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**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE,
A NATO MODEL FOR TAIWAN**

by

Jason Gambill and Christopher S. Pinkerton

December 2021

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Douglas A. Borer
Thomas Jamison

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RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE, A NATO MODEL FOR TAIWAN

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS
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from the

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ABSTRACT

Nowhere in the world exemplifies Great Power Competition as strongly as simmering conflict over Taiwan. Spanning over seven decades, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have sparred over the status of the island. Despite the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) protests, over the last three presidential administrations, the U.S. has strengthened its support for Taiwan's vibrant democracy. In addition to the U.S., the European Union and several countries in the Asia-Pacific region also strongly support an autonomous Taiwan. In response to what the CCP sees as foreign meddling in Chinese domestic affairs, the PRC has increased its hostilities against Taiwan while also attempting to reduce international support for the island's democracy.

How can Taiwan maintain its autonomy despite the ever-increasing pressure from the much stronger PRC? Through analysis of Arreguin-Toft's "How the Weak Wins Wars," Fiala's "Resistance Operating Concept," NATO's "Comprehensive Defense Handbook," and Taiwan's recent efforts to create an all-out defense, this thesis offers findings and recommendations based on employing irregular warfare to increase the population's resiliency and deter or repel a PRC invasion.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADIZ	Air Defense Identification Zone
AOR	Area of Responsibility
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
C2	Command and Control
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDH	Comprehensive Defense Handbook
CIV-MIL	Civilian-Military
CW	Cyber Warfare
DOD	Department of Defense
DPP	Democratic People's Party
DRMA	Defense Reserve Mobilization Agency
ECFA	Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement
EW	Electronic Warfare
FMSOF	Force Multiplier Special Operations Forces
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GMD	Guomintang Party
GPC	Great Power Competition
HA-DR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
INDOPACOM	India Pacific Command
ISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IW	Information Warfare

IW	Irregular Warfare
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
MANPADS	Man Portable Air Defense Systems
MRBM	Medium Range Ballistic Missiles
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDR	National Defense Report
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSP	New Southbound Policy
ODC	Overall Defense Concept
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLASSF	People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Resistance Operating Concept
SRBM	Short Range Ballistic Missiles
TNSS	Taiwan National Security Survey
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialists Republics
USSOF	United States Special Operations Forces
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
WHO	World Health Organization
WWII	World War II

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nowhere in the world exemplifies Great Power Competition as strongly as the simmering conflict over Taiwan. Spanning over seven decades, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have sparred over the status of the island. Despite the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) protests, over the last three Presidential administrations, the U.S. has strengthened its support for Taiwan's vibrant democracy. In addition to the U.S., the European Union and several countries in the Asia-Pacific region also strongly support an autonomous Taiwan. In response to what the CCP sees as foreign meddling in Chinese domestic affairs, the PRC has increased its hostilities against Taiwan while also attempting to reduce international support for the island's democracy. The PRC's aggression has fallen short of direct military attack but is instead a multi-layered approach below the threshold of violence intended to force Taiwan's capitulation or at least its obedience to the Chinese Communists Party's (CCP) control.

When confronted by a vastly larger force capable of projecting power across all domains of national power, Taiwan must seek all available options to ensure the survival its citizens and autonomy. External sources of support and defense in the form of alliances can serve as significant deterrents, but they are not a guarantee of security and are subject to a changing geo-political landscape. This is evident in the United States' "Strategic Ambiguity" approach to PRC-Taiwan foreign affairs established with the One China policy. Without a formal alliance, there is no guarantee that the U.S. will respond to a PLA military invasion of Taiwan. Without the ability to over-match or meet PRC direct challenges, Taiwan must increase its asymmetric/indirect capabilities to increase deterrence against the PRC. Taiwan's indirect approach could protract the conflict and extend the timeline to either outlast the CCP regime, or, at a minimum, maintain autonomy. Regardless of third-party involvement, it is imperative that Taiwan develops realistic and sustainable capabilities to maintain autonomy.

How can Taiwan maintain its autonomy despite the ever-increasing pressure from the much stronger PRC? Through analysis of Arrguin-Toft's "How the Weak Wins Wars," Fiala's "Resistance Operating Concept," NATO's "Comprehensive Defense Handbook,"

and Taiwan's recent efforts to create an all-out defense through the Overall Defense Concept (ODC); this thesis offers findings and recommendations based on employing irregular warfare to support the ODC and increase the population's resiliency to deter or repel a PRC invasion.

The thesis provides five findings: one, the relevance of the strategic interaction theory fits but requires nuance in application as it relates to the PRC unrestricted warfare. Two, Taiwan recognizes the need for asymmetric capabilities to deter and defend against the PRC, evident in the Overall Defense Concept (ODC). Third, Taiwan's defense is compatible with NATO's Comprehensive Defense strategy specifically relating to national resilience and resistance. Fourth, Taiwan requires significant improvement to its reserve forces training and capability to support defense and deterrence. Fifth, the combination of Taiwan's reserve forces and civil-volunteer force in mass is the key to deterring against a PRC invasion.

The first step to building effective deterrence and response capability is the development of purposefully trained and hyper-focused reserve forces capable of expert execution of specific tasks. U.S. SOF should work through its Taiwanese partners to develop the reserve force capabilities. To do this, U.S. SOF mentors its Taiwanese partners, not to become exquisite direct-action commandos, but instead Force Multiplier SOF that focus on the training and development of both the reserve forces and civilian population. Second, support Taiwan's development of the CIV-MIL response to natural disasters and crises, improving the reserve and active-duty forces capacity to mobilize and defend Taiwan. Finally, the U.S. should leverage alliances and its relationships with global SOF from both within and beyond the INDOPACOM AOR, to improve interoperability, expand the on-hand expertise of comprehensive defense, and expand the number of participating democracy's supporting Taiwan autonomy. Drastically and quickly improving Taiwan's 2.5 million strong reserve force and increasing the inclusion of the additional 5 million willing members of its population are the keys to increasing its deterrence against a PLA invasion.

The storm is on the horizon and when it lands, Taiwan will not be alone in reaping the effects of such a disaster. Taiwan recognizes this and is attempting to improve its

defenses to survive invasion. It is time the U.S. offers alternatives that do not necessarily begin with a carrier group or prohibitively expensive missile systems. Using USSOF to advise and assist the employment of principles from the CDH and ROC that support the Taiwanese ODC could increase defense viability, deterrence, and extend the tenuous peace long enough to find solutions other than war.

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE COMING STORM

On an ordinary humid afternoon in Taipei, Chia-wei and his family sat at a roadside restaurant enjoying bowls of beef noodle soup, Gua bao (Taiwanese braised pork belly bun), and mooncakes. The skies darkened and the winds grew more intense with whitecapped waves in the Hualien Harbor on the Island's East coast. In the thick summer air, there was an ominous feeling of something significant to come. For the last week, like many summers before, news outlets warned of a tropical storm building to the east with a possible track over the island. The warnings of strong winds, heavy rains, and a rising storm surge were all heard before. After all, Taiwan had endured many typhoons and tropical storms in the past. In 2001 Typhoon Toraji had killed an estimated 200 people and caused an estimated \$245 million (2001 USD) in damage.¹ What could be so different for Chia-wei; wasn't Taiwan prepared? What more could be done? The only thing now was to enjoy a good meal before the arrival of the storm. For Chia-wei and the people of Taiwan, August of 2009 would be disastrously different.

¹ "Timeline – Major Typhoons to Hit Taiwan," *Reuters*, August 14, 2009, sec. Asia Crisis, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSB479427>.

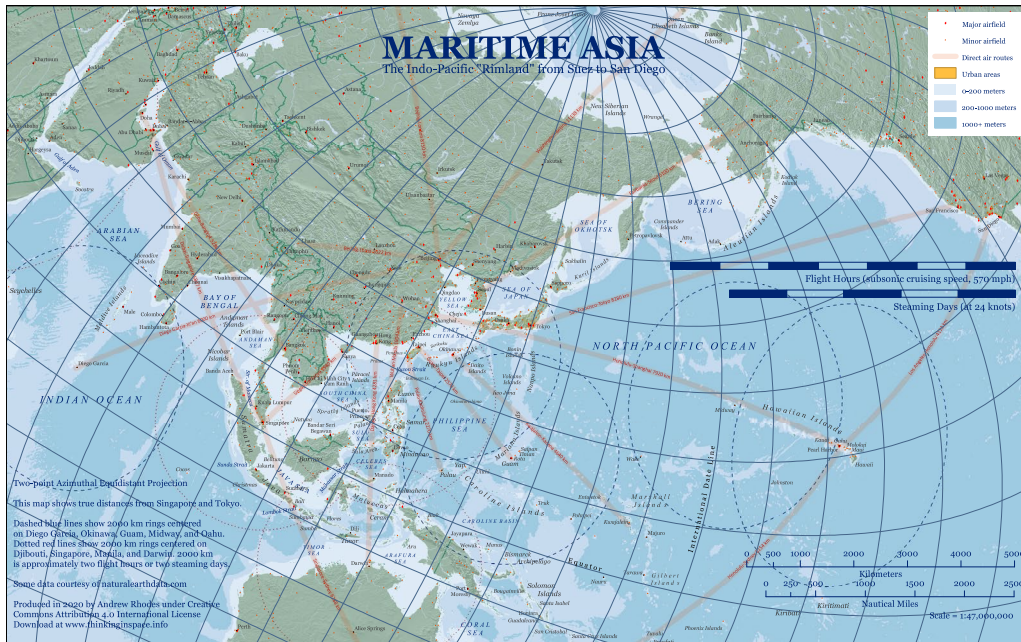


Figure 1. Maritime Asia Map.²

Unlike previous storms, “Typhoon Morakat,” would strike Taiwan at the height of its intensity on August 7, 2009, and remain there, wreaking havoc for the next 24 hours.³ Due to its high winds, record breaking rainfall, flooding, and mudflows, Morakat was responsible for the deaths of 700 Taiwanese deaths and the destruction of entire towns.⁴ Taiwan has a history of weathering and rebuilding from the effects of natural disasters and remains on alert for any future typhons.

In addition to natural disasters, Taiwan is threatened by its overbearing neighbor, the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Similar to a typhoon, the PRC lingers, dark and foreboding, just offshore while growing in size and strength. The specific threat is the

² Source: Andrew Rhodes, *Maritime Asia 2020: The Indo-Pacific “Rimland” from Suez to San Diego*, Digital PDF, 1:47,000,000 (Thinking in Space, March 1, 2020), <https://thinkinginspace.net/latest-maps/f/updated-version-of-maritime-asia>.

³ “Typhoon Morakot Lashes Taiwan,” CNN, August 7, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/weather/08/07/typhoon.morakot/index.html>.

⁴ The Weather Channel, *Three of the Worst Typhoons to Hit Taiwan* (The Weather Channel, 2016), <https://weather.com/storms/hurricane/video/three-of-the-worst-typhoons-to-hit-taiwan>.

Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) need to subjugate and reestablish control over all disputed territories. The catastrophic consequences of such an action demands an answer to Chai-wei's question: what more could Taiwan and its people do to prepare for the impending storm? This paper seeks to understand the nature of the threat to Taiwan and identify possible U.S. avenues for supporting Taiwanese capacity to maintain autonomy. U.S. support of Taiwan democracy and autonomy will ensure Chai-wei and his family have more options than just enjoying a final meal before suffering the wrath of the storm.

Specifically, this thesis addresses the question, ***“How can the combined effort of U.S. Special Operations Forces, interagency, and partners leverage Irregular Warfare to increase the Republic of China's (Taiwan) resilience, and if necessary, resistance to the People's Republic of China's (PRC) unrestricted warfare?”***

Throughout this thesis, the political scientist Ivan Arreguín-Toft's “Strategic Interaction” theory is used as a model to describe both the PRC-Taiwan historical and current relationship.⁵ The strategic interaction theory describes how two states of dissimilar strength compete and how the weaker of the two can win. The first section provides a historical background on the Chinese Communist (CCP) and Guomindang (GMD) Parties from whom the current PRC-Taiwan crisis originated. The second section presents the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) *Comprehensive Defense Handbook* and the resistance operations and near-peer competition expert, Dr. Otto C. Fiala's *Resistance Operating Concept* as a possible strategy to maintain Taiwan autonomy.⁶ The third section presents an analysis of the PRC's employment of combination warfare to set the conditions for Taiwan's reunification with the mainland. The fourth section presents an overview of Taiwan's interests and its ability to defend them. The thesis then provides five findings beginning with the relevance of the strategic interaction theory, Taiwan recognition of the need for asymmetric capabilities to deter and defend against the PRC, Taiwan's defense is compatible with NATO's Comprehensive

⁵ Ivan Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict,” *International Security* 26, no. 1 (Summer 2001): 93–128.

⁶ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*, A, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Shape, Belgium: Quartier General, 2020); Otto Fiala, ed., *Resistance Operating Concept*, 1st ed. (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence University, 2019).

Defense strategy, and the combination of Taiwan’s reserve forces and civil-volunteer force are the key to deterring a PRC invasion.

This final section proposes three recommendations explaining how U.S. SOF, interagency, and allies could improve Taiwan’s ability to defend its autonomy through NATO’s comprehensive defense strategy. First, the key to building effective deterrence and response capability is the development of purposefully trained and hyper-focused reserve forces capable of expert execution of specific tasks. U.S. SOF should work through its Taiwanese partners to develop the reserve force capabilities. This will require U.S. SOF mentors its Taiwanese partners, not to become exquisite direct-action commandos, but instead Force Multiplier SOF that focuses on the training and development of both the reserve forces and civilian population. Third, the U.S. should support Taiwan’s development of the CIV-MIL response to natural disasters and crises. A better developed CIV-MIL response to crisis could improve the reserve and active-duty forces capacity to mobilize and defend Taiwan. Finally, the U.S. should leverage alliances and its relationships with global SOF from both within and beyond the INDOPACOM AOR, to improve interoperability, expand the on-hand expertise of comprehensive defense, and expand the number of participating democracy’s supporting Taiwan autonomy.

A. IDENTIFYING THE STORM: THE THREAT OF CHINA

It is undeniable that the PRC is challenging the U.S. hegemony in the Pacific. This is not as alarming as it sounds. The movement of geopolitical power from a unipolar to a bipolar reality should not inspire fear and trepidation but should lead to the creation of a new lens or framework through which to engage the world. In China’s grand strategy mindset, the world was never unipolar, but rather a multi-power paradigm capable of being manipulated towards China’s benefit.⁷ Over the last 10 years, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has increased both its national power and world influence, bringing it to the forefront of geopolitics. This rise reflects the words of Deng Xiaoping (leader of the People’s Republic of China from 1978 until November of 1989), “Hide your strength, bide

⁷ Sulmaan Wasif Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 182.

your time.”⁸ The PRC obscured its growing capabilities and capacity until it was ready to assert itself on the world. That time is now. The interim U.S. National Security Strategic (NSS) guidance identifies the PRC’s rapidly increasing assertiveness.⁹ The most recent National Defense Strategy (NDS) identified near peer competition as the most significant threat to the U.S.¹⁰ Leveraging means across multiple domains, the PRC tops the list of actors threatening the security of the U.S.¹¹ China is deliberately degrading U.S. global influence and more so in Southeast Asia.¹² The U.S.-China struggle for influence should not lead to a binary “us or them” analogy, but instead create a strategy and policies that enable manageable competition. If China’s challenge is not answered soon, it could set a sphere of influence completely devoid of the U.S.’ interests making it incredibly difficult to re-enter without significant costs.

To improve the Taiwanese people’s ability to weather the storm, the U.S. is continuing to project power and influence in the India Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Area of Operations (AOR). The current geopolitical environment and sensitivity to risk requires the judicious use of the U.S. military. The U.S. should employ the military where the threat is the greatest and warrants the risk of using DOD assets. A Rand study focused on deterrence of U.S. forces recognizes that deploying in times of crisis can reduce risk of escalation but will not advance the defended state’s long-term bargaining leverage.¹³ This implies the use of conventional forces responding to a crisis event is inefficient with regards to a long-term solution. When applied to the most volatile U.S.-PRC friction points, Taiwan’s autonomy is clearly of the utmost importance.

⁸ Global Security, “Deng Xiaoping’s ‘24-Character Strategy,’” [Globalsecurity.org](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/24-character.htm), accessed November 24, 2021, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/24-character.htm>.

⁹ Joseph Biden, “Interim National Security Strategic Guidance” (Washington, D.C.: White House, March 2021), 8.

¹⁰ James Mattis, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 6, 2018), <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

¹¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2020*, Annual Report to Congress (Washington, D.C., 2020).

¹² Biden, “Interim NSS (2021),” 8.

¹³ Bryan Frederick et al., *Understanding the Deterrent Impact of U.S. Overseas Forces* (RAND Corporation, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2533>.

B. WHY TAIWAN?

Though worldwide competition across the multitude of domains is ongoing, the U.S. must identify locations to reasonably leverage the DOD efforts that provide the most value towards curtailing Chinese aggression. In *Strong Borders Secure Nation*, which focuses on geography and territorial disputes related to China, M. Taylor Fravel identifies that “Taiwan is China’s most important territorial dispute, linked to modern Chinese nationalism and the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and is an area of material as well as symbolic importance.”¹⁴ The Historian Sulmaan Wasif Kahn agrees, explaining that the PRC has long seen Taiwan’s formal independence as a non-negotiable “red line”¹⁵ Due to Taiwan’s democratic politics and its propensity to move towards independence, it is a political hot button that could lead to PLA overt military action.¹⁶

The United States’ reinforcement of Taiwan’s capacity to maintain autonomy protects the island’s democratic system and reduces the possibility of a PRC violent reunification. Taiwan’s ability to resist the CCP’s direct and indirect aggression increases the cost of PRC action and decreases its influence both near and abroad. For it to achieve an effective level of deterrence from PRC coercion, Taiwan requires a concerted whole-of-society effort that U.S. SOF could improve.

