

The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Confrontation:
Coercion, Credibility, and Use of Force *

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On May 22, 1995, the White House approved a visa for Lee Teng-hui to visit the United States in early June to attend his graduate school reunion at Cornell University. This decision to allow Taiwan's most senior leader to enter the United States reversed more than over thirty years of U.S. diplomatic precedent and challenged Clinton administration public policy statements and private reassurances to Chinese leaders that such a visit was contrary to U.S. policy. Equally important, the visa decision followed a three-year evolution of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. In 1992 the Bush administration, in violation of its pledge in the 1982 U.S.-China arms sales communique to reduce the quantity of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, sold Taiwan 150 F-16 war planes. In 1994 the Clinton administration revised upward the protocol rules regarding U.S. "unofficial" treatment of Taiwan diplomats, which had for the most part been in effect since 1981. Then, the next year, it allowed Lee Teng-hui to visit the United States. From China's perspective, the United States seemed determined to continue revising its Taiwan policy and, in so doing, encourage Taiwan's leaders to seek formal sovereign independence for Taiwan. Should Taiwan declare sovereign independence, it would likely lead to war, given China's credible forty-five-year commitment to use force in retaliation against Taiwan independence.

During the ten months following Lee's visit to Cornell, the United States and China reopened their difficult negotiations over U.S. policy toward Taiwan. These negotiations reached a climax in March 1996, when China displayed a dramatic show of force with missile tests targeted near Taiwan and when the United States responded with an equally dramatic deployment of two carrier battle groups. The 1996 Taiwan Strait confrontation was the closest the United States and China had come to a crisis since the early 1960s. It was a critical turning point in post-Cold War U.S.-China relations and in the development of the post-Cold War East Asian regional order. The confrontation continues to influence Chinese and American security policies and the bilateral relationships among all three of the actors in U.S.-China-Taiwan relations.

Many scholars have argued that Chinese use of force coerced the Clinton administration to reverse the trend of improving U.S.-Taiwan relations and to oppose Taiwan independence. They argue that the lesson of 1996 is that the United States needs to adopt a stronger posture against Chinese policy.¹ This article challenges this view. It argues that China did not coerce the United States to adopt policy that harmed U.S. interests but that both China and the United States achieved their interests.

The best way to address the U.S.-China confrontation is to focus on the distinct strategic objectives of the

United States and China. The confrontation reflected the interaction of Chinese coercive diplomacy and U.S. deterrence diplomacy. China used coercive diplomacy to threaten costs until the United States and Taiwan changed their respective policies.² The United States, on the other hand, used deterrence diplomacy to communicate to Chinese leaders and regional leaders the credibility of its strategic commitments. It sought reputational objectives by influencing perceptions of U.S. resolve.³

China's objective was to coerce the United States to end the recent trend of its indirect yet increasingly significant support for Taiwan independence by adopting a new position on U.S.-Taiwan relations and Taiwan's role in international politics. China also aimed to coerce Taiwan into abandoning its effort to redefine the "one-China" principle and Taiwan's status in international politics. Use of force was a crucial element in China's coercive diplomacy. Its large-scale military exercises and missile tests were intended to signal the United States and Taiwan the great risks inherent in their policies.⁴ This use of force made the potential costs of U.S. and Taiwan policy more credible and China's coercive diplomacy more effective.⁵

The Clinton administration did not use of force to defend U.S. policy against Chinese coercion. On the contrary, as discussed below, it had opposed Lee's visit to Cornell and NSC officials understood that Chinese use of force might help to curtail Taiwan's independence diplomacy. Its purpose was bolster the credibility of its deterrence posture to discourage future Chinese military action and the behavior of its allies. China's missile tests had challenged Washington's commitment to impose costs on any attempt to resolve the Taiwan issue with force and to defend its strategic partners from future military threats. It believed that its commitments were "interdependent." The United States thus used force to deter prospective challenges to its interests and to maintain its reputation for loyalty to its security partners.⁶

