their strategic location to shipping lanes, fishing grounds, and natural resources (such as oil and natural gas reserves).

<sup>115</sup> The Spratly islands are in the South China seas and would provide the owner with access to increased hydrocarbons, commercial fishing, and maritime shipping routes.

a democracy exacerbated Cross Strait tensions, and motivates the continuance of the US-ROC relationship.

The United States continues to participate in extended deterrence of the PRC through arms sales to the ROC, which, in addition to supporting the ROC democratic system, assists the United States in maintaining its influential presence in the region. By continuing arms sales to the ROC, the United States ensures that PLA capabilities cannot compel the ROC to negotiate about reunification.

The PRC has incentives to attack the ROC, such as expanding its influence and reinforcing CPC legitimacy over the Chinese region; however, the United States presence in the region dissuades this reunification from occurring. A conflict against the superior US military would likely harm the PRC more than reunification with the ROC would benefit it. As a result, the PLA's development indicates the PRC's acknowledgement of this threat, while simultaneously encouraging the United States to maintain its protections of the ROC.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion**

The idea for this thesis originated from the notion that the ROC had strategic value to the United States. This idea resulted in the formulation of the question of “Why would the United States maintain its relationship with the ROC despite the threat of the PRC?” The initial hypothesis for this question was that the United States continued its relationship with the ROC in order to contain communist influence in the region. This hypothesis was tested through the analysis of existing literature and theoretical models, which support this hypothesis.

During the period between the Second and Third Taiwan Strait Crises, the United States acted as the hegemonic state in the Asia Pacific region. As a result, the United States utilized its influence to create a stable Cross Strait region and deter PRC aggression. Since the Chinese Civil War, whenever the PRC threatened the ROC’s sovereignty through force, the United States

stepped in to intervene on the ROC's behalf. The most prominent examples of US deterrence to the PRC are the three Taiwan Strait Crises, in which United States directly prevented the PRC from attacking the ROC and forcing reunification between the two regions. During the 1990s, the PRC became discontent with the US influence in the region and challenged that authority, resulting in the third crisis.

Since the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis, the PRC has continued to challenge US authority in the region and likely has a desire to become the Asia Pacific hegemony. Despite this, according to Hegemonic Stability Theory, the PRC will be unable to become the regional hegemon as long as the US has a strong presence in the region. As a result, the PRC discourages US involvement with Taiwan. If the PRC did succeed in becoming the regional hegemon, it would likely attempt to expel US influence from this region so as to not be threatened by the US military presence, while simultaneously expanding its own influence.

In order to contain the threat of a PRC hegemon, the United States continues to deter the PRC through its security relationship with the ROC, which insures that the United States remains an influential presence in the region. Because the United States has superior military capabilities, the PRC hesitates in taking actions against the ROC due to fear of US retaliation.

The United States utilizes the relationship with Taiwan to emphasize its value of the Cross Strait situation. If a conflict has asymmetric stakes for the participants, the actor with the higher stake could believe that its goals are more important. There is a need to have an objective for participating in Cross Strait tensions and serving as an extended-deterrent. As a result, the United States claims its support of the ROC democracy as reasoning for maintaining this relationship with Taiwan.

The United States also continues to partake in extended deterrence through arms sales to the ROC. Despite threats of the PRC and claims that US-ROC arms sales disrupt Sino-American relations, the United States continues these sales which decrease the threat of the PRC to the ROC. Likewise, the United States legitimizes its actions through its agreements with the ROC, such as the TRA and the “Six Assurances”.

What are the implications for the future of the PRC-ROC relationship for US national security? Because the ROC recently elected a pro-independence president, one should consider the possibility of the ROC declaring its independence from the PRC. Likewise, one must take into account that the PRC could attack the ROC unprovoked to force unification on the between the regions. If a Cross Strait conflict occurred, which side would the United States support? Would the United States uphold the TRA promise of protections to the ROC if the PRC attacked before the ROC declared independence? If the ROC did declare independence and the PRC retaliated, would the United States standby and allow for the expansion of PRC influence? I recommend that the United States continue its ambiguous policies towards the situation by not directly supporting ROC independence. The United States benefits as much from the current status quo as it would from an independent ROC. As a result, the United States should not support a ROC declaration of formal independence, which would increase tensions and potentially harm Sino-American relations.

If a Cross Strait conflict erupted, US security interests would be impacted due to the importance of remaining a presence in the region. This thesis established that the United States values its relationship with the ROC and uses this relationship to contain the PRC. The only question left to answer is: To what extent will the United States maintain this relationship in the future?



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