C. WHY U.S. SOF?

In an era of strategic competition with the PRC, United States Special Operations Command’s (SOCOM) value proposition is the cost-effective use of U.S. SOF forward deployed in the region with partners and the interagency to increase the quality and frequency of irregular warfare (IW).¹⁷ The idea of initiating a full-scale military conflict

¹⁴ M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China’s Territorial Disputes*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11–12.

¹⁵ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 82.

¹⁶ Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*, 317.

¹⁷ Jason Gambill, “China and Russia Are Waging Irregular Warfare Against the United States: It Is Time for a U.S. Global Response, Led by Special Operations Command,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, November 2, 2021, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2021/november/china-and-russia-are-waging-irregular-warfare-against-united>.

with the PRC is extremely unattractive to the U.S. and the international community; therefore, the DOD must employ methods below the threshold of violence to achieve its goals. The Irregular Warfare Annex of the United States National Defense Strategy highlights this reality and emphasizes that the DOD must remaster IW competencies in relation to GPC.¹⁸ Effectively conducting IW in Taiwan without escalating conflict necessitates that Taiwan's defenses and capabilities are its own and not completely reliant on the U.S.

D. WHY NOW?

The balance of national power has shifted between Taiwan and the PRC, changing the aggression calculus of the CCP and making engagement now more important than ever. Historically, Chinese relative power lagged far behind Taiwan's rapid growth based on a democratic political system and an open-market economic system. However, the adoption of capitalism with Chinese characteristics, coined by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s, led to a resurgent China.¹⁹ China's version of capitalism has left it second only to the U.S.' economy in the 2020 Asian comprehensive power rankings conducted by the Lowry Institute.²⁰ The opening of Chinese markets, the BRI and the significant advantages China has gained using economic practices that violate international norms, has changed the power dynamic. This rapid adjustment of the power has put Taiwan at risk of a similar fate as Hong Kong's. The Biden administration has expressed the United States' obligation to fortify Taiwan, a leading democracy, critical economic, and security partner.²¹

The PRC's immense advantage in national power is not insurmountable, in fact, research and theory has identified possible solutions. Arreguín-Toft's theory identifies when a weaker state attempts to match a stronger state with the same type of offensive or

¹⁸ Department of Defense, "Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy Summary" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2020).

¹⁹ Walden Bello, "Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics," Foreign Policy In Focus, December 6, 2019, <https://fpif.org/capitalism-with-chinese-characteristics/>.

²⁰ Herve Lemahieu and Alyssa Leng, "Lowry Institute Asia Power Index: Key Findings 2020" (Lowry Institute, 2020).

²¹ Biden, "Interim NSS (2021)."

defensive (direct or indirect) approach, it will ultimately lose and will do so quickly.²² However, when the weaker state uses the opposite form of strategic approach against the stronger, it will have a much higher chance of success extended over a long period of time.²³ In Taiwan's case, the relative power has shifted in mainland China's favor; Taiwan has become the weaker of the two sides. The PRC's approach is multi-dimensional and often employed below the level of armed conflict, representing an indirect approach. However, its approach is indicative of a preparation designed to facilitate an overt direct military approach to subdue Taiwan, evidenced by the PRC's exponential growth of conventional capabilities. For Taiwan to compete with the current indirect approach and be capable of repelling a direct approach, it must build the capacity to execute an indirect defense to resist the PLA.

The storm is on the horizon and when it lands, Taiwan will not be alone in reaping the effects of such a disaster. Taiwan recognizes this and is desperately attempting to improve its defenses. It is time the U.S. offers alternatives that do not necessarily begin with a carrier group or prohibitively expensive missile systems. Using USSOF to advise and assist the employment of principles from the CDH and ROC that support the Taiwanese ODC could increase defense viability, deterrence, and extend the tenuous peace long enough to find solutions other than war.

²² Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict."

²³ Arreguín-Toft.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE CHINESE COMMUNIST AND THE GUOMINDANG PARTIES

Beyond 180 kilometers of water, the governments and citizens of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) are separated by more than 100 years of competing ideology and history. This chapter provides the historical background specifically related to the PRC and Taiwan. The chapter also provides an understanding of why the idea of one Chinese government, led by either Beijing or Taipei, ruling over both the mainland and Taiwan's sovereign islands is a dangerous and irrelevant proposal. As shown in Table 1, Chinese history from the 1911 fall of the Qing Dynasty through 1949 consists of many actors including student and political movements, warlords, criminal gangs, competing elites, and other great power actors. The historical background provided here focuses on the CCP and the GMD. The current conflict between the PRC and Taiwan is a ripple in time that started in the spring of 1927 when Jiang Jieshi (also known as *Chiang Kai-shek*) and the Guomindang Party (GMD) orchestrated the massacre of its United Front counterparts, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).²⁴ From dissolution of the first United Front, China has existed with an irreparable rift between its two separate identities. Understanding the duality that exists between both competing governments will assist in recognizing the foundation and framework supporting the strong separate identity and resiliency of the Taiwanese people and their ability to resist all types of PRC hostility.

²⁴ Michael Share, "Clash of Worlds: The Comintern, British Hong Kong and Chinese Nationalism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 4 (June 2005): 616, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130500105258>.

Table 1. Historical Timeline from Post Qing Dynasty to End of WWII.²⁵

1911- 1945 Fall of Qing Dynasty through end of WWII

1911:	The fall of the Qing Dynasty and beginning of the Republican Revolution
1912 - 1949:	The Republican Era (Clash of Political Systems)
1912 - 1916:	Presidency of Yuan Shikai
1916 - 1927:	Warlord Era
1921:	Chinese Communist Party Founding
1924 -1927:	First United Front between CCP - GMD Alliance
1927:	Shanghai Massacre (GMD purge of Communists)
1927 - 1937:	GMD holds political power
1931:	Japan invades Manchuria
1931 - 1934:	CCP forms base areas , including Mao's Jiangxi Soviet
1931 - 1934:	GMD encirclement campaigns against Communists
1934:	GMD successful 5th Encirclement and CCP's Long March
1937:	WWII Chinese Theater: Japan Invades North China
1937 – 1945:	Second United Front between CCP and GMD
August 1945:	Japanese surrender and end of WWII

The Chinese Civil war starting in 1927 is one of the more supportive historical case studies for Ivan Arreguín-Toft’s Strategic Interaction Theory.²⁶ In particular, two of his hypotheses stand true. First, “When strong actors attack using a direct strategy and weak actors defend using a direct strategy, all other things being equal, strong actors should win quickly and decisively.”²⁷ Secondly, “When strong actors attack with a direct strategy and weak actors defend using an indirect strategy, all other things being equal, weak actors

²⁵ Adapted from Share (2005) and Carter et al. (2016).

²⁶ Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict,” 107–10.

²⁷ Arreguín-Toft, 107.

should win.”²⁸ After the Communist’s failed attempt to establish and hold the sovereign like territory of Jiangxi Soviet against the stronger Nationalist’s military, Mao and the Communist Chinese were forced into the Long March, during which they evolved and initiated their guerilla warfare strategy. Over the course of a 20-year-plus confrontation, likely extended by World War II (WWII) and a Japanese occupation, a weaker CCP and its Red Communist army of peasants doggedly eroded the control of the stronger Nationalist army led by Jiang and the GMD. Using the strategies Mao famously described in *On Guerrilla Warfare*, the Communist army succeeded in securing mainland China.²⁹ Unfortunately for the PRC, once it became the more powerful combatant and evolved from guerrilla to mobile, and then onto more direct and conventional methods, it lacked enough means to conclusively defeat the U.S. supported Nationalists in Taiwan, resulting in the stalemate which exists today.

A. ONE MOUNTAIN CANNOT HOLD TWO TIGERS

The ancient Chinese proverb “one mountain cannot hold two tigers” illustrates that two strong and opposing forces or personalities cannot occupy the same geography.³⁰ The Civil War and the current question of Taiwan’s status remains a battle between two diametrically opposed combatants, both fighting for their own survival.

Before the civil war, the CCP and GMD could only agree upon the need to prevent other nations from meddling in China’s internal affairs and the need to establish a strong central government. Leaders of the competing parties had their own distinct visions for the future of China. To Mao Zedong and the CCP, the Chinese Civil War was a conflict between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. On Mao’s side of the conflict were the CCP-led revolutionaries, formed by the peasants and workers of a fragmented and economically backwards Chinese nation. On the other side, the counterrevolutionaries were a mixture of other elites, manipulative foreign nations, competing political

²⁸ Arreguín-Toft, 108.

²⁹ Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Thousand Oaks, California: BN Publishing, 2007).

³⁰ Tommy Jamison, “Clash of Core Interests: Can One Mountain Hold Two Tigers? 核心利益的冲突：一山，不容，二虎?,” *Center for International Maritime Security*, July 29, 2016, <https://cimsec.org/clash-core-interests-can-one-mountain-hold-two-tigers>.

movements, and warlords leftover from the turbulent period after the Qing Dynasty. From Jiang's perspective, he was the rightful leader of China by virtue of military might and diplomatic maneuvering.³¹ Jiang was resolved to defeat all competing factions, including the regional warlords, political parties, and left-over colonial powers. In 1938, Mao rightly described China as, "not independent and democratic but semi-colonial and semi-feudal, that internally she has no democracy but is under feudal oppression and that in her external relations she has no national independence but is oppressed by imperialism."³² Beginning with the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, regional warlords and political movements each fought over control of China, while simultaneously the international powers of UK, Japan, and U.S.S.R. either carved away pieces of the country for themselves or supported and influenced the various factions to their own ends.

B. AN UNEASY PARTNERSHIP AND COMPETING IDEOLOGIES

Despite founding their own party in 1921, communists often belonged to both the CCP and the stronger GMD. This practice was encouraged by both the U.S.S.R and the GMD's party leader, Sun Yet-san.³³ This partnership further developed into a short-lived United Front allowing both parties to overcome common adversaries. In 1925, Sun unexpectedly died of liver cancer and was succeeded by Jiang.³⁴ After Sun's death, the relationship between both parties quickly soured because of the vast distance between their ideologies.³⁵ The most glaring difference between the two parties' ideologies existed on where power resided. The GMD placed the power of the party in the elites, where the CCP

³¹ James Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, ed. Jeffrey Wasserstrom (Oxford: Oxford University Press Inc, 2016), 137, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/lib/ebook-nps/reader.action?docID=4706585>.

³² Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (United States: Praetorian Press LLC, 2012), Kindle location 5928.

³³ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 11; Share, "Clash of Worlds," 601.

³⁴ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 135.

³⁵ Share, "Clash of Worlds," 608.

dogma placed it with the common peasantry.³⁶ James Carter explained, “(Jiang) sought to remake the country according to the lessons he had learned during his career by establishing a centralized state, a modern military, and a sense of social order.”³⁷ Both parties’ ideologies were similar with regards to the elimination of leftover colonial influence and unifying China, but the CCP’s powerbase resided with the peasants located throughout the most rural and oppressed regions throughout the countryside. Carter explained, “Mao felt that the Chinese peasantry—the great majority of the country’s population—would be the key to the successful communist revolution.”³⁸ With the lack of common ideology and both sides politically maneuvering for dominance over the other, armed conflict was ensured. From the indications given by Jiang throughout 1926, it was apparent after the successful campaign to secure the Northern provinces of China, the Communists held no additional value to him.³⁹

C. UNITED FRONT ABANDONED, THE SHANGHAI MASSACRE, AND JIANGXI SOVIET

Once firmly in control of the GMD, Jiang almost immediately took actions to reduce the influence and existence of communists in the GMD party. These actions initially started with limiting the number of communists participating within the GMD. Jiang and the more nationalist members of the GMD progressed to policies calling for the detention of the communist members and deportation of Soviet advisors.⁴⁰ Following the United Front’s success in pacifying the northern provinces, Jiang and anti-communists within the GMD sought to purify the party. Between February and June of 1927, Jiang initiated a systematic massacre of an estimated 85% of all CCP members in a “White Terror” that

³⁶ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 137.

³⁷ Carter et al., 141.

³⁸ Carter et al., 142.

³⁹ Share, “Clash of Worlds,” 612–14.

⁴⁰ Share, 613.

killed thousands.⁴¹ With most other factions destroyed or coopted, Jiang no longer needed the CCP and sought to eliminate his last political competitor.

With the United Front dissolved, the CCP fled from Nationalist controlled areas to its base of support amongst the peasants in the countryside of Jiangxi province. The communist's relocation to the rural regions within Hunan—Jiangxi provinces was meant to provide a safety from the GMD military and increase the CCPs base membership by moving closer to the peasants.⁴² In the case of the Jiangxi Soviet, it became an autonomous communist community. Carter explains, "Led by Mao, the Jiangxi Soviet was small, but soon took on many of the functions of a sovereign state, issuing currency, establishing social services, and collecting revenues."⁴³ Khan further describes, "It (Jiangxi Soviet) was the creation of an order where once there had been none, a way of being that was different, more dignified, less chaotic than what had existed before."⁴⁴ During this period of perceived stability, Mao started to formulate some of his most significant thoughts and strategies, including those on Guerrilla Warfare.⁴⁵ The CCPs successful creation of several autonomous regions outside of the GMD's control would both draw popular support to Mao's cause and the fury of Jiang.

As shown in Figure 2, Jiang ensured that the mirage of safety the CCP built in Jiangxi Soviet did not last long. In 1931, despite also being encumbered by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Jiang led three successive failed attempts to surround and destroy all communist base areas.⁴⁶ The battles between the two forces were massive, with combatants numbering into the 100,000s.⁴⁷ The final attempt by Jiang was successful after

⁴¹ Share, 615.

⁴² Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 142.

⁴³ Carter et al., 145.

⁴⁴ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 13.

⁴⁵ Khan, 13.

⁴⁶ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 145.

⁴⁷ Carter et al., 145.

he leveraged almost 500,000 GMD troops to encircle and attack Jiang Soviet.⁴⁸ It was during this siege and the subsequent need to flee Jiangxi Soviet, that Mao’s strategy would finally come into its own. Mao used his formulae for guerrilla warfare, “to split forces and rouse the masses, to concentrate forces and engage the enemy, to retreat when the enemy advanced, to strike when the enemy tired, to harass when the enemy was stationed, and to pursue when the enemy was in retreat.”⁴⁹ In support of Arreguín-Toft’s theories, the numerically weaker CCP holding and defending Jiang Soviet allowed the better supplied and numerically stronger Jiang and the GMD military to amass combat power and attack at will; resulting in the defeat of the communists. Mao’s guerrilla warfare strategy was useless while remaining static and defending vast territories, but genius when fluidly moving among the peasantry. Once Mao denied Jiang of a stationary target to amass forces and attack, the CCP quickly grew in size and capability.

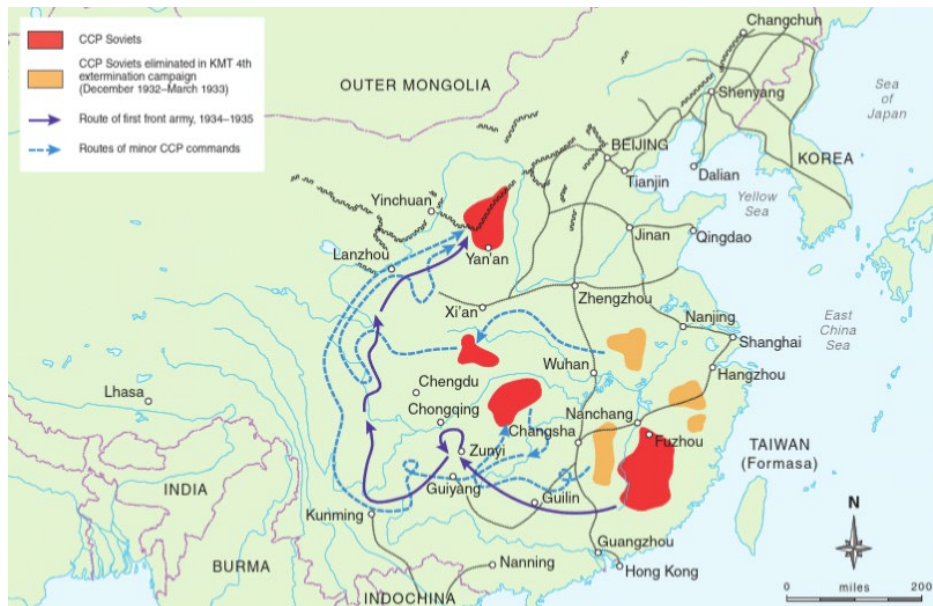


Figure 2. CCP Autonomous Soviets.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Carter et al., 145.

⁴⁹ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 13.

⁵⁰ Source: Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 143.

D. LONG MARCH TO END OF WWII

Several important events span from the long march to the end of WWII. First Mao, though initially criticized and marginalized over his theories of mobilizing the peasants, became the central figure in the CCP.⁵¹ His musings on a protracted conflict waged by peasant soldiers became the reality for the Communist Red Army. Second, Jiang and the GMD Army were contending with at least two significant threats, the Communists and the Imperial Japanese Military. Despite it already taking Manchuria in 1931, then extending its conquests into Northern China, and finally committing what is known as the “Rape of Nanking,” the Japanese Imperial Army became the centralized threat to all Chinese, but not to Jiang. Jiang and the Nationalist Army continued to prioritize dismantling the communist threat above the Japanese.⁵² Third, following the attack on Pearl Harbor and its declaration of war on Japan, the U.S. becomes a participant in not only China’s survival against the Japanese Imperial army, but also the conflict between both the Nationalists and Communists which continues to this day.⁵³ Due mostly to the United States’ influence, the CCP and the GMD joined in a new United Front to fight the Japanese.

Despite the United States’ efforts, the United Front did not last beyond the end of WWII. As shown in Table 2, both Mao and Jiang would mutually support the fight against the Japanese, but never cease their internal struggle for control of China. During the years following the long march, to garner support for CCP post-war dominance over China, Mao diplomatically approached, not only external supporters like the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., but also internal entities like the Mongols, Hui Muslims, warlords, and even members of the GMD.⁵⁴ Kahn explains, “Mao made concessions to work with any party to ensure the survivability and growth of the CCP. Preaching tolerance and acceptance to their views and beliefs. Banding together smaller powers to later they could all be overcome one by one” and “the overall China (WWII) war effort was immaterial to Mao.” [sic]⁵⁵ Jiang

⁵¹ Carter et al., 168.