Because China and the United States pursued two different types of strategic objectives, each was able to achieve its purpose. China influenced Taiwan's assessment of the costs of independence. It also succeeded in curtailing the evolution of U.S. policy toward Taiwan, thus reestablishing U.S. constraint on Taiwan's independence diplomacy. For its part, the United States secured its reputational objectives. Following U.S. deployment of two carrier battle groups, China, Taiwan, and American regional allies concluded that the United States remained committed to the defense of Taiwan and to using its military power to maintain the East Asian strategic order. The United States thus succeeded in maintaining its pre-confrontation reputation so that the credibility of U.S. deterrence

was intact.⁷

The first section of this article addresses the origins of the U.S.-China confrontation. It examines why China considered Lee Teng-hui's 1995 visit to the United States a major challenge to its interests and its initial efforts to affect U.S. and Taiwan behavior. The second section examines the March 1996 confrontation. It explains why each side used force to achieve its objectives. The third section examines the consequences of the confrontation, including the costs and benefits for U.S. and Chinese interests and for U.S.-China relations. The conclusion argues that because both the United States and China achieved their objectives and were content with the restoration of the status quo prior to Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States, the confrontation itself was unnecessary and avoidable. Both countries could have achieved their interests without putting their relationship under such intense pressure. The lesson of 1996 is not that the United States requires a tougher China policy, but that policy making must avoid the mistakes of 1995 to prevent future similar costly and unnecessary confrontations.

FROM ITHACA TO NEW YORK CITY

Between May 1995, when Lee Teng-hui received his visa, and October 1995, when President Bill Clinton and President Jiang Zemin met in New York for a unofficial summit, Washington and Beijing negotiated restoration of the pre-visa agenda of U.S.-China relations. Beijing pressed Washington to affirm its opposition to Taiwan independence and to reassure Chinese leaders that there would be no further erosion of U.S. policy toward Taiwan, as agreed to in the three U.S.-China communiques.⁸ Washington resisted Chinese pressure. After offering China informal and ambiguous assurances, it insisted that U.S.-Taiwan relations were no longer at issue and that China should refocus on the prior agenda of U.S.-China relations, that is, U.S. opposition to Chinese arms proliferation, trade, and human rights policies. This period ended with China's failure to achieve its objectives through diplomatic persuasion.

China's Response to Lee Teng-hui's Visit to Cornell

President Clinton's decision to issue a visa to Lee Teng-hui did not reflect considered analysis of U.S. interests, but rather White House acquiescence to congressional pressure. In April 1995, Secretary of State

Christopher told Foreign Minister Qian Qichen that a visa for Lee Teng-hui would be “inconsistent with an unofficial relationship” with Taiwan and National Security Council officials argued against issuing a visa to Lee. However, after the Senate voted 97-1 and the House of Representatives voted 360-0 in support of a visa in May, the president gave into congressional pressure and decided that Lee should receive a visa.⁹

Leaders in Beijing considered the U.S. decision a serious challenge to China’s opposition to Taiwan’s independence movement. A Chinese foreign ministry statement charged that this was Lee’s latest step in his efforts to create “one China and one Taiwan.”¹⁰ When he returned from Cornell, a Xinhua News Agency commentary observed that Lee and pro-independence supporters “are now very swollen with arrogance.” A joint Xinhua-People’s Daily commentary argued that Lee had used his visit to gain U.S. support for independence. Moreover, Taiwan appeared to dare Beijing to try to stop its drive for independence. Just prior to his departure for Cornell, Lee personally observed military exercises in which Taiwan forces practiced defense against a People’s Liberation Army (PLA) attempt to land on Taiwan. Then, Taiwan announced that it was prepared spend \$1 billion dollars to secure admission to the United Nations.¹¹

China believed that U.S. policy drift had encouraged Lee Teng-hui to seek sovereignty for Taiwan. Moreover, the visa decision followed a succession of similarly important decisions since the end of the Cold War. In 1992 George Bush approved the sale of 150 F-16 military planes to Taiwan. The sale not only violated the August 17, 1982, U.S.-China communique on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, but also suggested increased U.S. support for Taiwan in its conflict with China.¹² Then, in 1994 the Clinton administration revised its policy on U.S. government contacts with Taiwan, raising the protocol level for U.S. treatment of Taiwan officials. Thus, as a leading Chinese authority observed, Washington’s decision to issue the visa was not an isolated incident. Rather it was the latest step in a dangerous post-Cold War trend that could lead to a Taiwan declaration of independence.¹³ People’s Daily observed that if the trend continued, “Lee Teng-hui will have less to fear in colluding with ‘Taiwan independence forces.’”¹⁴

Moreover, Lee’s visit also had implications for other countries’ Taiwan policies, including Japanese and West European policies. He had already carried out “golf diplomacy” in Southeast Asia and soon he might be traveling around the globe, gaining greater legitimacy for himself and for Taiwan independence. As a Xinhua commentary explained, Lee was “chief behind-the-scenes backer” of Taiwan’s independence movement. He aimed

to use his visit to the United States to “boost Taiwan’s status with the help of foreigners and to achieve a ‘domino effect’ leading to the international community’s recognition of Taiwan’s ‘political status.’”¹⁵

Beijing understood that the catalyst for Washington’s changing policy was political pressure on the White House. But it did not care, for regardless of the cause of U.S. policy change, “China cannot help but show great concern and vigilance” for the trend in U.S. policy.¹⁶ As a Chinese foreign ministry statement explained, there are “stubborn anti-China elements in the U.S. Congress,” but the U.S. government must “exercise its power and influence to...honor the international commitments it has made.” The statement went on to observe that if policymakers “only attach importance to pressure from certain pro-Taiwan forces, Sino-U.S.-relations will...even regress.”¹⁷

Moreover, despite Christopher’s April statement to Qian that a visit by Lee Teng-hui would be “inconsistent with an unofficial relationship,” after the fact the administration argued that the visa decision was in fact consistent with U.S.-China understandings. On June 8, President Clinton explained to Chinese Ambassador Li Daoyu that there had been no major change in U.S. policy. The state department held that the decision was “completely consistent with the...three communiques that form the basis” of U.S.-China relations. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord seemed to dismiss the significance of the decision when he characterized it as a mere “tactical change.” In early July Christopher said that the visit was not “violative” of the U.S.-China “basic relationship” but was “quite compatible” with unofficial U.S.-Taiwan relations. Although it was clear that the administration would oppose additional visits by Lee to the United States, U.S. declaratory policy allowed room for ongoing policy change.¹⁸

Beijing, however, sought more than mere U.S. reaffirmation of the three U.S.-China joint communiques. It was determined to compel the Clinton administration to formally commit the United States to a one-China policy and to the status quo in its relationship with Taiwan. In a July meeting with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Foreign Minister Qian insisted that “what is imperative is that the United States make concrete moves to eliminate the disastrous effects its permitting Lee’s visit.” Prime Minister Li Peng demanded that Washington “take practical measures” to correct its mistaken decision.¹⁹

Beijing retaliated to the visa decision by canceling the imminent visits to Washington by Defense Minister Chi Haotian and State Counselor Li Guixian and by cutting short a visit to the United States by the Chinese air force

chief of staff. It also suspended bilateral discussions over arms proliferation and human rights. Following Lee's visit, Beijing called home its ambassador for "consultations" and rejected U.S. suggestions that the two sides hold high-level talks to restore pre-visit cooperation.²⁰

China's diplomacy included a show of force. Chinese leaders were united in using force to signal that the Taiwan issue was a "question of war and peace" and that the United States "could be dragged into military conflict" over Taiwan.²¹ On July 18, China announced that from July 21 to July 28 it would conduct missile tests and naval and air exercises in the waters near Taiwan. It launched six surface-to-surface missiles approximately 100 miles from Taiwan.²² The Chinese foreign ministry spokesman explained that "What we are going to do is make the U.S. realize the importance of U.S.-China relations to prompt it to take the right track."²³ The tests and exercises concluded three days before Qian Qichen and Warren Christopher would meet in Brunei for the first high-level U.S.-China meeting since Lee Teng-hui received his visa. The meeting would be Washington's first opportunity to inform Beijing whether it would "take practical measures" to end its support for Taiwan independence.