⁵² Carter et al., 147.

⁵³ Carter et al., 163.

⁵⁴ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 16–18.

⁵⁵ Khan, 22.

would also garner patronage of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. as well, but as exemplified by the GMD attacking the Communist army in January of 1941, he would not hesitate to break the united front to gain an advantage over the CCP.⁵⁶ Despite U.S., U.S.S.R., and UK diplomacy, culminating with a 1945 in-person meeting between both Mao and Jiang, the civil war resumed between the CCP and the GMD.⁵⁷ The animosity and distrust built over decades of infighting ensured that no possible alliance between the CCP and GMD was forthcoming following the end of WWII.

Table 2. From Post-WWII to Normalization of U.S.-PRC relations.⁵⁸

<u>Post WWII to the Expiration of Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty</u>	
1945 - 1947:	U.S. and U.S.S.R direct participants in CCP – GMD Peace Talks
August 1945:	Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong participate in direct and unsuccessful talks
1945 - 1949:	CCP-GMD Civil War
October 1949:	People’s Republic of China (PRC) founding
December 1949:	Jiang Jieshi flees to the island of Formosa (Taiwan)
1949 - 1976:	Mao Zedong Era
1950 - 1953:	Korean War
1954 – 1979:	Sino-American (U.S.-Taiwan) Mutual Defense Treaty
1972:	President Richard Nixon visits Beijing and Shanghai
1976:	Mao Zedong dies
1979:	U.S. diplomatically recognizes PRC and issues Joint Communique
January 1980:	Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty expires

⁵⁶ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 168.

⁵⁷ Carter et al., 173.

⁵⁸ Adapted from Share (2005) and Carter et al. (2016)

Following the Japanese surrender, the CCP, with its almost 1-million-man army, found itself in a strong position to negotiate or reengage in the civil war against the quickly weakening GMD.⁵⁹ From the end of the war until 1947, then Secretary of State George C. Marshall attempted to negotiate an end to the civil war and bring a lasting peace between the GMD and the CCP.⁶⁰ Frustrating Marshall's well-intentioned efforts were not only the diabolically opposed political positions and ideologies, but also the increasing strength of the CCP and Jiang's unsuccessful attempts to control the country through military might alone. In addition to the strong military, several factors strengthening the CCP's position: Mao's previously described diplomatic efforts with various subgroups, its safe-haven in U.S.S.R.'s occupied Northern China, the U.S.' mediation efforts and reluctance to support the Nationalists in a civil war, and finally the weakened state of the GMD's own military, and declining political popularity. In contrast to the growing size of the CCP's military, the GMD suffered terrible losses including approximately 750 thousand troops just in 1944 alone.⁶¹ In 1947 war torn China, the de-facto ruler Jiang found himself and the GMD in a relatively weaker position than Mao and the CCP.

From 1947 until mid-1948, Mao and the CCP continued to move fluidly through the country, not holding territory, but winning the populations support and stretching thin the Nationalist army. In contrast, as described by Mitter, "[Jiang] was fatally overconfident, believing that sheer numbers of troops could outweigh the better training of the Communist armies."⁶² In less than two years of successful guerrilla warfare, the Communist army was strong enough to transition into a more conventional strategy against the weakened Nationalist army. Kahn explains, "The CCP was drawing up plans for an army that was five million strong." and "This was no longer guerrilla war. It was modern warfare, waged by a state grown strong."⁶³ By 1949, the CCP had finally become the vastly

⁵⁹ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 172.

⁶⁰ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 28.

⁶¹ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 172.

⁶² Carter et al., 175.

⁶³ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 31.

stronger faction and able to win complete control of the mainland by directly attacking the weaker Nationalists army.

Beginning in 1949, any reconciliation or possibility of negotiated peace between the CCP and the GMD was crushed, and two Chinas became the reality for at least the next 60 years. In April of 1949, Mao ordered the Communist army to, “Advance bravely and annihilate resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely all the Kuomintang reactionaries within China’s borders who dare to resist. Liberate the people of the whole country. Safeguard China’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence.”⁶⁴ Finally, on October 1st of 1949, Mao Zedong declared the founding of the People’s Republic of China with, “We the four hundred and seventy-five million Chinese people have now stood up.”⁶⁵ In December of 1949, still defiant but unwilling to personally lead the fight from the Chinese mainland, Jiang fled to the island of Formosa (Taiwan), where he would continue to regroup, maintain international support, and plot from safety.⁶⁶ As the Communist army relentlessly pummeled the Nationalist army, Mao continued to solidify the CCP’s dominant position through internal politics and international statecraft. The Communist army would continue to destroy any forces left on the mainland loyal to Jiang, as well as independent warlords, while Mao solidified an alliance with the U.S.S.R. and negotiated a lasting agreement with Tibet.⁶⁷ With the CCP fully in control of the newly-formed People’s Republic of China (PRC), nothing short of war with one of the world’s great powers could threaten the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) slow march toward unifying all Chinese lands under a single communist flag.

E. THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND: THE KOREAN WAR

While the PRC was building the combat power necessary to dislodge the GMD from Taiwan, the U.S. and its allies intervened in the fighting on the Korean Peninsula.

⁶⁴ Tse-Tung, *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung*, Location 9958.

⁶⁵ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 37.

⁶⁶ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 175.

⁶⁷ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*, 49.

This presented the PRC with not only an ill-timed security dilemma, but also an emotional one. Khan's analysis of Mao's statements relating to the emotional dilemma are, "to sit watching from the sidelines is hard on the heart." and "it was emotion: the tug of loyalty to the North Koreans who had helped the CCP in the days when the revolution was young."⁶⁸ Combined with the security concerns posed by the U.S. and its allies fighting so close to the Chinese border, U.S.S.R. pressure for Chinese intervention, and Mao's underlying identity as a revolutionary, the PRC committed up to 2.3 million of its own troops to the Korean war, instead of finishing the civil war with the GMD.⁶⁹ Mao's decision not only resulted in almost 500 thousand casualties amongst PLA troops, but would also instigate a closer relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan.

The U.S. played a substantial role in the defense of Taiwan throughout. In 1950 before sending the U.S. 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Strait, President Truman writes that "the occupation of Formosa by the Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the U.S."⁷⁰ Then in 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower committed the U.S. to the defense of Taiwan by signing the U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty.⁷¹ Alexander Huang writes that the U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty "not only assured the security and continuity of the ROC government in Taiwan, but also enabled a more complete network of military alliances between the U.S. and Asian-Pacific democracies."⁷² This alliance would last until the end of 1979 when the U.S. and the PRC normalized their relations. As a result of the PRC's involvement in the Korean War, even though it would abandon this alliance and remove its military from Taiwanese islands by 1980, the U.S. continues to provide indirect security assurance to Taiwan till the present day.

⁶⁸ Khan, 57.

⁶⁹ Carter et al., *The Rise of Nationalism and Revolutionary Parties, 1919–1937. The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China.*, 184.

⁷⁰ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President, Truman on Korea" (Wilson Center Digital Archive, June 27, 1950), <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116192>.

⁷¹ Dr Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang, "The United States and Taiwan's Defense Transformation," *Brookings*, Taiwan-U.S. Quarterly Analysis, February 16, 2010, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-united-states-and-taiwans-defense-transformation/>.

⁷² Huang.

This historical background covered the events leading from initial relationship between the CCP and the GMD to the permanent separation of the PRC and Taiwan. The above analysis supports the following positions, 1) the Chinese Civil War conducted from 1921 till 1949 successfully proves the applicability of Arreguín-Toft's Strategic Interaction Theory as a possible model for the ongoing conflict between the PRC and Taiwan; 2) over 60 continuous years, the U.S. established and maintains a the precedent for Taiwanese self-identity that lasts till today; 3) the PRC remains a hostile actor committed to securing its claim to territories under Taiwan's control; and 4) the PRC and Taiwan are distinctly two separate nations with little possibility of reconstituting peacefully into a singular state. Those four positions form the premises for the subsequent case of Taiwan adopting the approaches outlined in Fiala's Resistance Operating Concept and NATO's Comprehensive Defense Strategy.⁷³

⁷³ Kevin D. Stringer and Otto C. Fiala, "The ROC: Special Operations Command Europe's Collaborative Approach within Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare* 32, no. 3 (December 2019): 14–16; NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*.

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III. COMPREHENSIVE DEFENSE: A WEAKER DEFENDER'S STRATEGY AGAINST A STRONGER ADVERSARY'S COERCION

U.S. support of democratic countries against totalitarian regimes did not originate with contemporary Russian and the PRC aggression. In 1947, while seeking support for the struggling democracies of Italy, Greece, and Turkey against communist insurgencies, President Harry S. Truman stated, “One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion.”⁷⁴ In what is called the “Truman Doctrine,” the U.S. supported free democracies by directly challenging the U.S.S.R.’s attempts to spread communism. The U.S. employs various forms of deterrence that continue to ensure the populations of democracies, like Taiwan, can freely choose their destinies despite powerful adversaries’ coercion and attempts of subjugation. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. and its allies have employed various forms of unconventional warfare and international development to protect democracies. Recent iterations of this methodology are found in both the *Resistance Operating Concept* (ROC) and NATO’s *Comprehensive Defence Handbook* (CDH). Using the strategies presented in both the ROC and the CDH, including an acknowledged whole of society response to crisis and invasion, will greatly aid Taiwan’s current efforts to deter and if needed repel a PLA invasion.

This section provides an understanding of how the elements of Comprehensive Defense, when combined, provide increased deterrence against a stronger adversary’s hostile actions. Initially, this section provides a historical background of the short-lived U.S. and NATO sponsored covert and clandestine resistance activities in response to Soviet expansionism throughout Europe during the 1950s. Next it explains how some European countries created a more sustainable and acceptable approach to improving national resilience by focusing on responding to a crisis regardless of its root cause. Finally, the section explains how the methodology presented by the ROC and CDH allows a weaker

⁷⁴ Harry S. Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine,” National Archives, Harry S. Truman Library, March 12, 1947, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/public-papers/56/special-message-congress-greece-and-turkey-truman-doctrine>.

nation to increase its ability to deter or repel a stronger adversary by combining the concepts of a resilient population a governmental led and an acknowledged resistance strategy.

A. NATO’S SWORD, SHIELD, AND DAGGER

NATO’s employment of irregular warfare in response to a Russian threat is not new. The ROC’s heritage was derived from the turbulent years directly following the surrender of Nazi Germany. After WWII, NATO and the U.S. quickly found themselves disadvantaged by the combination of the U.S.S.R.’s immense conventional military, its nuclear weapons, and willingness to employ unconventional warfare against the liberal democracies of Europe. In the 1950s, the U.S.S.R. and its allies possessed a formidable conventional military force, which the U.S. and the newly established NATO alliance would struggle to defeat in the event of hostilities. The U.S.S.R.’s military was so massive that it was able to station twenty divisions alone in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany.)⁷⁵ Following its first successful atomic detonation in 1949, the U.S.S.R. also developed a credible nuclear arsenal to complement its conventional military forces.⁷⁶ In addition to both its conventional and nuclear capabilities, the U.S.S.R. employed a type of unconventional warfare termed “active measures.”⁷⁷ Mark Galeotti explains active measures are “a gamut of covert and deniable political influence and subversion operations, including (but not limited to) the establishment of front organizations, the backing of friendly political movements, the orchestration of domestic unrest and the spread of disinformation.”⁷⁸ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, while recovering economically from WWII, both NATO and the U.S. found themselves in the precarious position of needing to develop a costly deterrence against Soviet expansionism.

⁷⁵ Diego Ruiz Palmer, *A Strategic Odyssey: Constancy of Purpose and Strategy-Making in NATO, 1949–2019* (Rome Italy: NATO Defense College, 2019), 25, <https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/resrep19967>.

⁷⁶ Ruiz Palmer, 17.

⁷⁷ Mark Galeotti, “Active Measures: Russia’s Covert Geopolitical Operations,” *The Marshall Center Security Insights*, Russia Strategic Initiative, no. 31 (June 2019), <http://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/active-measures-russias-covert-geopolitical-operations-0>.

⁷⁸ Galeotti.

Following WWII, NATO was committed to containing Soviet expansionism by undermining communist idealism and subversion, while limiting the effectiveness of any future U.S.S.R invasion into Europe's democratic countries. NATO's concept of nuclear and conventional deterrence was termed its "Sword and Shield."⁷⁹ Additionally, both the U.S. and NATO explored unconventional methods to deter a Soviet invasion and counter its active measures. Under NATO's Allied Clandestine Coordination Groups (ACCG), plans were discussed to form stay-behind groups that were primarily intended to recapture lost territory.⁸⁰ Additionally, these efforts were expanded to combat ongoing communist idealism and subversion in NATO countries.⁸¹

The U.S. initially advocated and aided the creation of NATO unconventional capabilities that addressed both the possibility of a future invasion and the Soviet's active measures. Thomas Adams explained, "this was a time when many western leaders feared a Soviet ground invasion of western Europe," while also contending with the "vicious covert activities of the USSR, its satellite countries, and Communist groups."⁸² Thus, the CIA and the U.S. Army would leverage a blend of guerrilla, information, and economic warfare, with counterinsurgency against the U.S.S.R.⁸³ To aid its allies, the U.S. employed the recently created CIA to establish resistance and countersubversion capabilities across Europe. Along with the CIA, the U.S. Army became a significant employer of unconventional warfare and quickly developed related capabilities. In addition to NATO's Sword and Shield, the U.S would provide the allies a dagger in the form of covert action and unconventional warfare.

⁷⁹ John Slessor, "Sword and Shield," *Survival* 3, no. 1 (January 1961): 12–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396336108440228>.

⁸⁰ Fiala, *ROC*, 183.

⁸¹ Fiala, 183.

⁸² Thomas K. Adams, "The Creation of Army Special Forces," in U.S. *Special Operations Forces in Action* (Routledge, 1998), 44–47.

⁸³ Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA/OPC Strategic War Plan in Support of the Joint Outline Emergency War Plan," War Plan (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, April 4, 1951), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950-55Intel/d61>.

To supplement NATO's Sword and Shield during peacetime, the U.S. employed covert action to better prepare NATO countries on the periphery of the Iron Curtain for Soviet hostilities and invasion. In 1951, the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) stated that in the event of war it would employ "covert operations to the fullest practicable extent to assist in accomplishing the military defeat of the U.S.S.R. and her satellites."⁸⁴ The CIA OPC also stated during peacetime, it would "strengthen the will of the peoples in the area to resist both internal and external forces" and "to engage in resistance activities."⁸⁵ In preparation of a Soviet invasion, the U.S. intended to use covert action to improve the population's resilience against subversion. During an invasion, U.S. covert action and preplanned resistance activities were intended to slow the advances of Soviet conventional forces. If an allied nation became occupied, these covert programs would prepare the population to degrade the security and effectiveness of the Soviet forces' command and control, while stifling logistics to the frontlines.

In addition to the CIA's covert actions, the DOD also participated in the development of an allied resistance capability. Though some military and civilian veterans of WWII with training and experience in unconventional warfare remained in government service, their organizations, like the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), were long disbanded.⁸⁶ To correct the capability gap, the DOD leveraged a combination of former members of the OSS, volunteers from established elite U.S. military units, and foreign-born Lodge Bill participants to create an element capable of supporting some of the activities outlined in the CIA's OPC directives.⁸⁷ On June 19, 1952, the U.S. established its first dedicated special operations group, 10th Special Forces Group (SFG).⁸⁸ Thomas Adams writes that the "unit's wartime mission was to develop, organize, train, equip and

⁸⁴ Central Intelligence Agency.

⁸⁵ Central Intelligence Agency.

⁸⁶ John Chambers, "Office of Strategic Services Training During World War II," *Studies in Intelligence*, Training for War and Espionage, 54, no. 2 (June 2010): 17.

⁸⁷ Adams, "The Creation of Army Special Forces," 54-55; Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA/OPC Strategic War Plan in Support of the Joint Outline Emergency War Plan."

⁸⁸ Adams, "The Creation of Army Special Forces," 54.

direct anti-Soviet resistance forces in eastern Europe in the event of war with the USSR.”⁸⁹ The 10th SFG, with approximately 932 assigned men, was responsible for organizing partisan resistance that could wreak havoc against the probable U.S.S.R. overrun areas of democratic Europe.

However, the United States’ enthusiasm and funding of stay-behind networks did not last beyond the Truman administration. Despite the initial interest, in the years following the CIA’s OPC directives, the U.S. would struggle with implementing and maintaining the activities it outlined in Europe. In addition to the availability of nuclear deterrence, these initiatives were dampened by the fact that President Eisenhower did not share the previous administration’s enthusiasm for maintaining large networks of partisans across Europe for a war which may never come. Eisenhower expressed, “I saw no sense in wasting manpower in costly small wars that could not achieve decisive results under the political and military circumstances.”⁹⁰ Fiala explains in Europe, “As fear of invasion waned, primarily from the 1970s onward, stay-behind forces’ *raison d’être* began to vanish.”⁹¹ Due to the limited use of covert action and no immediate need for a large and organized resistance, both the CIA and Army Special Forces would reduce their commitments and evolve to inherit other missions in Latin America and Southeast Asia.⁹² In addition to diminished fear of invasion that was partly accomplished through successful conventional and nuclear deterrence, these mostly unacknowledged tactics were deemed resource intensive and of questionable deterrence value.

B. AN ENDURING IMPROVEMENT TO CRISIS RESPONSE: EUROPE’S INCLUSION OF A RESILIENT POPULATION

Unlike the United States’ abandoned efforts to create a clandestine resistance to defeat an occupying force, nations throughout Europe successfully implemented acknowledged programs focusing on creating a self-sufficient and organized population in

⁸⁹ Adams, 54.

⁹⁰ Adams, 61.

⁹¹ Fiala, *ROC*, 184.

⁹² Adams, “The Creation of Army Special Forces,” 57–59.

a whole-of-society response to any national crisis. Consider the German response to the floods of July, 2021: one of the greatest natural disasters to occur in modern Western European history, a flood spanning across both Belgium and Germany was responsible for the deaths of more than 130 people.⁹³ Almost immediately, Germany's Technisches Hilfswerke (the Federal Agency for Technical Relief or THW), an organization similar to the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), responded to the crisis with pre-positioned equipment and approximately 80,000 volunteers to assist with recovery efforts.⁹⁴ The government also has access to an additional 1.7 million volunteers nationwide through civic, charity, and relief organizations to respond to crisis if needed.⁹⁵ Kohlmann explains that within Germany, "Volunteerism is also a prime hallmark of the work of millions of other rescuers and helpers organized in associations like the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB)—a charity and relief organization—the German Red Cross (DRK), the DLRG German Life Saving Association, as well as church-based humanitarian organizations such as the Johanniter Unfall Hilfe or the Malteser Hilfsdienst."⁹⁶ Additionally, the German government established and maintains a mobile digital network for crisis communications that covers 99% of the country.⁹⁷ Germany's ability to respond to the flood was greatly aided by the planned and coordinated inclusion of a trained and invested population, prepositioned resources, and established communications procedures.

Though likely intended without resistance against foreign invasion in mind, Germany's timely response to the natural disaster is a testament to the advantages of preparing the population with planning, resourcing, and education. Fiala defines resilience as, "the will and ability to withstand external pressure and influences and/or recover from

⁹³ Melissa Eddy et al., "Devastation from Floods Spreads in Germany and Belgium, With Hundreds Missing," *The New York Times*, July 17, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/07/16/world/europe-flooding-germany>.

⁹⁴ Steven Erlanger, "Neighbor Helping Neighbor, German Volunteers Lead Flood Recovery," *The New York Times*, July 18, 2021, Digital edition, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/18/world/europe/germany-volunteers-flood-recovery.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.

⁹⁵ Thomas Kohlmann, "Why Germany's Disaster Management Works from the Bottom to the Top," *News, DW.COM*, July 21, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/why-germanys-disaster-management-works-from-the-bottom-to-the-top/a-58571507>.

⁹⁶ Kohlmann.

⁹⁷ Kohlmann.

the effects of those pressures or influences.”⁹⁸ Germany’s efforts before and during the flood provide an excellent example of national resilience, a key element of comprehensive defense.

Countries closer to the Russia Federation and/or not aligned with NATO have a stronger case to expand their preparation to include preplanned resistance. For example, during the Cold War, Sweden was alarmingly positioned geographically and diplomatically between NATO and the U.S.S.R. Its geopolitical vulnerabilities continue with the current tensions between the Russian Federation and NATO. As a neutral country with no formal defense obligation to either combatant, but sharing borders with both, Sweden’s population remains a likely victim of circumstance if a war broke out. Colin Dwyer explains, “Though they maintained neutrality, it was hard to believe they could continue to do so—especially as, one by one, their Nordic neighbors got caught in the tides of violence.”⁹⁹ Petridou et al. explain that Sweden’s strategies to better prepare the population was to encourage each “citizen to take control of their own crisis management.”¹⁰⁰ In the 1960s, Sweden published a series of pamphlets, titled *If War Comes*, meant to prepare citizens for evacuation in the event of war.¹⁰¹ In 2018, responding to growing tensions between NATO and Russia, terrorism, cyberattacks, pandemics, information warfare, and the possibility of natural disasters related to global warming, Sweden printed over 4 million pamphlets titled *If Crisis or War Comes* meant to augment its digital campaign to improve an individual citizen’s resiliency to crisis.¹⁰² A nation’s strategy to increase resilience is enhanced by ensuring it realistically reflects the entire scope of possible crises.

⁹⁸ Fiala, *ROC*, 15.

⁹⁹ Colin Dwyer, “Unsettled By Russia, Sweden Revives Pamphlets On What To Do ‘If War Comes,’” *National Public Radio*, January 22, 2018, sec. International, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/01/22/578893302/unsettled-by-russia-sweden-revives-pamphlets-on-what-to-do-if-war-comes>.

¹⁰⁰ Evangelia Petridou et al., “If Crisis or War Comes: A Study of Risk Communication of Eight European Union Member States,” *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research* 2, no. 2 (2019): 207, <https://doi.org/10.30658/jicrcr.2.2.3>.

¹⁰¹ Dwyer, “Unsettled By Russia, Sweden Revives Pamphlets On What To Do ‘If War Comes.’”

¹⁰² Dwyer.

Extending beyond the German THW’s approach, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is responsible for educating and preparing the general public in the event of an armed conflict.¹⁰³ Stinger and Fiala explain that the MSB “assist the general public with the earliest stages of preparation and response due to the early-stage similarities between a natural or man-made disaster and the threat of forceful foreign occupation.”¹⁰⁴ In addition to physically preparing for crisis, Sweden strongly communicates its expectations of the population’s contribution in the event of armed conflict and occupation. Sweden states in the pamphlet *If Crisis or War Comes*, “Everyone is obliged to contribute and everyone is needed for Sweden’s Total Defense.”¹⁰⁵ It also states, “if Sweden is attacked ..., we will never give up. All information to the effect that resistance is to cease is false.”¹⁰⁶ Sweden’s more broad approach to preparing its population for crisis became the model for NATO’s Baltic Sea countries that share borders with Russia.

C. COMBINING RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE INTO AN ENDURING STRATEGY

The strategy presented within the 2019 *Resistance Operating Concept* (ROC) and the 2020 *Comprehensive Defense Handbook* (CDH) are designed to prepare and organize a government-led, whole-of-society response to any crisis, whether natural disaster, accident, or invasion. These documents take the most useful elements of both NATO and the United States’ 1950s conventional and unconventional warfare strategies against the U.S.S.R. and pair it with more contemporary European countries’ campaigns to mobilize a prepared whole-of-society response to crisis. Special Operations Command-Europe (SOCEUR), Swedish Defence University, and Joint Special Operations University developed the ROC to create “intellectual interoperability” between the U.S. and the democratic nations of Europe.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Fiala, *ROC*, 84.

¹⁰⁴ Fiala, 84.

¹⁰⁵ Fiala, 26.

¹⁰⁶ Fiala, 26.

¹⁰⁷ Stinger and Fiala, “The ROC: Special Operations Command Europe’s Collaborative Approach within Unconventional Warfare,” 14.

Building upon the foundations of the ROC, in 2020, NATO published a two-volume CDH, “intended to serve as a guide for implementing a whole-of-society approach to national defense.”¹⁰⁸ Fiala states, “This Resistance Operating Concept (ROC) explores actions that a sovereign state can take to broaden its national defense strategy and prepare to defend itself against a partial or full loss of national sovereignty.”¹⁰⁹ Less descriptive but clearer, the CDH outlines specific conditions, responsibilities, requirements, and considerations to adequately serve as a national level check list. Former NATO SOF Headquarters Commander, LTG Eric Wendt describes the handbook as a checklist to “practically assist in the development of a national program designed to enable all members of society to contribute to comprehensive deterrence and defense.”¹¹⁰ For this thesis, unless specifically cited, the ROC and CDH are used interchangeably when describing the rudimentary concepts and terms of national comprehensive, all-out, or total defense.

The current body of literature outlining Comprehensive Defense is mostly reflective of NATO and Sweden’s efforts to create credible deterrence against Russian hostile activities in the Baltics and Scandinavia. Comprehensive Defense is defined as “an official Government strategy, which encompasses a whole-of-society approach to protecting the nation against potential threats.”¹¹¹ A foundation of comprehensive defense is creating resilient and synchronized public, private, and civic sectors, or “whole-of-society,” response to any disaster. In addition to nuclear and conventional means, NATO considers resilience “its first line of deterrence and defense.”¹¹² The CDH describes all three categories of actors. Included in the public sector, or the “2%,” are elements of military active duty and reserves, government ministries, and emergency management.¹¹³ The private sector includes business, industry, hospitals, and other private

¹⁰⁸ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*, 1:13.

¹⁰⁹ Fiala, *ROC*, 15.

¹¹⁰ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*, 1:1.

¹¹¹ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 1:15.

¹¹² NATO, “Deterrence and Defence,” NATO, June 25, 2021, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_133127.htm.

¹¹³ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*, 1:15.

infrastructure.¹¹⁴ The civic sector includes NGOs, clubs, faith-based organizations, and individual citizens.¹¹⁵ As described by the CDH, “the government must enable the rest of the society (the so-called 98%) to participate in matters of security that was [sic] previously tended to solely by state officials.”¹¹⁶ A nation leveraging a greater percentage of its private and civic sectors during crisis will strengthen its response by increasing the number of available participants. Furthermore, during an invasion, increasing the numbers and preparedness of private and civic sectors reduces the need to rely on the public sectors, thus allowing it to focus instead on repelling an attacker.

Aimed at discouraging Russian hostile actions, NATO’s Baltic nations and Sweden have combined whole-of-society crisis response with an acknowledged resistance strategy into their national defense plans.¹¹⁷ A Rand study explains comprehensive defense “can include broad-based, state-supported resistance against invaders—are designed to enhance deterrence by denial and by increasing the cost of aggression, while also supporting conventional defense efforts to counter and repel military attacks.”¹¹⁸ By combining the elements of resilience and resistance into their national defense plans, the Baltic nations have expanded their options to not only combat hostile actions against them, but also presented Russia with increased risk of failure should it invade.

In summary, despite a credible threat of invasion and occupation, the application of a primarily covert and clandestine resistance is not palatable for an enduring period of time. As exemplified in both Germany and Sweden, this section argues that a strategy inclusive of the general population will increase its resiliency to any crisis, as well as greatly multiplying the governments capacity to respond to the event. Finally, using the Baltic Nations and Sweden as an example, when combining a resilient population with a

¹¹⁴ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 1:15.

¹¹⁵ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 1:15.

¹¹⁶ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 1:21.

¹¹⁷ Stephen Flanagan et al., *Deterring Russian Aggression in the Baltic States Through Resilience and Resistance* (RAND Corporation, 2019), 2, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2779>.

¹¹⁸ Stephen Flanagan et al., *Deterring Russian Aggression in the Baltic States Through Resilience and Resistance* (RAND Corporation, 2019), 2, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2779>.

government organized and led resistance capability, it is possible to create an effective and enduring strategy to respond to crisis and deter a stronger nation from invading.

D. WHY SHOULD TAIWAN EMPLOY NATO'S COMPREHENSIVE DEFENSE STRATEGY?

When performing a macro analysis of the threats to Taiwan, relying on a model specifically addressing either a response to a natural and accidental crisis or an invasion will not adequately prepare either the government or the population. The natural and accidental threats include typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, epidemics, and nuclear powerplant meltdowns, all of which will result in catastrophic consequences.¹¹⁹ Unlike Germany, Taiwan's national security is declining under the PRC's increasing threat and it cannot rely solely on a strong response to a natural and accidental crisis. Taiwan's security concerns are the PRC's many conventional and irregular means to coerce its population and government. These include armed invasion, cyberattacks, economic and information warfare.¹²⁰ Whether originating from a much stronger adversary or a natural disaster, Taiwan has the inherent right to adequately prepare for any crisis threatening the lives, liberty, or prosperity of its population.

Similar to the U.S.S.R.-NATO disparity of power during the early Cold War, the PRC also holds an immense advantage in military power over Taiwan and additionally uses less direct methods to reach its foreign policy objectives. When applying the lessons learned from the ROC and the CDH to Taiwan, the sole application of clandestine and/or covert resistance is even less palatable. Undoubtedly, a clandestine, preplanned, and organized resistance would complement Taiwan's Overall Defense Concept, but resistance on its own will not offer increased deterrence against a PLA invasion.¹²¹ Both to its advantage and disadvantage, Taiwan's situation with the PRC differs from the Baltic

¹¹⁹ Mignonette Chan, "Risk Management for Disasters in Taiwan," *Japan Spotlight*, The Challenge to Risk Management after 3.11, no. September/October 2012 (October 2012): 1.

¹²⁰ Yimou Lee, David Lague, and Ben Blanchard, "China Launches 'Gray-Zone' Warfare to Subdue Taiwan," *Reuters*, December 10, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/hongkong-taiwan-military/>.

¹²¹ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, First (Taipei, Taiwan: Ministry of National Defense, 2019).

nations and Russia. Taiwan is semi-dependent on the PRC and has few allies to call upon if attacked and occupied, but advantageously separated by a large body of water. With these factors in mind, Taiwan's most realistic and desirable path for maintaining its autonomy is deterrence of an invasion.

The ROC's two primary concepts of resilience and resistance greatly support Arreguín-Toft's strategic interaction theory, the concept of reenforcing a weaker nation's resilience, by preparing and organizing the population's response to any disaster, also hardens it to the external pressures of a stronger adversary.¹²² In addition to resilience, organizing a government led and whole of society embraced national resistance will impose costs before, during, and after a stronger adversary's hostile actions. Finally, in the case of either single Baltic nation and Russia or Taiwan and the PRC, a weaker opponent relying on a direct conventional defense against a stronger adversaries direct conventional attack will lose. NATO's Baltic nations exemplify this indirect strategy of using unconventional warfare in addition to conventional military capabilities to provide a credible deterrence to a Russian invasion. The ROC and NATO's Comprehensive Defense concepts are viable means to strengthen Taiwan's deterrence against the PRC's coercion.

¹²² Fiala, *ROC*, 15.

IV. THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: ANTAGONIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

Understanding China's strategies is vital to identifying opportunities and vulnerabilities to exploit in building an approach to competition. Hayes broadly explains the ideas underpinning the PRC's strategy are expressed through the China Dream, Xi Jinping's Thought, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as essentially tying nationalism to its destiny of achieving great power status and becoming rich and powerful enough to surpass the U.S.¹²³ Scobel et al., explains China's grand strategy as "national rejuvenation" to produce a China that is "well governed, socially stable, economically powerful, technologically advanced, and militarily powerful by 2050."¹²⁴ Garrick and Bennet, Benabdallah, as well as Singh and Pradhan individually describe the strategies of the PRC as seeking to solidify Chinese Communist Party (CCP) control of all China (including Taiwan), increase economic growth by connecting local Chinese markets to the world, and proclaim a timeline for ascension to superpower status.¹²⁵ Summarily, the goal of Chinese grand strategy is not limited to competing with and surpassing the U.S. but also changing what is acceptable within international norms. Brands and Cooper identify that China's efforts to increase power and influence cannot succeed unless the global order becomes amenable and supportive of autocratic power displacing the order built on democratic values.¹²⁶ This end-state is unacceptable to the U.S. and requires further actions to render it either unattainable or undesirable.

¹²³ Anna Hayes, "Interwoven 'Destinies': The Significance of Xinjiang to the China Dream, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the Xi Jinping Legacy," *Journal of Contemporary China* 29, no. 121 (January 2, 2020): 31–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2019.1621528>.

¹²⁴ Andrew Scobell et al., "China's Grand Strategy: Trends, Trajectories, and Long-Term Competition," July 24, 2020, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2798.html. (ix)

¹²⁵ John Garrick and Yan Chang Bennett, "'Xi Jinping Thought': Realization of the Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation?," *China Perspectives* 2018, no. 2018/1-2 (June 1, 2018): 99–105, <https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.7872>; Lina Benabdallah, "Contesting the International Order by Integrating It: The Case of China's Belt and Road Initiative," *Third World Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 92–108; Harinder Singh and R. P. Pradhan, "Taiwan, Hong Kong & Macau in China's Infrastructure-Diplomacy and the China Dream: Will the Dominions Fall?," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 15–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2019.1637428>.

¹²⁶ Hal Brands, "U.S.-Chinese Rivalry Is a Battle Over Values," March 18, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-03-16/us-china-rivalry-battle-over-values>.



Figure 3. China and Surrounding Nations.¹²⁷

Taiwan’s success and autonomy threatens the CCP’s foreign and domestic interests. Secretary General Xi Jinping stressed in 2021, “Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China’s complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the Communist Party of China....We must take resolute action to utterly defeat any attempt toward ‘Taiwan independence.’”¹²⁸ This perspective is not Xi’s alone; preventing Taiwan’s independence and reunification has remained a non-negotiable hard line since the founding of the PRC.¹²⁹ The goal of reunification is directly identified as

¹²⁷ Source: *China Physiography*, Lambert Conformal, 1:30,000,000 (Langley, Virginia, 2011), <https://geology.com/world/1200/china-physical-map.jpg>.

¹²⁸ David Sacks, “What Xi Jinping’s Major Speech Means For Taiwan,” *Asia Unbound: Council on Foreign Relations*, *Council on Foreign Relations* (blog), July 6, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/what-xi-jinpings-major-speech-means-taiwan>.

¹²⁹ Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*.

one of the three historic tasks, that if accomplished, will lead to the fulfillment of National Rejuvenation.¹³⁰

This chapter describes the PRC's efforts to unify Taiwan with mainland China. As expressed in the ROC, an assessment of the adversary's approach is necessary to develop the appropriate approach to a successful defense.¹³¹ This chapter describes combination warfare and how the PRC leverages it to affect Taiwan. It provides examples of the PRC's economic, diplomatic, information, and military efforts to coerce or compel Taiwan to acceptance of reunification.

A. COMBINATION OF TWENTY-SEVEN TYPES OF WARFARE AGAINST CIVILIANS AND MILITARY ALIKE

Chinese warfare doctrine evolved to use all elements available to coerce a society towards a common goal.¹³² COL James Collard and COL Peter Faber of the U.S. Strategy and Policy Division of the Directorate of Strategic Planning at U.S. Air Force Headquarters, theorize that the PRC is developing “at least twenty-seven different types of warfare” and “the ability to mix and match them in unprecedented combinations.”¹³³ In what is called “combination warfare,” the CCP leverages multiple elements of national power in concert to overwhelm adversaries and satisfy its strategic policy goals.¹³⁴ Current events appear to validate that China has fully employed combination warfare to achieve its goal of reunification. Combination warfare is the CCP's primary means of achieving reunification with Taiwan and in the words of Xi Jinping, “smash any attempts at formal

¹³⁰ XI Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” (October 18, 2017), http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf.

¹³¹ Fiala, *ROC*.