China's use of force had a second target: Lee Teng-hui and public support on Taiwan for Lee's pro-independence activities.²⁴ By using force, Chinese leaders wanted to signal to Taiwan that a declaration of independence risked war with the mainland. They believed that their relatively conciliatory overtures, including Jiang Zemin's January 1995 eight-point proposal for mainland-Taiwan cooperation, and their tolerance of Lee's pragmatic diplomacy had eroded the credibility of Chinese deterrence.²⁵ From China's perspective, the missile tests and naval exercises were thus necessary to signal its determination to curtail Taiwan's march toward independence and to make clear that a formal declaration independence would result in war.²⁶

U.S. Resistance to Chinese Demands:

The agenda for the August 1 Christopher-Qian meeting in Brunei was clear. The two sides would attempt to reach sufficient agreement on U.S. policy toward Taiwan so that they could focus on other issues, including arms proliferation, trade, and human rights. Prior to the meeting, Qian told the press that China appreciated U.S. statements that Washington would continue to abide by the one-China policy, but he recalled the Chinese expression that "'words must count and deeds must yield results.'"²⁷ Qian wanted Washington to adopt new commitments that would limit U.S. policy and constrain Taiwan.

Christopher presented Qian with a confidential letter from President Clinton to President Jiang Zemin, in which Clinton stated that U.S. policy opposed Taiwan independence, did not support Taiwan membership in the UN and did not support a two-China policy or a policy of one China and one Taiwan. Although Washington expected that such assurances would mollify China, these were basically the same confidential commitments American presidents had been making to Chinese leaders since Nixon visited China in 1972.²⁸ Christopher also tried to assure Qian that the U.S. decision to issue Lee a visa did not indicate that future visits would be routine. He did not rule them out, but he said that Lee's visit was a "special" situation and that future visits would be personal, unofficial, rare, and decided on a case-by-case basis.²⁹ While Christopher tried to reassure China with well-established U.S. commitments, he adopted a low-key posture toward Chinese military activities. He merely reiterated the mild State Department position that such activities do not contribute to "peace and stability in the area."³⁰

Beijing was not satisfied with confidential and vague U.S. assurances, however. Following the Brunei meeting, Qian said that Christopher's statements were helpful but that the "true value of a promise is shown in real action." Prime Minister Li Peng explained that although Christopher and Qian held a positive meeting in Brunei, "it is not enough to make oral statements and what is important is to translate the statements into actions." China's foreign ministry insisted that the "top priority" was for the United States to "translate" its assurances into "concrete actions."³¹

Moreover, Chinese diplomacy had failed to curtail Lee Teng-hui's "adventuresome" foreign policy, including his call for Taiwan admittance to the UN. In late July, just a few days after China began its July military maneuvers, Taiwan launched its own missile and naval exercises. It also announced that it would conduct live artillery tests in August. Rather than succumb to Chinese pressure, Lee was "still stubbornly challenging the 'one-China' principle." Liu Huaqing, vice chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission, observed that because Taiwan's leaders had purchased foreign weaponry, they could be "cocky" and resist reunification.³²

China's next opportunity to press the United States was during Under-secretary of State Peter Tarnoff's visit to Beijing in late August. Before Tarnoff's arrival, on August 15 China began a second round of missile tests and naval exercises near Taiwan. Both exercises were scheduled to last until August 25, the day of Tarnoff's arrival in China. The Chinese media explained that the July military operations had been effective in undermining support for Lee and his efforts to gain UN membership for Taiwan. Nonetheless Lee remained stubborn and the United

States had yet to make new commitments in opposition to Taiwan independence. Thus, to underscore its determination, China now carried out live artillery exercises and missile tests. Moreover, the Chinese-influenced Hong Kong media reported that the August exercises simulated a naval blockade of Taiwan and a response to U.S. military intervention.³³

Prior to Tarnoff's arrival Chinese leaders also defined their new demands on the United States. They would welcome a U.S.-China summit, but they also wanted public affirmation of the commitments that Clinton had made in his letter to Jiang Zemin. They suggested that the summit issue a fourth U.S.-China communique, which would address the subject of future visits to the United States by Taiwan's leaders and embody the "three nos" in Clinton's letter -- no to Taiwan independence, no to a two-China policy, and no to Taiwan membership in the UN.