¹³² James Callard and Peter Faber, “An Emerging Synthesis for a New Way of War: Combination Warfare and Future Innovation,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (2002): 61–68.

¹³³ Callard and Faber, 63.

¹³⁴ Callard and Faber, “An Emerging Synthesis for a New Way of War.”

independence.”¹³⁵ Over the last 20 years, the PRC relied heavily on economic, diplomatic, and military pressures to forward its Taiwan policy goals. This is demonstrated by connecting their economies, continued international isolation, ongoing information/disinformation campaigns, and military coercion and compellence.

B. ECONOMIC WARFARE TO FORCE DIPLOMATIC OBEDIENCE

During the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008, the PRC advanced its position in international institutions, allowing its influence to shape the world economy and isolate Taiwan.¹³⁶ According to the Corporate Finance Institute, from late 2007 through 2009, the U.S. housing market created a bubble through over-whelming mortgage-backed securities that included high-risk loans.¹³⁷ These loans eventually defaulted creating massive losses in the banks, which in turn caused massive losses in the markets that had significant international ripple effects.¹³⁸ The recession that followed inevitably caused major western financial institutions to take on debt and greatly restrict their ability to lend or extend credit. China’s apparent resiliency to the crisis with minimal impact to its growth rate and possession of the largest foreign currency reserves at the time set the conditions for its increased presence on the world stage.¹³⁹ China’s growing middle class increased the development of one of the largest emerging markets in the world and its willingness to extend development aid and assistance with limited stipulations gave it unprecedented bargaining power at a time when the rest of the world was overwhelmed with debt and local recessions.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Yew Lun Tian and Yimou Lee, “China’s Xi Pledges ‘reunification’ with Taiwan, Gets Stern Rebuke,” *Reuters*, July 1, 2021, sec. China, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-xi-pledges-reunification-with-taiwan-partys-birthday-2021-07-01/>.

¹³⁶ Stephen Olson and Clyde Prestowitz, “The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission,” n.d., 96.

¹³⁷ Corporate Finance Institute, “2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis – Overview, Market Bubble, Aftermath,” Corporate Finance Institute, accessed August 6, 2021, <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/finance/2008-2009-global-financial-crisis/>.

¹³⁸ Corporate Finance Institute.

¹³⁹ Olson and Prestowitz, “The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.”

¹⁴⁰ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare, Assumptions on War and Tactics in the Age of Globalization* (Beijing, China: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999). Pg51-52

As of 2008, with both increased domestic prosperity and growing prestige internationally, the PRC was in a strong position to bargain for increased isolation of Taiwan. The PRC uses its economic power and increased international influence to wage diplomatic warfare against Taiwan. The PRC leverages its direct aid programs and massive consumer market to encourage or even coerce borrowers and private industry to support the isolation of Taiwan. This practice includes economic coercion that ensures the international community strictly adheres to the “One China policy” by avoiding recognition or mention of Taipei.¹⁴¹ The PRC’s tactics are effective, as that Taiwan is only recognized by fourteen United Nations members.¹⁴² With decreasing international recognition, Taiwan has lost its voice at not only the U.N., but also several international bodies that include the World Health Organization.¹⁴³

To magnify the effects of international isolation, the CCP intertwined both countries’ economies attempting to reach a point of irreversible interdependence. According to Christian Le Miere, a research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Beijing believed that over the course of time with China’s growth, Taiwan could be absorbed through closer engagement and its sovereignty evaporated.¹⁴⁴ Beginning in 2008, the CCP leveraged its influence with the GMD which led to increased cross-strait engagement as represented in the movement of people, money, and goods. Shelley Rigger explains that Taiwanese investors took advantage of the opportunities presented in mainland China and “occupy a critical position as employers, technology providers, and bridges to global markets.”¹⁴⁵ As shown by Figure 4, Taiwan increased its investment in the PRC at the expense of trade with other nations. This culminated in 2010, when the CCP and Taiwan signed a preferential trade agreement, the Economic

¹⁴¹ Olson and Prestowitz, “The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.” Pg. 15

¹⁴² Tom O’Connor, “Which Countries Still Recognize Taiwan? Two More Nations Switch to China In Less Than A Week,” *Newsweek*, September 19, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/who-recognizes-taiwan-two-change-china-1460559>.

¹⁴³ Yu-Jie Chen and Jerome A. Cohen, “Why Does the WHO Exclude Taiwan?,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 9, 2020AD, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/why-does-who-exclude-taiwan>.

¹⁴⁴ Christian Le Miere, “Analysing Chinese Military Strategy towards Taiwan,” 2021, 22.

¹⁴⁵ Shelly Rigger, *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse*, 2nd Edition (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 118.

Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), in June of 2010 with the intent to reduce tariffs and eliminate trade-barriers with Taiwan.¹⁴⁶ The PRC tactics degraded Taiwan’s ability to generate economic growth and influence outside of the opportunities presented by the CCP.

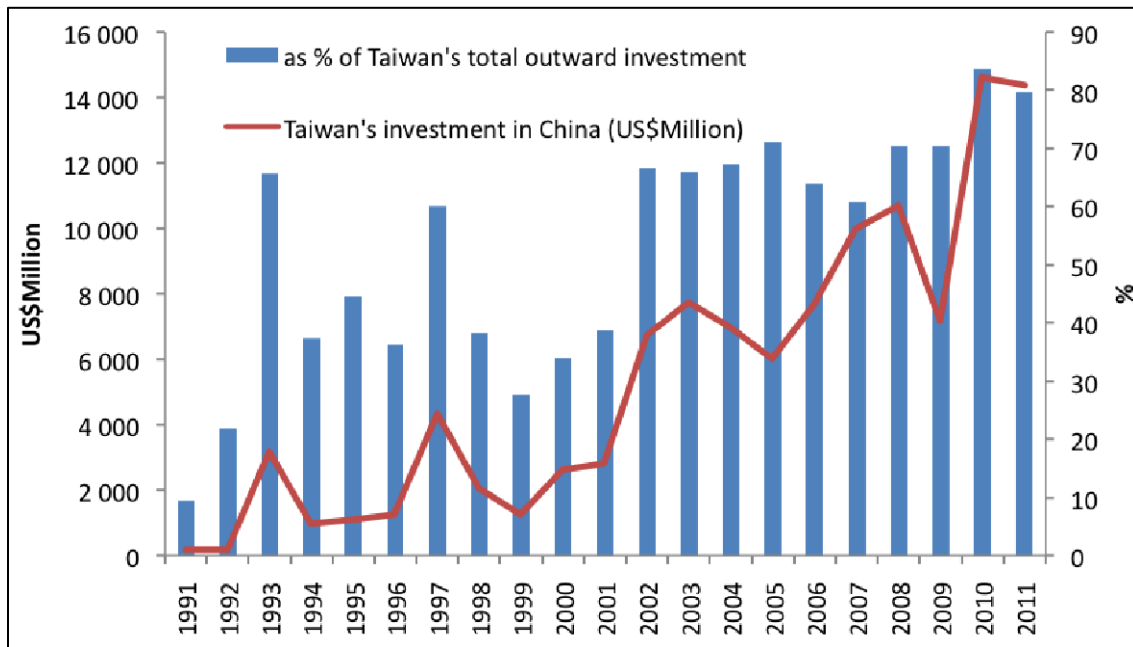


Figure 4. Taiwan’s Total Outward Investment % vs. Investment in the PRC.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Kuo-I Chang and Kazunobu Hayakawa, “Details in the China-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement,” *Journal of Economic Integration* 29, no. 4 (December 15, 2014): 676–99, <https://doi.org/10.11130/jei.2014.29.4.676>.

¹⁴⁷ Source: Min-Hua Chiang and Bernard Gerbier, “Cross-Strait Economic Relations: Recent Development and Implications for Taiwan,” *Revue de La Régulation. Capitalisme, Institutions, Pouvoirs*, no. 13 (April 18, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4000/regulation.10177>.

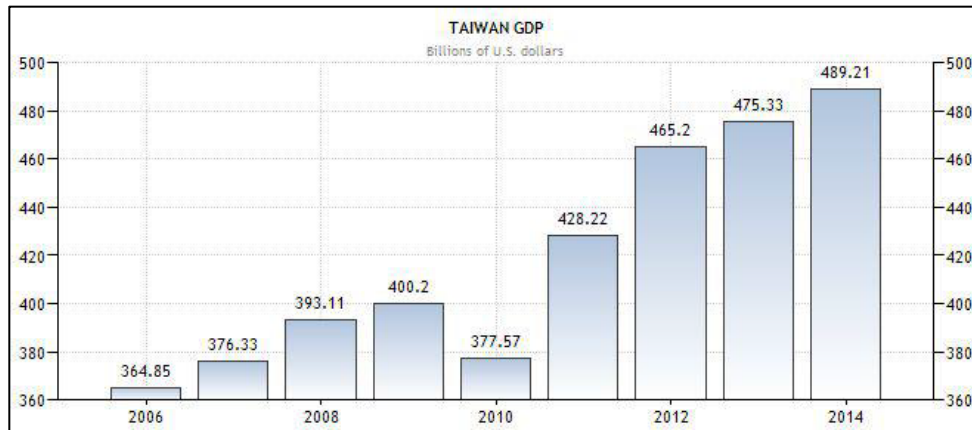


Figure 5. Taiwan’s GDP 2006 to 2014.¹⁴⁸

These economic efforts succeeded in increasing trade and economic growth for both Beijing and Taiwan and initially seemed to garner greater affinity for Beijing while the GMD remained in power. As shown in Figure 5, the increased investment in the PRC resulted in drastic growth of Taiwan’s GDP, but at the expense of increased economic reliance on the mainland. However, in 2016 the Democratic People’s Party (DPP) candidate Tsai Ing-Wen was elected on a platform focused on autonomy and sovereignty stopping just short of declaring independence. The transition from the GMD to DPP slowed the growing economic interdependence with the PRC by both cooling of the Taipei-Beijing relationship and moving Taiwan towards reopening more direct relations with the U.S.¹⁴⁹ Beijing attempted to use its economic leverage to strategically signal and message Taiwan about its displeasure with the election results. Hilton Yip acknowledged that China significantly reduced tourism to Taiwan after the inauguration of Tsai Ing-wen as a form of economic punitive action.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, in March of 2021, China claimed that Taiwanese pineapples were banned because of a pest infestation and refused to import

¹⁴⁸ Source: MarketGyrations, “Taiwan Looks Like A Safe Haven As An Investment Opportunity Among Emerging Markets | Seeking Alpha,” Seeking Alpha, March 9, 2015, <https://seekingalpha.com/article/2984956-taiwan-looks-like-a-safe-haven-as-an-investment-opportunity-among-emerging-markets>.

¹⁴⁹ Miere, “Analysing Chinese Military Strategy towards Taiwan.”

¹⁵⁰ Hilton Yip, “Taiwan Shows How to Carefully Snip Chinese Economic Ties,” *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed August 3, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/24/taiwan-china-economic-ties-decoupling/>.

40,000 tons of pineapples.¹⁵¹ Though this attempt at economic coercion was relatively ineffective, as the pineapples were exported elsewhere, it indicated the PRC's willingness to economically punish Taiwan through decreased trade with the mainland.

The interdependence of the two economies is not necessarily balanced in China's favor. China is reliant on Taiwan for high-end tech such as semiconductors, whose value is of absolute necessity to China.¹⁵² Taiwan has already begun significant efforts to diversify its supply chains decoupling its dependence on China, limiting the effectiveness of China's economic coercion attempts.¹⁵³ The trade imbalance is evident in Taiwan's exports (indirectly through Hong Kong and Macao) in 2020, which accounted for 70% of cross-strait trade lifting Taiwan's growth rate above China's for the first time since 1990.¹⁵⁴ Following Tsai Ing-Wen election, Taiwan initiated the New Southbound Policy (NSP) intended to diversify its economy and create redundant supply chains.¹⁵⁵ Taiwan's efforts to reduce economic dependence on the mainland leads to the CCP leveraging other means of influence to maintain pressure.

C. INFORMATION WARFARE TO SUBVERT THE NEED FOR AUTONOMY

Information operations are vital to China's ability to shape and control the narrative. Throughout the information domain, China is expanding its influence through social media, disinformation, and influence operations. A Rand study of Chinese disinformation efforts explains, "China is using Taiwan as a test bed for developing attack vectors using disinformation on social media."¹⁵⁶ Recognizing the necessity of information warfare in

¹⁵¹ Bonnie Glaser and Jeremy Mark, "Taiwan and China Are Locked in Economic Co-Dependence," *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed August 3, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/14/taiwan-china-economic-codependence/>.

¹⁵² Glaser and Mark.

¹⁵³ Glaser and Mark.

¹⁵⁴ Glaser and Mark.

¹⁵⁵ Yip, "Taiwan Shows How to Carefully Snip Chinese Economic Ties."

¹⁵⁶ Scott W. Harold, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Jeffrey W. Hornung, "Chinese Disinformation Efforts on Social Media," July 19, 2021, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4373z3.html.

the modern technological age the PRC created a separate service, the PLA Strategic Support Force (PLASSF), to enhance its capability to conduct information warfare.¹⁵⁷ According to the RAND report, the PLASSF wages public opinion management, influence operations, and disinformation campaigns to compete in the gray zone or area below armed conflict.¹⁵⁸ Young, Gregson, and Hsiao describe this information warfare as a component of Sharp Power, and a prong in the CCP's two prong approach.¹⁵⁹ The National Endowment for Democracy describes Sharp Power as "aggressive and subversive policies employed by authoritarian governments as a projection of influence."¹⁶⁰ Sharp power includes "attempts by one country to manipulate and manage information about itself in the news media and educational systems of another country, for purposes of misleading or dividing public opinion."¹⁶¹ Summarily the CCP through multiple government organizations and the PLASSF conduct operations to achieve pre-kinetic effects to disparage and isolate Taiwan by sowing doubt and dividing its populace while simultaneously guarding against its own vulnerabilities on the mainland.¹⁶² Through the use of sharp power the CCP continues to wage information warfare against Taiwan to control the narrative and to prepare the precrisis environment for possible future actions.

D. MILITARY MIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE DOMINANCE AND ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY

Since the end of the Chinese civil war, the PLA has engaged in demonstrations and increasingly direct military actions intent on challenging Taiwan's idea of autonomy and establish the CCP's dominance over the island. The CCP initiated a massive modernizing of the PLA offensive capabilities and doctrine meant to refocus from local wars of a

¹⁵⁷ Harold, Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Hornung.

¹⁵⁸ Harold, Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Hornung.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen Young, Chip Gregson, and Russel Hsiao, "David and Goliath: Strengthening Taiwan's Deterrence and Resiliency," *Global Taiwan Institute*, Occasional Report, November 2020, 37. (pg 7)

¹⁶⁰ Young, Gregson, and Hsiao. (pg 8)

¹⁶¹ Young, Gregson, and Hsiao.

¹⁶² Harold, Beauchamp-Mustafaga, and Hornung, "Chinese Disinformation Efforts on Social Media."

defensive nature to projection of offensive military power.¹⁶³ As a result of modernization, the PLA has exponentially increased its development of air, missile, and naval capabilities eclipsing Taiwan's national assets numerically, and arguably technologically.¹⁶⁴ In particular, the PLA's development and production of short range ballistic missiles (SRBM), mid-range ballistic missiles (MRBM), and hypersonic glide vehicles with increased accuracy decrease the effectiveness of Taiwan's defenses to deter them.¹⁶⁵ The growth of the PLA's capabilities provide a means of coercion against Taiwan not seen since before the start of the war on the Korean Peninsula.

This newfound primacy in stand-off capability provides the PLA the means to continually push the boundaries of what is considered the Air defense identification zone (ADIZ) as well as maritime boundaries. According to *Janes Intelligence Review*, Taiwan had intercepted Chinese ships 1,223 times and Chinese aircraft crossed into Taiwan's ADIZ a record 380 times.¹⁶⁶ Adrian Ang U-jin and Olli Pekka Suorsa argue that these incursions are meant to signal Washington, D.C., rather than Taiwan, but they also recognize that these missions locations and frequency indicate the CCP's desire to establish a new normal of patrol areas both in the maritime and air domains.¹⁶⁷ Even if these events are primarily meant to signal the U.S. they create second and third order effects on the Taiwanese military. When PLA aircraft violate the ADIZ, Taiwan launches fighter aircraft to intercept and ensure the incursion goes no farther. This requires the Taiwanese air force to maintain several of its limited aircraft on alert status, increasing maintenance requirements on the airframe and effecting rest and training requirements for the pilots required to fly the missions. Over the course of time the new normal becomes more and more difficult to physically respond to. Additionally, the new normal could build

¹⁶³ Miere, "Analysing Chinese Military Strategy towards Taiwan."

¹⁶⁴ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020*.

¹⁶⁵ Miere, "Analysing Chinese Military Strategy towards Taiwan."

¹⁶⁶ Miere.

¹⁶⁷ Adrian Ang U-jin, and Olli Pekka Suorsa, "Understanding China's Aerial Incursions Into Taiwan's ADIZ," accessed August 10, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/understanding-chinas-aerial-incursions-into-taiwans-adiz/>.

complacency that degrades Taiwan's response to breaches of its air and maritime borders. The collaborative weight of advancements in technology, increased military exercises focused on projecting power in the maritime environment, extension and frequency of air and maritime patrols, and the growth of PLA missile capabilities are the hard power component of a two-prong approach.¹⁶⁸

The PRC's use of combination warfare does not fit well within Arreguín-Toft's strategic interaction theory. Though the PRC is unquestionably the stronger actor, it chooses to leverage combinations of direct and indirect tactics. Along with its economic growth and military modernization, Beijing is using diplomatic clout to increase international support for isolation of Taiwan and the one-china policy. The PRC's aggression across these different domains represents both direct and indirect forms of warfare. As that the PRC has not succeeded in coercing Taiwan into reunification using combination warfare thus far, Arreguín-Toft's theory remains a solid foundation for understanding international conflict.

¹⁶⁸ Young, Gregson, and Hsiao, "David and Goliath: Strengthening Taiwan's Deterrence and Resiliency."

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V. TAIWAN'S VIBRANT DEMOCRACY REFUTING THE CCP'S MANDATE FOR REJUVENATION

After seven decades of political and geographic separation, both the PRC and Taiwan are challenging the mostly peaceful status quo. The PRC challenges include ever increasing modernization of the PLA, use of combination warfare, and the 2049 mandate for national rejuvenation that includes the reassimilation of Taiwan. PRC Defense Minister Wu Qian proclaims the coercive activities “are necessary actions to address the current security situation in the Taiwan Strait and to safeguard national sovereignty and security.”¹⁶⁹ Wu adds, “we warn those ‘Taiwan independence’ elements: those who play with fire will burn themselves, and ‘Taiwan independence’ means war.”¹⁷⁰ Taiwan itself is upsetting the balance by challenging the CCP’s position with stronger calls for independence. Taiwan’s recently reelected president, Tsai Ing-wen, stated, “We don’t have a need to declare ourselves an independent state.”¹⁷¹ She continues, “We are an independent country already and we call ourselves the Republic of China (Taiwan).”¹⁷² If the clash of wills between the two countries results in armed conflict, the current disparity of power favors the PRC.

¹⁶⁹ Tony Monroe and Yew Lun Tian, “China Sharpens Language, Warns Taiwan That Independence ‘Means War,’” *Reuters*, January 28, 2021, Aerospace and Defense edition, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-taiwan-idUSKBN29X0V3>.

¹⁷⁰ Monroe and Lun Tian.

¹⁷¹ John Sudworth, “China Needs to Show Taiwan Respect, Says President,” *BBC News*, January 14, 2020, Digital edition, sec. Asia, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51104246>.

¹⁷² Sudworth.

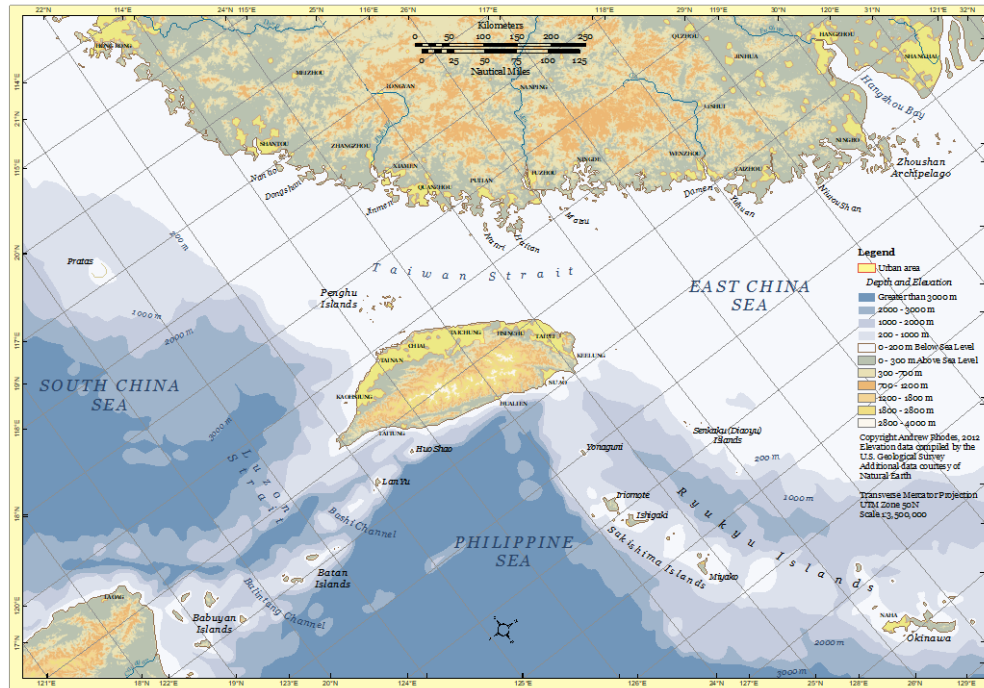


Figure 6. Taiwan Strait Off-Axis.¹⁷³

Taiwan’s Overall Defense Concept (ODC) attempts to address its realization that a direct defense against the ever-increasing strength of the PRC would result in loss of autonomy.¹⁷⁴ As represented in Arreguín-Toft’s theory on strategic interaction, to survive and maintain autonomy, Taiwan must adopt a strategy which offsets this disparity of power and offers credible deterrence against a PLA invasion.¹⁷⁵ Admiral (retired) Lee Hsi-min and Eric Lee write, “Taiwan must abandon notions of a traditional war of attrition with the PLA. Facing a stronger adversary, embracing an effective asymmetric defense posture and incorporating tactical asymmetric capabilities could compensate for Taiwan’s conventional disadvantage and prevent the PLA from getting boots on the ground.”¹⁷⁶ For Taiwan,

¹⁷³ Source: Andrew Rhodes, *Taiwan Strait Off-Axis*, Digital PDF, 1:3,500,000 (Thinking in Space, 2012), https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4c5456d6-a318-49d7-ac1c-f151fb7ab26b/downloads/1cup9fv0i_283979.pdf?ver=1635605376552.

¹⁷⁴ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 65.

¹⁷⁵ Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict.”

¹⁷⁶ Lee Hsi-min and Eric Lee, “Taiwan’s Overall Defense Concept, Explained,” *The Diplomat*, accessed July 22, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/taiwans-overall-defense-concept-explained/>.

strengthening their population's resolve and adopting a strategy counteracting the PRC's advantages could offer credible deterrence and further extend the status quo.

Overall, this chapter offers an overview of Taiwan's interests and its ability to protect them. Initially the section presents the disparity in power between both countries and why traditional military deterrence is no longer viable for Taiwan. It analyzes the current state of "status quo" and the elements allowing it to perform as a non-conventional deterrent to a PRC invasion. Second, it analyzes the populations support for autonomy over reunification and how this hampers the PRC's efforts to subjugate Taiwan. Third, it presents Taiwan's civil-military security strategy named the ODC and discuss its strengths and weaknesses.¹⁷⁷ Finally, this section offers an analysis on Taiwan's reserve force; its most important but least prepared capability.

A. STATUS QUO, AN UNEASY EQUILIBRIUM, AND AUTONOMY

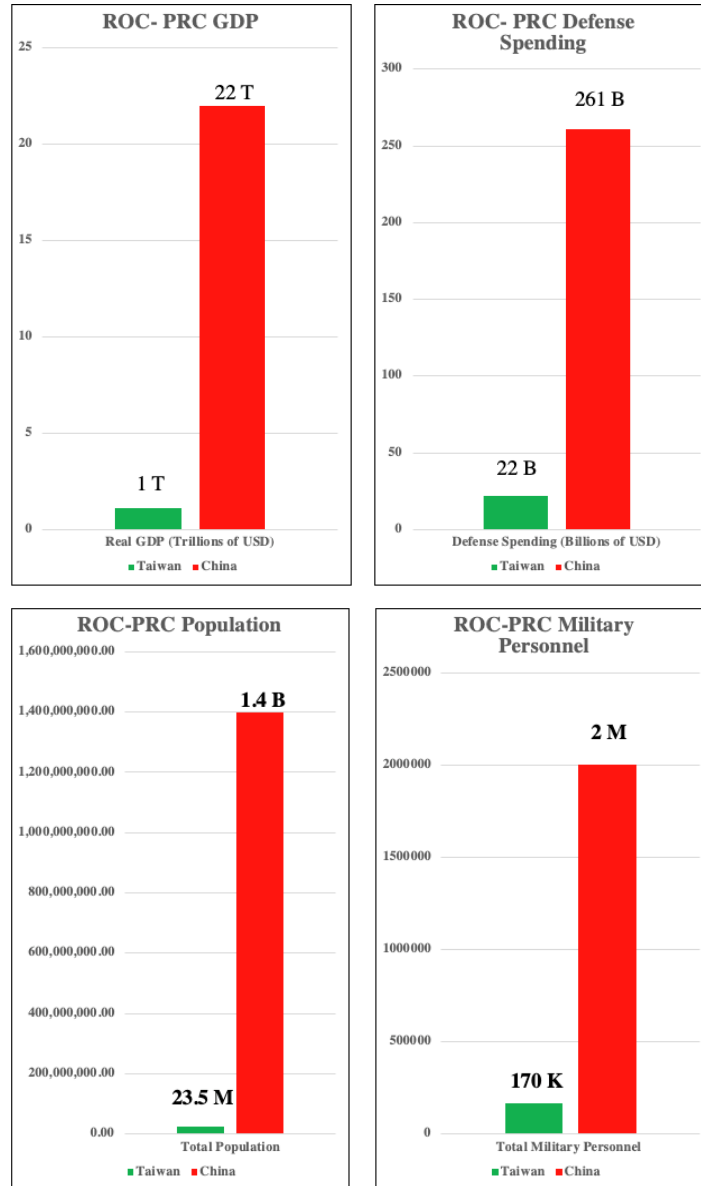
The current disparity in national power between both the PRC and Taiwan is tremendous and not likely to decrease. When Jiang and the GMD fled from mainland China to Taiwan, his intentions were to use the island only as a temporary base to retake the country from the communists.¹⁷⁸ As the decades passed, retaking the mainland from the CCP became more improbable as the PRC's national power and international recognition continued to grow while Taiwan's declined. As shown in Figure 7, a 2020 comparison of both countries easily distinguishes the immense advantage in national power the PRC holds over Taiwan. The PRC has an alarming advantage in the four categories of Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Total Defense Spending, Total Population Size, and Total Military Personnel.¹⁷⁹ In addition to these factors, unlike Taiwan, the PRC also possesses

¹⁷⁷ Hsi-min and Lee.

¹⁷⁸ Rigger, *Why Taiwan Matters*, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Janes, "Janes: Taiwan Dashboard," Janes Taiwan Dashboard, accessed August 9, 2021, <https://customer-janes-com.libproxy.nps.edu/dashboard/country/Taiwan>; Central Intelligence Agency, "Taiwan," in *The World Factbook* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, August 1, 2021), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/taiwan/>; Central Intelligence Agency, "China," in *The World Factbook* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, August 3, 2021), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>; Janes, "Janes: China Dashboard," Janes China Dashboard, accessed August 9, 2021, <https://customer-janes-com.libproxy.nps.edu/Dashboard/Country/China>.

a nuclear arsenal.¹⁸⁰ Taiwan, despite the population's interests, is no longer powerful enough to confidently proclaim independence or ensure its autonomy from the PRC's hostile actions solely based on a strategy of conventional military power.



¹⁸⁰ Elizabeth N. Saunders, “The Domestic Politics of Nuclear Choices—A Review Essay,” *International Security* 44, no. 2 (October 1, 2019): 146, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00361.

Figure 7. Taiwan and China GDP, Defense Spending, Population, and Military Comparison.¹⁸¹

Despite losing the Civil War, a lasting period of martial law under an authoritarian regime, and decreasing international recognition and partnerships, the country of Taiwan has maintained its autonomy for over seven decades. To combat that autonomy, the PRC is incrementally increasing the pressure on Taiwan, seeking its capitulation. The PRC has also pressured the international community to reduce its acceptance of Taiwan's sovereignty.¹⁸² Despite these events and pressures, Taiwan created a geopolitical space residing between a self-determined province of the PRC and an internationally unrecognized sovereign state. This space of equilibrium existing between Taiwan and the PRC is often cited as the "status quo."¹⁸³ The status quo is an informal truce and compromise that minimalizes cross-strait hostilities between both countries.

Taiwan maintains autonomy and continues the *status quo* through overwhelming popular support of its government and vibrant democracy, relatively little dependence on the PRC, a reasonably strong conventional military, and the geographic separation from the mainland. In addition to Taiwan's strengths, the U.S. contributes to the status quo through its own ambiguous diplomatic policy. For Taiwan to maintain a strong deterrence and extend the status quo, it must continue to build upon these elements. The two surest paths to a PRC victory are either a PLA invasion followed by a successful occupation, or a shift in preferences by the Taiwanese themselves, wherein supporting reunification under the CCP exceeds support for their own autonomy. The following paragraphs present an argument that a PRC victory by either scenario is unlikely.

¹⁸¹ Source: Janes, "Janes: Taiwan Dashboard"; Central Intelligence Agency, "Taiwan"; Central Intelligence Agency, "China"; Janes, "Janes: China Dashboard."

¹⁸² Olson and Prestowitz, "The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission," 15.

¹⁸³ Rigger, *Why Taiwan Matters*, 6.

B. TAIWAN IDENTITY: AUTONOMY VERSUS REUNIFICATION

In less than 40 years, Taiwan transformed politically from a single-party dictatorship to a modern multiparty democracy, responsive to its population's views, and often applauded by other democratic countries. Following the GMD's monopoly of political power and the end of martial law in 1987, Taiwan's population has voiced its interests and concerns through the country's elections.¹⁸⁴ By far, the most important issue in Taiwan politics is its relationship with the PRC.¹⁸⁵ Taiwan political parties and their candidates' popularity at the polls are directly linked to their positions on autonomy and reunification. President Tsai stated, "I ask that the 23 million people of Taiwan act as our guides and partners. Let us pool our wisdom and courage and make this country a better place together."¹⁸⁶ Only two parties have held the office of president, the pro-unification GMD and the pro-status quo or pro-independence Democratic People's Party (DPP).¹⁸⁷ Since 2016 and following Tsai's 57% to 38% reelection over the GMD in 2020, the DPP continues to hold Taiwan's presidency.¹⁸⁸ In addition to the presidency, the DPP enjoys a 54% majority to the GMD's 34% popular vote in the legislative Yuan or parliament.¹⁸⁹ The DPP's success in both those elections correlates with the Taiwan people's general feelings of maintaining autonomy over reunification with the mainland. Yet, as expected, the population's views are more complicated than a binary choice between reunification or autonomy.

¹⁸⁴ Christian Schafferer, "Taiwan's Defensive Democratization," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 1, no. 47 (February 24, 2020): 41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.2020.1730041>.

¹⁸⁵ Dennis Hickey, "More and More Taiwanese Favor Independence – and Think the U.S. Would Help Fight for It," *The Diplomat*, December 3, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/12/more-and-more-taiwanese-favor-independence-and-think-the-us-would-help-fight-for-it/>.

¹⁸⁶ Richard C. Bush, "Taiwan's President Begins Her Second Term with a Call for Unity," *Brookings* (blog), May 21, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/05/21/taiwans-president-begins-her-second-term-with-a-call-for-unity/>.

¹⁸⁷ Jane's, "Taiwan – Internal Affairs," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment-China and Northeast Asia*, August 10, 2021, 1–17.

¹⁸⁸ Jane's, 5.

¹⁸⁹ Jane's, 5.

The vast majority of Taiwan’s population and its current president, Tsai Ing-wen, are against reunification with the mainland, but differ on whether to support independence or continue the *status quo*. Dennis Hickey of the Taiwan National Security Survey (TNSS) notes, “support for immediate unification...stands at roughly 1 percent,” but also “support for immediate independence remains in single digits”¹⁹⁰ Similarly, Timothy Rich and Andi Dahmer explain, “Across the entire population, more than two-thirds of respondents agreed that they would support independence if peaceful coexistence with China was a possibility.”¹⁹¹ Though, as Rich and Dahmer further clarify, the support for independence drops dramatically, to under 50%, if an expectation of a PRC attack would follow.¹⁹² Though the pro-independence, the DPP continues to increase its popularity over the pro-unification GMD, but as of 2020, the majority of Taiwan’s population is not supportive of measures leading to further violent conflict with the PRC. In comparison with reunification or independence, consistent polling reveals that maintaining the status quo remains an increasingly popular and viable option for both the population and its elected officials.¹⁹³

In this environment, nationalistic identity supports the viability of comprehensive defense. For a start, the population overwhelmingly supports its democratically elected government and identifies as Taiwanese over Chinese. Kat Devlin and Christine Huang explain, “that people in Taiwan increasingly identify only as Taiwanese as opposed to both Taiwanese and Chinese or solely Chinese.”¹⁹⁴ Devlin and Huang’s data, based on Pew Research polling, shows 66% identify as only “Taiwanese,” 28% as both “Taiwanese and Chinese,” and 4% as only “Chinese.”¹⁹⁵ Hickey’s states, based on TNSS polling, that “an impressive majority—almost 75 percent—continue to believe that Taiwan is already an

¹⁹⁰ Hickey, “More and More Taiwanese Favor Independence – and Think the U.S. Would Help Fight for It,” 5.

¹⁹¹ Timothy Rich and Andi Dahmer, “Taiwan Opinion Polling on Unification with China,” *The Jamestown Foundation China Brief* 20, no. 18 (October 19, 2020): 5.

¹⁹² Rich and Dahmer, 5.

¹⁹³ Hickey, “More and More Taiwanese Favor Independence – and Think the U.S. Would Help Fight for It”; Rich and Dahmer, “Taiwan Opinion Polling on Unification with China.”

¹⁹⁴ Kat Devlin and Christine Huang, “In Taiwan, Views of Mainland China Mostly Negative,” *Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project*, May 12, 2020, 12.

¹⁹⁵ Devlin and Huang, 12.

independent country called the Republic of China.”¹⁹⁶ In addition to the over 17 of 23 million Taiwanese supporting autonomy, polling shows 22%, or approximately 5 million people, will join the military or support the effort if war comes with the PRC.¹⁹⁷

In support of Taiwanese employment of a comprehensive defense strategy, it could mobilize upwards of 5 million willing members of its population as a force multiplier to offset numerical superiority favoring the PLA. Taiwan’s population, either directly as armed resistance or indirectly as a mobilized response to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA-DR), will increase the country’s military capacity to repel a PLA invasion. Traditional military theory often relies upon a 3:1 ratio advantage of combat power for an attacker to successfully conduct an offensive breakthrough.¹⁹⁸ In terms of a PLA invasion, Easton, Stokes, Cooper, and Chan suggest that a 5:1 ratio is more realistic due to the fact that the “unique military geography of the Taiwan Strait battlespace, defined by rough seas, foul weather, high mountains, and dense cities, further advances the defender’s advantage.”¹⁹⁹ From a strictly numerical comparison, the PLA likely possesses the combat power to secure an initial foothold in Taiwan. The PLA’s chances of success are diminished when applying the geographic factors of distance over water and a required amphibious-airborne-air assault.²⁰⁰ In addition to the difficulty of a cross-strait invasion, based on the 3:1 rule, PLA success is reduced further when factoring the addition of a motivated and mobilized population numbering in the millions.