Once again, however, the United States adopted a low-key posture toward Chinese use of force and its demands for U.S. policy change. A State Department spokesperson simply repeated the now well-known phrase that the United States believed that China's missile tests "do not contribute to peace and stability in the region." Tarnoff privately conveyed previous U.S. assurances regarding Taiwan independence and Taiwan membership in the UN, and reiterated that future visits to the United States by Taiwan's leaders would be rare. The Chinese foreign ministry responded that the talks were useful, but maintained that "whether Sino-U.S. relations can be restored to normal depends on whether the U.S. side will take actions to honor its commitments."³⁴ Jiang Zemin then told former president George Bush that "oral undertakings are not enough; we demand...practical and effective measures" to remove the consequences of Lee's visit and to "avert the recurrence of big ups and downs" in U.S.-China relations. Prime Minister Li told Bush that China wanted "concrete actions."³⁵

The dispute over Taiwan had become enmeshed in negotiations over a U.S.-China summit. At issue was the summit agenda. President Jiang would be in New York in late October 1995 to attend the celebration of the 50th anniversary of UN General Assembly and could travel to Washington for a summit. But whereas China wanted the summit to focus on negotiations over the Taiwan issue, the State Department believed that it had made sufficient concessions to satisfy Chinese concerns. Nor would it agree to a summit in which the focus was on the Taiwan issue. It believed that such a summit would be tension-ridden, only serve Chinese interests in one-upping Taiwan, and not address the issues the United States cared about -- arms proliferation, trade, and human rights.³⁶

Washington brusquely dismissed China's demand. Before Vice Foreign Minister Li resumed his

discussions with Under-secretary of State Tarnoff in Washington, the State Department declared that the United States would not agree to any communique regarding visits to the United States by Taiwan leaders or “that deals in any way, shape or form with the subject of Taiwan because our position on Taiwan is clear.” It explained that after repeated discussions and exchange of letters, the U.S. position is “abundantly clear” and it “is not going to change.” Thus, “the stage is over in the relationship” in which the United States would try to mollify Beijing’s concerns over the Taiwan issue.³⁷ Moreover, on September 13, President Clinton met with the Dalai Lama at the White House, revealing his ongoing willingness to consider domestic politics when making China policy.

The United States remained interested in a U.S.-China summit, but insisted that “whether or not it takes place will depend on how much progress we make in U.S.-China relations.” Progress for the United States meant Chinese willingness reach agreement on human rights, proliferation, and trade.³⁸ After Li’s talks with Tarnoff and a brief meeting with Christopher on September 22, the state department explained that a summit meeting required a “stable” relationship in which the two sides “get beyond” the Taiwan issue. Li described his talks with Tarnoff as “very frank and useful.”³⁹

China faced a defacto U.S. ultimatum: either drop the Taiwan issue or forgo a summit. On September 27, Christopher and Qian met in New York to discuss the terms for a summit. Four days earlier, the United States delivered to Taiwan two E-2T early airborne warning and command aircraft. The timing of the delivery of the advanced aircraft to Taiwan may have been coincidental, but it underscored U.S. determination to resist Chinese pressure.⁴⁰

Faced with a defacto U.S. ultimatum, on October 2 China accepted the U.S. terms for a summit. The focus of the summit would not be Taiwan but non-proliferation. Without receiving any U.S. concessions on Taiwan, Qian told Christopher that China would suspend its assistance to Iran’s nuclear energy program. He explained to the press that China appreciated U.S. commitments regarding Taiwan and that it was ready to work for greater U.S.-China cooperation. Notably absent from Qian’s remarks were any complaints regarding U.S. Taiwan policy and demands for “practical measures.” China had apparently followed U.S. advice to get beyond the Taiwan issue. Christopher thus instructed Tarnoff to continue his discussions with Li regarding a summit. Finally, after three more rounds of Tarnoff-Li meetings, on October 2 the two sides announced that Presidents Jiang and Clinton would meet on October 24 at Lincoln- Center in New York. Beijing then announced that its ambassador would soon return to