¹⁹⁶ Hickey, “More and More Taiwanese Favor Independence – and Think the U.S. Would Help Fight for It,” 5.

¹⁹⁷ Hickey, 5.

¹⁹⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, “Assessing the Conventional Balance: The 3:1 Rule and Its Critics,” *International Security* 13, no. 4 (1989): 54–56, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538780>.

¹⁹⁹ Ian Easton et al., *Transformation of Taiwan’s Reserve Force*, e, RR1757 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 42, www.rand.org/t/RR1757.

²⁰⁰ Samuel Cranny-Evans, “Taiwan Has a Plan: The Overall Defence Concept,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, June 8, 2021, 2.

C. THE ODC: CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE AND DETERRENCE, CIVIL-MILITARY HA-DR, ASYMMETRIC WARFARE, AND RESERVE FORCES

In response to the growing disparity in power and an increasingly hostile PRC, Taiwan initiated new defense strategy in 2018. The ODC is Taiwan's military strategy to address the PRC's ongoing hostile actions, deterrence against invasion, and to repel or remove a PLA invasion force. Taiwan's 2019 *National Defense Report* (NDR) states, "Through a rapid growth on its comprehensive national power, the PRC is speeding up its military reform and weapon modernization, and has greatly improved its military capabilities in a real combat setting through its frequent crossing island chains training, far seas drills, and joint air and maritime drills."²⁰¹ Taiwan seeks to use its advantages, that include a resilient and supportive population, a relatively strong and modern military, as well as geographic separation as deterrents against a PLA cross-strait invasion. Furthermore, Taiwan seeks to expand upon its current strengths by improving civil-military responsiveness to crisis, developing asymmetric capabilities that offset the PLAs strengths, and revisioning its reserve forces to reinforce its traditional armed forces' defense against invasion.

The ODC is intended to evolve Taiwan's national security strategy from a primarily direct defense and deterrence strategy towards a joint force and civil-military "All-Out Defense."²⁰² Closely resembling NATO's Comprehensive Defense, Taiwan's NDR states, the strategy "is formulated to proactively construct joint military strength ... capable of resolute defense, integrate total civil and military power as an all-out defense, and achieve a result of strategic perseverance."²⁰³ In 2019, Minister Defense Yen Teh-fa stated, "Our mission is to shape our military into a force capable of disaster relief in peacetime and fight in wartime."²⁰⁴ As depicted in Figure 8, the three important pieces of the ODC to

²⁰¹ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 52.

²⁰² Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 164.

²⁰³ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*; Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 65.

²⁰⁴ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 7.

understand are the conventional military strategy of “Resolute Defense and Multi-domain deterrence,” the civil-military interactions supporting crisis response, and the range of asymmetric capabilities intended to offset the PRC’s primary advantages.²⁰⁵ The combination of all three offer a potential solution to protect an island nation of 23 million people against a 1.4 billion-man tidal wave.



Figure 8. ODC “Resolute Defense and Multi-domain Deterrence.”²⁰⁶

1. Conventional Military Strategy: Resolute Defense and Multi-domain Deterrence

The three parts of the ODC’s “Resolute Defense and Multi-domain Deterrence” plan are “preservation of the forces,” a “decisive battle in the littoral zone,” and “destruction of the enemy at the landing beach.”²⁰⁷ The three parts of the plan address the enemy’s very capable preparatory fires, Taiwan’s strength in defending the space over the Strait, and the likeliness of PLA landing on the island.²⁰⁸ Initially the plan calls for

²⁰⁵ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 68–69.

²⁰⁶ Source: Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 69.

²⁰⁷ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 68–69.

²⁰⁸ Cranny-Evans, “Taiwan Has a Plan: The Overall Defence Concept,” 3–4.

preservation of Taiwanese forces, by various means throughout a conflict, from the PLA's highly developed preparatory fires, that include a growing and evolving ballistic missile arsenal. The plan then calls for the use of air, naval, and shore-based capabilities to incapacitate an invasion force crossing the Taiwan Strait.²⁰⁹ Finally, the plan calls for the use of joint forces using prepositioned defensive capabilities to destroy PLA forces as they land on Taiwan shores.²¹⁰ The Resolute Defense and Multi-domain Deterrence plan evolves beyond previous defense plans to address the expansion and modernization of the PLA. Additionally, the ODC is well-publicized and intended to improve its deterrence value against the PRC, strategic messages to supportive partner nations of Taiwan's willingness to fight for autonomy, and increase the population's will to participate in the country's defense.

2. Strong Civil-Military HA-DR in Response to Crisis

Taiwan is improving the interoperability and the responsiveness of both its public (ministries, military, and emergency management) and civic (individuals, NGOs, clubs, and faith-based organizations) sectors through education, training, and mobilization to better prepare for crisis. Whether in response to an earthquake, tsunami, or a PLA invasion, Taiwan's inclusion of its population in government led HA-DR is not a new concept. Alan Hao Yang and Judy Shu-Hsien Wu write, "In Taiwan, local communities that are regularly threatened by extreme weather conditions try to build disaster resilience through the voluntary and collective actions of residents and through community-building projects, seeking to prevent disasters or mitigate potential losses."²¹¹ To expand the populations understanding of crisis and improve its ability to respond in concert with the government, Taiwan is implementing education through public schools, private institutions, youth

²⁰⁹ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 68–69.

²¹⁰ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 68–69.

²¹¹ Alan Hao Yang and Judy Shu-Hsien Wu, "Building a Disaster-Resilient Community in Taiwan: A Social Capital Analysis of the Meizhou Experience," *Politics and Governance* 8, no. 4 (2020): 388, <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.17645/pag.v8i4.3106>.

camps, and on the job training.²¹² To increase and validate interoperability, Taiwan executes HA-DR exercises throughout the year, which include tens of thousands of participants from both the public and civic sectors.²¹³ The findings from these exercises are used to improve all aspects of HA-DR, including regulation, doctrine, and material mobilization.²¹⁴ Response to crisis is further improved by increasing the efficiency of mobilization of material and people. Material mobilization during crisis is improved by planned prepositioning, commandeering, direct purchasing, and civil-military sharing.²¹⁵ Though not fully developed, Taiwan seeks to create a nation-wide personnel recall system that uses mobile text to increase the ability to mobilize manpower quickly.²¹⁶ Whether for purposes of pro-unification or pro-independence, improving a nation's ability to respond to crisis is politically safe and desirable. Taiwan's HA-DR plan is likely intended to expand the number of volunteers by gaining support from elements of the population not normally willing to participate in direct defense against a PLA invasion.

Though roughly 5 million Taiwanese proclaim a willingness to support the military in the event of an invasion, this leaves a great number more civilians as passive observers, or, worse yet, less than capable casualties. Minister Yen explains, "aside from routine training and drills, the armed forces also actively join in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts."²¹⁷ Though not as ambitious as mobilizing an armed resistance against invaders, by allowing the armed forces to participate in guiding and educating willing elements of the population, Taiwan will increase its ability to cope with any crisis, bolster support of the military, and further strengthen its national identity. During an invasion, a population prepared to render self and community assistance will

²¹² Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 164–69.

²¹³ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 84–85.

²¹⁴ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 83–84.

²¹⁵ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 84, 184, 185.

²¹⁶ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 85–86.

²¹⁷ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 7.

decrease the military's requirements in a HA-DR crisis, allowing it to remain focused on repelling the PLA.

3. Taiwan's Asymmetric Warfare to Counter Chinese Conventional Overmatch

The least clear, and likely most ambitious, piece of the ODC is Taiwan's development of asymmetric warfare capabilities to offset the PLA's overmatch. Unlike the previously detailed civil-military response to crisis, the Taiwan's asymmetric warfare capabilities are not as clearly defined, described, or developed. No doubt many are classified. Despite the lack of clarity regarding the development of asymmetric warfare capabilities, Taiwan has communicated its importance. President Tsai states, "I am committed to accelerating the development of asymmetric capabilities under the Overall Defense Concept...this will be our number one priority."²¹⁸ Taiwan's three layers of asymmetric warfare are: 1) counter-invasion capabilities, 2) advantage producing cyber, electronic, and information warfare, and 3) irregular warfare. If envisioned and developed appropriately, these three layers will provide both deterrence against PRC hostilities and, in the case of an invasion, offset the PLA's great military advantage.

The asymmetric counter-invasion layer is a suite of more conventional capabilities that are cheap, concealable, reproducible, mobile, and effective against key PLA airborne-air assault-amphibious invasion forces. In addition to the ability to disrupt the PRC invasion forces, these capabilities are intended to survive beyond the likely PLA preparatory fires. Admiral Lee (retired) explains, "the island should bristle with big numbers of smaller, cheaper but lethal weapons, including mobile anti-ship missiles, [man] portable anti-aircraft missiles, advanced sea mines and fast missile boats."²¹⁹ In addition to more complex and expensive military hardware, this layer also includes dual-use civilian materials. Lee Hsi-min and Eric Lee explain, "Taiwan's multiple telecommunication systems can serve as back-up communication networks. Civilians can use drones and other

²¹⁸ Hsi-min and Lee, "Taiwan's Overall Defense Concept, Explained," 10.

²¹⁹ Lee, Lague, and Blanchard, "China Launches 'Gray-Zone' Warfare to Subdue Taiwan," 2.

commercial electronics to provide logistics support and localized reconnaissance.”²²⁰ Additionally, Taiwan could use heavy equipment and even offshore wind farms to either deny landing or channelize PLA forces into more defensible terrain.²²¹ If both deterrence and defense across the strait fail to prevent a landing on Taiwan, the asymmetric layer, along with what remains of the conventional military, will further deplete the PLA’s ability to buildup combat power and secure further success on the island.

Beyond kinetic hardware, Taiwan is strengthening and developing cyber (CW), electronic (EW), and information warfare (IW) capabilities to better defend the nation’s various command and control (C2) mechanisms, and critical civil infrastructure against PLASSF capabilities. The expanded CW, EW, and IW capabilities enable offensive asymmetric warfare operations while protecting the population’s will to participate in defense and HA-DR efforts. As previously discussed, the PLA Strategic Support Force (PLASSF) conducts first-strike cross-domain space, information, cyber, and electronic warfare intended to cripple an adversary’s command and control, amplify conventional force attacks, and erode the will of the population to continue the conflict.²²² CW, EW, and IW are the keys to counteracting the PRC’s cross-domain preparatory fires against both Taiwan’s military and civil population.

Taiwan’s information warfare (IW) strategy is focused on magnifying the country’s already strong national identity and degrading the PLASSF’s ability to target the population’s will to support the Taipei government. Taiwan’s IW seeks to fortify and expand civil-public communications in all phases of conflict by reinforcing patriotism and increasing a willingness to participate in crisis response.²²³ The *National Defense Report* states that the Taiwan Ministry of Defense must address the population’s concerns “in a timely manner to deal with the news in question, and disseminate positive discussions

²²⁰ Hsi-min and Lee, “Taiwan’s Overall Defense Concept, Explained,” 9.

²²¹ Hsi-min and Lee, 9.

²²² Simone Dossi, “On the Asymmetric Advantages of Cyberwarfare. Western Literature and the Chinese Journal Guofang Keji,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 2 (March 5, 2019): 281–308, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2019.1581613>.

²²³ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 82.

widely to win the public trust and support.”²²⁴ Much like Sweden’s current information campaigns to combat Russian hostile actions, Taiwan can use various information related capabilities to combat the PRC’s efforts to degrade the populations determination to maintain autonomy.

Taiwan’s use of irregular warfare likely includes elements of its special operations and reserve forces, intended to perform as the last layer of deterrence and defense against a PLA invasion force. Research reveals irregular warfare is the least publicized and understood layer of Taiwan’s asymmetric warfare strategy. Admiral Lee (retired) states, “Another crucial element is dramatic reform of the reserves and civil defense units, creating urban and guerrilla warfare units. These would engage in protracted warfare with Chinese troops that do manage to land.”²²⁵ An additional indication of Taiwan SOF’s expanding role in irregular warfare is the ongoing efforts to create a U.S. JSOC like entity to optimize the country’s employment of SOF and other paramilitary organizations in asymmetric warfare.²²⁶ Though Taiwan shows an interest in using irregular warfare and a preplanned resistance as a layer of defense, its proficiency at building or managing this capability is not clear. Whether a paper tiger or a developing capability, the PRC will need to expend resources to characterize Taiwan’s use of irregular warfare and how it could affect a PLA invasion.

The U.S. already employs its own SOF as mentors and is supportive of Taiwan’s interest in building an irregular warfare capability.²²⁷ The U.S. DOD alludes to irregular warfare as another layer of complexity needed to further disrupt the PLA’s ability to accomplish a cross-strait invasion. The Office of the Secretary of Defense states “the complexity of urban warfare and counterinsurgency, even assuming a successful landing and breakout, make an amphibious invasion of Taiwan a significant political and military

²²⁴ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 164–68.

²²⁵ Lee, Lague, and Blanchard, “China Launches ‘Gray-Zone’ Warfare to Subdue Taiwan,” 2.

²²⁶ Jane’s, “Taiwan – Special Operations Forces,” *Jane’s Amphibious and Special Forces*, July 2, 2021, 2, <https://customer-janes-com.libproxy.nps.edu/Janes/Display/JAWC0516-JASF>.

²²⁷ Gordon Lubold, “U.S. Troops Have Been Deployed in Taiwan for at Least a Year,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 7, 2021, sec. World, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-troops-have-been-deployed-in-taiwan-for-at-least-a-year-11633614043>.

risk.”²²⁸ Much like U.S. SOF’s ongoing efforts to build preplanned resistance throughout the Baltics against Russia, the DOD is supportive of similar efforts in Taiwan. In the event of a PLA invasion of Taiwan, Christopher Maier testified that the U.S. “should be considering strongly (sic)” employing the scope of capabilities previously used in the Baltics in Taiwan to defense against an invasion.²²⁹ Maier also testified that “there could be some opportunities for, as you say, resistance networks or other capabilities that would leave behind, if you will, against a potential enemy, amphibious landing (sic).”²³⁰ Though U.S.-Taiwan SOF exchanges would greatly aid the development of tactic, techniques, and procedures, the application of irregular warfare is a moot point without a large body of willing and semi-organized personnel. Taiwan’s reserve force of 2.5 million personnel is a likely employer of asymmetric warfare capabilities and a possible source of future resistance fighters.²³¹ The strength and viability of this force is considered below.

4. Reserve Forces: A 2.5 Million Strong Paper Tiger

Roughly thirteen times larger than its active-duty personnel strength, Taiwan possesses 2.5 million reservists to assist with HA-DR in peacetime and reinforcement of full time professional military in wartime.²³² Taiwan’s reservists closely resemble the “home guard” detailed in NATO’s Comprehensive Defense Handbook (CDH) in that it is intended to rapidly mobilize in response to national crisis, allowing “every member of society to defend their nation by performing a meaningful function.”²³³ Taiwan has recognized that its reserve forces are not sufficiently trained to defend the island against a PLA invasion and will require additional preparation to carry out their expected roles. More

²²⁸ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2020*, 114.

²²⁹ U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, “Transcript Hearings to Consider the Nominations of Under Secretaries,” § U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) (2021), 72, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/21-45_05-27-2021.pdf.

²³⁰ U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, 72.

²³¹ Easton et al., *Transformation of Taiwan’s Reserve Force*, 42.

²³² Easton et al., 42; Paul Huang, “Taiwan’s Military Is a Hollow Shell,” *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed September 22, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/15/china-threat-invasion-conscription-taiwans-military-is-a-hollow-shell/>.

²³³ NATO Special Operations Headquarters, *NATO Comprehensive Defense Handbook*, 1:102.

importantly, the PRC perceives Taiwan's reserve forces as relatively weak and unlikely to affect the outcome of an invasion attempt, which reduces their deterrence value.²³⁴ To better support all-out defense, Taiwan has improved reserve mobilization and integration with both the active-duty military and civilian volunteers, but still requires further progress to compete with the ever-modernizing PLA. It is, the opinion of this thesis, that Taiwan's reserve forces, if properly prepared, are the key to successful deterrence, and if needed, defense against a PLA invasion.

The effectiveness of Taiwan's reserve forces is hampered by a lack of training, focus, and the unrealistic expectation of weeks of preparation time leading up to an invasion. Easton et al. explain, "Training generally consists of five days of basic drills once every two years. NCOs receive one extra day of training, or six days of training every two years; officers typically receive two extra days of training, or seven days total."²³⁵ In comparison to U.S. reserve force's thirty plus days of activation and training, Taiwan reservists train only about four days a year.²³⁶ Additionally, Taiwan's initial military training is five weeks, which falls well short of U.S. infantry and armor 22-week one station unit training (OSUT).²³⁷ Critics may refute a comparison of these two nation's reservists due to the many advantages available to the U.S., but unlike the American military, the survival of Taiwan is tied to its reserve, force thus necessitating greater investment.

To offset the lack of preparation, Taiwan expects four weeks of early warning before a PLA invasion attempt, which the reserves will use to quickly mobilize and conduct focused training.²³⁸ As explained previously, in the time leading up to an invasion, the PLA is likely to conduct extensive ballistic missile, cyber-warfare, and information warfare

²³⁴ Easton et al., *Transformation of Taiwan's Reserve Force*, 49.

²³⁵ Easton et al., 16.

²³⁶ "10 U.S.C. 10147 – Ready Reserve: Training Requirements" (United States, January 3, 2012), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title10/html/USCODE-2011-title10-subtitleE-partI-chap1005-sec10147.htm>.

²³⁷ Todd South, "These Armor Soldiers Will Go through the New 22-Week OSUT," *Army Times*, October 13, 2019, <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/10/13/these-army-armor-soldiers-will-go-through-the-new-22-week-osut/>.

²³⁸ Easton et al., *Transformation of Taiwan's Reserve Force*, 16.

preparatory fires, which will degrade or disrupt Taiwan’s ability to mobilize, train, and integrate its poorly prepared reservists to defend the island. It is vital to Taiwan’s interests to better prepare its reservists for the possibility of immediate and extended conflict across its islands.

To better support its ODC, Taiwan is addressing reserve force deficiencies by improving organizational efficiency, expanding access to dual use civil-military resources and equipment, and drilling the systems in future exercises. In 2021, Taiwan’s Yaun created legislation combining both its All-Out Defense Mobilization Office and Armed Forces Reserve Command to form the Defense Reserve Mobilization Agency (DRMA).²³⁹ This action is expected to improve interoperability and mobilization between the approximately 1 million members of Taiwan’s Civil Defense Volunteers and the 2.5 million members of the military reserves.²⁴⁰ The DRMA will provide greater access to resources by sharing of dual use civil-military properties and prepositioned equipment. Eaton et al. explain at a minimum these resources include, “10,000 fixed facilities, 2,000 pieces of heavy machinery, 300 fishing boats, 60 aircraft, and 50 ships.”²⁴¹ In addition to the formation of the DRMA, Taiwan holds yearly various all-out defense and HA-DR exercises to practice and validate its personnel, policies, and systems.²⁴² These exercises will include tens of thousands of personnel and over a thousand vehicles.²⁴³ These improvements will not only result in immediate improvements to interoperability and mobilization but set the structure for addressing more difficult problems related to improving reserve force tactical and technical proficiency.

²³⁹ J Michael Cole, “Taiwan to Create Reserve Mobilisation Agency,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, May 24, 2021; Central News Agency, “New Agency to Oversee Mobilization of Reserves,” *Taipei Times*, April 21, 2021, digital edition, sec. Taiwan News, <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2021/04/21/2003756078>.

²⁴⁰ Easton et al., *Transformation of Taiwan’s Reserve Force*, 12.

²⁴¹ Easton et al., 17.

²⁴² Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, *Republic of China 2019 National Defense Report*, 84.

²⁴³ Republic of China Ministry of National Defense, 84.

Taiwan could quickly improve its reserve force's most significant short fall, lack of training, by incorporating realistic expectations and focusing training on specific tactical tasks. Expecting each reservist to maintain proficiency as an infantryman, or similarly complicated specialty, after only five weeks of initial training and four additional training days a year, will result in a poor outcome against the better prepared PLA invaders. Comparably, assuming if the PRC uses a combined air-airborne-amphibious assault with follow-on forces accompanied by armored vehicles, it is more realistic to ensure a significant number of reservists can mobilize under any circumstance and proficiently operate a single weapon system. For instance, by U.S. army standards, becoming proficient in operating a Javelin anti-armor missile system requires only 40 hours of initial training and approximately 1 additional day a month to maintain proficiency.²⁴⁴ Taiwan could replicate this methodology against armor, amphibious, air, and airborne assault capabilities using man portable air defense systems (MANPADS), sea mines, and other relatively cheap and maneuverable weapons. This approach will support Taiwan's efforts to develop asymmetric warfare capabilities expected to survive preparation fires and offset the PLA's advantages. By focusing a significant percentage of 2.5 million personnel on quickly mobilizing and proficiently operating a single deadly weapon system, Taiwan will inflict catastrophic losses on a PLA invasion force attempting to gain and maintain a foothold.

²⁴⁴ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Javelin-Close Combat Missile System Field, Medium*, FM 3-22.37 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Army, 2008), 65–67.

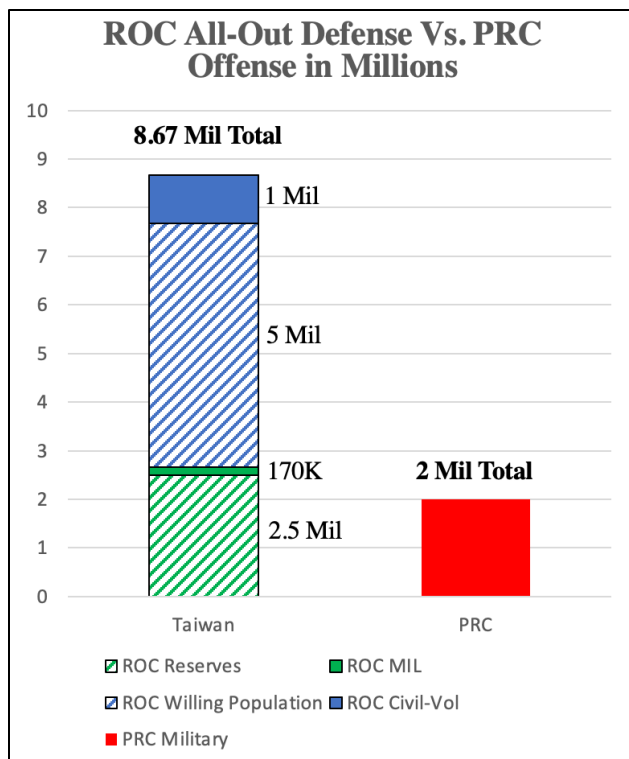


Figure 9. ROC All-Out Defense vs. PRC Total Military Strength.²⁴⁵

In conclusion, apart from a developed and advertised national resistance, Taiwan’s ODC is similar and complimentary to NATO’s Comprehensive Defense Strategy. As depicted in Figure 9, the combination of Taiwan’s full-time military, reserves, civil-volunteer force and willing members of its population far eclipses the number of total PRC Military personnel. The combination of a Taiwan’s whole-of-society defense and the advantageous geography ensure that nothing short of PRC nuclear weapon strike and/or an extended bombing campaign intended to inflict harm on both civilians and military personnel will lead to a successful invasion and violent reunification. Drastically and quickly improving Taiwan’s 2.5 million strong reserve force and increasing the inclusion of the additional 5 million willing members of its population are the keys to increasing its deterrence against a PLA invasion.

²⁴⁵ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, “Taiwan”; Easton et al., *Transformation of Taiwan’s Reserve Force*, 12, 42; Hickey, “More and More Taiwanese Favor Independence – And Think the U.S. Would Help Fight for It,” 5.

VI. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the initial assumption that Arreguín-Toft's Strategic Interaction Theory is accurate, this thesis used a combination of the strategies discussed in both NATO's *Comprehensive Defense Handbook* and Fiala's *Resistance Operating Concept* to analyze Taiwan's efforts to create an all-out defense against the PRC's coercion. Research revealed five major findings and four recommendations. Findings as follows:

1 – The Strategic Interaction Theory accurately portrays the ongoing conflict between both Taiwan and the PRC. As shown from 1927 to 1945, the weaker CCP successfully employed an indirect defense against the much stronger GMD direct attack. From 1945 to 1950, the stronger CCP successfully employed a direct attack against the weaker GMD's direct defense. Finally, from 1950 till the publication of this thesis, the stronger PRC has unsuccessfully employed an indirect attack against Taiwan's weaker direct defense. Based on this analysis, unless the PRC changes its strategy, by employing a direct attack, Taiwan will indefinitely extend the ongoing status quo.

2 – Based on PLA modernization and the CCP's 2049 national rejuvenation rhetoric, Taiwan anticipates a PRC direct attack and is attempting to develop an indirect response that could either extend the status quo through deterrence or defend its autonomy against an invasion. This finding is based on Taiwan's development of its Overall Defense Concept (ODC) and other steps taken to build an all-out defense against the PRC's ever-increasing hostile activities. Taiwan's indirect defense is best exemplified by the development of asymmetric warfare capabilities, improvements to civil-military crisis response and reducing its interdependence with the PRC.

3 – Taiwan's ongoing work to build an all-out defense is analogous to NATO's Comprehensive Defense Concept, but requires the addition of an acknowledged resistance and more capable home guard or reserve force. Taiwan's ongoing work to build interoperability between its incredibly resilient population, full-time military, and reserve force is very similar to the ROC and CDH's approach to employing a whole-of-society in response to crisis. When considering the threat posed by the PRC, Taiwan's all-out defense

lacks an acknowledged and preplanned resistance that would both increase deterrence against CCP coercion or extend the conflict in the event of an invasion. In addition to the lack of a resistance, the mere existence of a large but incapable reserve force was found of no concern to the CCP and its much more capable PLA.

4 – Improvement to Taiwan’s 2.5 million personnel reserve force is the key to deterring or repelling a PLA invasion. Taiwan’s modern and capable, but small full-time military is not strong enough to successfully leverage a direct defense against a much stronger PLA direct attack. The current lack of preparedness of Taiwan’s large reserve force is reducing both its deterrence value and ability to participate in defense of the island. The lack of preparedness is directly attributed to a lack of training and little operational focus.

5 – In addition to its 1.5 million civil-volunteer force, Taiwan possesses approximately an additional 3.5 million citizens willing to participate in defense against a PLA invasion. Once prepared, these 5 million citizens will greatly reduce the commitment of combat forces employment in HA/DR and also provide a tentative pool of resistance fighters in the event of an invasion.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

Initial Research Question: *“How can the combined effort of U.S. Special Operations Forces, interagency, and partners leverage Irregular Warfare to increase the Republic of China’s (Taiwan) resilience, and if necessary, resistance to the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) unrestricted warfare?”*

Based on the United States’ strategic ambiguity foreign policy approach to PRC-Taiwan relations, the Biden administration’s messaging, and this thesis’ findings these four recommendations provide options for U.S. SOF, the U.S. interagency, bilateral partners, and allies.

1: As described by the CDH, the U.S., Allied, and Taiwan Force Multiplier Special Operations Forces (FMSOF) should conduct a military assistance mission to improve reserve force preparedness and identify resistance development opportunities.

Identified as the likely key to Taiwan’s deterrence and defense of the island, the 2.5 million reserve force members are inadequately trained to conduct independent operations and are of little deterrence value. To improve Taiwan’s asymmetric warfare capabilities, U.S., Allied, and Taiwan FMSOF should conduct the NATO military assistance activity which systematically improves a portion of the reserve force’s ability to mobilize, move to predesignated key terrain, and employ specific weapon systems that offset PLA invasion capabilities. Taiwan SOF will need to prioritize towards all-out defense activities and less so on commando or direct-action skillset. Much like NATO’s Baltic Nations of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, U.S. and allied SOF should primarily focus on mentoring and enhancing Taiwan SOF efforts, in lieu of directly training the reserve forces.²⁴⁶ This activity requires additional analysis identifying the specific reserve units, training focuses, weapons systems, and Taiwan full-time military partners. See section “Reserve Force: a 2.5 million Strong Paper Tiger,” pages 60–64.

In addition to military assistance, U.S. FMSOF should provide subject matter expertise, gained throughout NATO’s Baltic nations, to assist Taiwan SOF and its interagency with establishing a preplanned, legal, and acknowledged resistance that further expands its asymmetric warfare options and increases its deterrence against a PLA invasion. See section “Taiwan’s Asymmetric Warfare to Counter Chinese Conventional Overmatch,” pages 57–60 and the *Resistance Operating Concept*.²⁴⁷

2: The U.S. interagency and U.S. SOF in concert should engage with Taiwan’s Defense Reserve Mobilization Agency (DRMA) to enhance its ability to organize and direct the 2.5 million reservists and 1 million civil defense volunteers when responding to crisis.

The tenuous geopolitical situation regarding foreign military assistance to Taiwan necessitates a nuanced approach to building capacity. As exemplified by Germany’s response to the recent floods and NATO countries building robust civilian volunteer organizations

²⁴⁶ Flanagan et al., *Deterring Russian Aggression in the Baltic States Through Resilience and Resistance*, 2019, 1.

²⁴⁷ Fiala, *ROC*.

responsible for HA/DR events, maximizing these types of groups in Taiwan is paramount to its defense.²⁴⁸ Some U.S. SOF units, including U.S. Army Civil Affairs, allow military commanders to support the DoS, international aid organizations, and Taiwan’s civil-military crisis response organizations to grow and improve the HA/DR infrastructure on the island. This support could include training, exchanges, seminars, and exercise support. Historically, random acts of excellence secluded to the individual U.S. departments or agencies have not equated to cumulative, sustainable action. However, a concerted effort to develop improved mobilization procedures, pre-planned, pre-coordinated, and pre-positioned people and equipment supports the island’s resiliency to natural disasters. Self-reliance limits opportunities for the PRC to intrude based on humanitarian reasons in such events and establishes networks and organizations capable of supporting resistance against a PLA invasion. See “Strong Civil-Military HA-DR in Response to Crisis” pages 55–57 and “Reserve Force: a 2.5 million Strong Paper Tiger,” pages 60–64.

3: Beyond the more obvious countries of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia, the U.S. must expand the scope of allies leveraged to include those outside of Asia.

Though the U.S. possesses a pool of likely regional partners also experiencing land and maritime territorial disputes with the PRC; the CCP uses economic interdependence and PLA coercion to reduce those countries’ support for Taiwan autonomy. The U.S. should look to its allies in Europe, who are not as easily compelled by the CCP’s threats. One powerful example is Lithuania, who, despite threats from Beijing, has increased its support of Taiwan.²⁴⁹ With almost no concern for economic pressure or military threat from the PRC, Lithuania has little to lose in supporting Taiwan’s vibrant democracy.

Lithuania has at least two powerful tools to leverage in Taiwan’s behalf. First, it has its voice at the table of international organizations that include the United Nations and NATO.

²⁴⁸ Erlanger, “Neighbor Helping Neighbor, German Volunteers Lead Flood Recovery”; Dwyer, “Unsettled By Russia, Sweden Revives Pamphlets On What To Do ‘If War Comes.’”

²⁴⁹ Andrew Higgins, “Lithuania vs. China: A Baltic Minnow Defies a Rising Superpower,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 2021, Digital edition, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/30/world/europe/lithuania-china-disputes.html>.

Second, it offers its experience as a small country that employs a comprehensive defense against its much stronger and hostile Russian neighbor. As portrayed in this thesis, the U.S. and its European allies have extensive experience in using comprehensive defense. By including its European allies, the U.S. not only increases the collective volume of protest against the PRC's coercion, but also expands the on-hand expertise of comprehensive defense to support Taiwan's autonomy.

B. BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS THESIS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

Admirers of Strategic Interaction Theory should consider whether Arreguín-Toft's simple model of direct or indirect approaches adequately portrays the more complex and layered methods the PRC or the Russian Federation will employ during armed conflict. For example, a great power combining armed invasion against an adversary, while leveraging information, diplomatic, and economic warfare to erode the international support for the weaker defender is likely.

Though this thesis found that covert action was a questionable means of building an enduring resistance or increasing the deterrence value of a preplanned resistance, it is a significant foreign policy tool. Future research should consider how covert action could increase the effects of desired U.S. foreign policy goals with the PRC and Taiwan.

Although U.S. SOF has a long history of providing military assistance to foreign partners, it lacks the manpower necessary to quickly increase the asymmetric warfare expertise of the large numbers of Taiwan's reserve forces. Future research should consider how the inclusion of other non-SOF elements like the 1st Security Force Assistance Command (1st SFAC) could assist with quickly developing the expertise of Taiwan's reserve forces.²⁵⁰ The inclusion of additional non-SOF elements could not only expand the breadth and intensity of training conducted with the reservists, but also allow U.S. and Taiwan SOF to focus on the more specialized aspects of asymmetric warfare including resistance development.

²⁵⁰ "Fort Benning | 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade," accessed October 30, 2021, <https://www.benning.army.mil/Tenant/1-SFAB/>.

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VII. CONCLUSION

When confronted by a vastly larger force capable of projecting power across all domains of national power, a country must seek all available options to ensure its survival and protect its citizens. External sources of support and defense in the form of alliances can serve as significant deterrents, but they are not a guarantee of security and are subject to a changing geo-political landscape. According to Machiavelli, any sovereign nation that relies on the arms (in this context “arms” delineates the ability to defend or maintain one’s sovereignty) of others is destined to fail due to the inability of those arms to meet the level of investment required; their survival is not at stake.²⁵¹ This is evident in the United States’ “Strategic Ambiguity” approach to PRC-Taiwan foreign affairs established with the One China policy.²⁵² Without a formal alliance, there is no guarantee that the U.S. will respond to a PLA military invasion of Taiwan. In accordance with Arreguín-Toft’s theories, Taiwan needs to increase its asymmetric/indirect capabilities to deter the PRC. Taiwan’s indirect approach protracts the conflict and extends the timeline to either outlast the CCP regime, or, at a minimum, maintain autonomy. Regardless of third-party involvement, it is imperative that Taiwan develops realistic and sustainable capabilities to maintain autonomy.

The Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, effectively established a condition of strategic ambiguity. This strategic ambiguity provides the U.S. with a maneuverable grey area that allows for flexible engagement and support.²⁵³ This is the space where US-Allied SOF and Taiwan should apply the lessons of the CDH through the above recommendations to increase deterrence of the PRC indirectly protect Taiwan. This diplomatic policy managed to keep the peace for over 40 years and now requires adjustment to extend the status quo.

Ultimately this thesis proposes, if properly prepared and appropriately employed, Taiwan’s full-time military, 2.5 million reservists, and 5 million willing citizens form an

²⁵¹ Niccoio Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

²⁵² Rigger, *Why Taiwan Matters*, 182–83.

²⁵³ 96th Congress, “96th Congress (1979-1980): Taiwan Relations Act” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, April 10, 1979), 1979/1980, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479>.

insurmountable the “whole-of-society” barrier against any forthcoming storm. This barrier refers to not only a defense against an invasion, but also the need to prevent it from ever occurring. Robert Blackwill and Philip Zelikow recent invoked the famous John Adam’s quote, “Great is the guilt of an unnecessary war,” while arguing for “a U.S. strategy that relies less on aircraft carriers... and more on coordinated planning to help Taiwan defend itself.”²⁵⁴ A U.S. strategy that improves upon Taiwan’s strengths and adequately messages those to the CCP is a much more sound than attempting to match the PLA plane to plane or ship to ship.

²⁵⁴ Robert D. Blackwill and Philip Zelikow, “The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, no. 90 (n.d.): 3.

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