Washington, D.C. Following the summit, China agreed to resume the U.S.-China military dialogue and to hold discussions on trade and other bilateral issues.⁴¹

THE CONFRONTATION OVER TAIWAN

The Clinton administration had withstood Chinese pressure to make significant concessions regarding Taiwan and secured an important Chinese concession regarding nuclear energy cooperation with Iran. Regarding visits by Taiwan's leaders to the United States, Clinton reaffirmed to Jiang that such visits would be "unofficial, private, and rare" and decided on a case-by-case basis. And as in the past, Clinton offered confidential assurances that Washington would oppose Taiwan independence and membership in the UN. He also repeated the administration's ambiguous assurances regarding future visits by Taiwan leaders to the United States. Otherwise, the summit agenda paid scant attention to the Taiwan issue. Instead it focused on such issues as trade disputes, arms proliferation, human rights, international crime, and environmental protection, all of which reflected U.S. interest in Chinese cooperation with American objectives.⁴²

Moreover, the administration had achieved its goals while retaining its negotiating leverage in summit diplomacy. Beijing had wanted a "state visit," replete with a state banquet and military honors. But the White House had agreed only to hold an unofficial meeting in Washington. Thus, Washington could use Beijing's continued interest in an official Washington summit to extract additional concessions. The State Department explained that an unofficial summit "most appropriately reflects the current standing of U.S.-China relations."⁴³

Administration officials were pleased with the summit and the direction of U.S.-China relations. Assistant Secretary of State Lord reported that Chinese leaders agreed with the U.S. position that the two sides can discuss issues sensitive to China (i.e., Taiwan), but that such issues but that "we have to get on with the broad agenda." After the disruptions caused by Lee's visit to Cornell, China and the United States were now "resuming momentum" toward resolving other problems. Director of Asian Affairs for the National Security Council Robert Suettinger similarly believed that the summit enabled the two sides to make "significant progress."⁴⁴ When Secretary of State Christopher met with Foreign Minister Qian in mid-November in Osaka, he reported that China was now prepared for a constructive discussion of the Taiwan issue. Lord was confident that Chinese leaders "understand" that

administration officials had “reaffirmed as much as we’re capable of doing” on U.S. Taiwan policy.⁴⁵

But Chinese leaders were not satisfied, for there had been no fundamental change in U.S. policy since Lee’s visit. It believed that the United States had not made commitments regarding the Taiwan issue. It agreed to the summit and had made the concessions necessary to make the summit successful, it had not accepted Washington’s Taiwan policy, nor had it reduced the priority of the Taiwan issue on the U.S.-China agenda.⁴⁶ Rather, it had decided to shelve the issue until its leverage improved. Even after Qian Qichen announced that China had agreed to the New York summit, he said that “we do not think that this is enough because a complete agreement...has not been reached.” Immediately following the summit, Qian said that Clinton and Jiang had held a “positive and useful meeting,” but “this does not mean that the Taiwan issue will not again be the main issue affecting U.S.-China relations.” And whereas in Osaka Christopher was upbeat about U.S.-China relations, Qian said that the “differences and contradictions” between Washington and Beijing “need to be addressed and tackled.”⁴⁷

China agreed to the New York summit because it had turned its focus to the December election for members of the Taiwan legislature and it needed stable U.S.-China relations to enhance its effort to coerce Lee Teng-hui to stop his pro-independence activities. Despite China’s repeated military exercises and missile tests, Lee defied Chinese warnings. In September Taiwan carried out its own missile tests, and in early October it held ground, air, and naval exercises simulating a response to an enemy attempt to land on Taiwan. It also insisted that Tokyo invite Lee to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Japan. After visiting the United States, Lee was now aiming for Japan.⁴⁸ Moreover, Taiwan leaders had been closely watching U.S.-China diplomacy. They stressed U.S. refusal to consider a fourth communique and emphasized U.S. criticism of China’s military activities, but minimized the importance of the U.S.-China summit. China observed this pattern and suggested that Lee was creating a domestic environment supportive of his independence efforts.⁴⁹

China responded to the failure of its U.S. policy by escalating its use of force. In October, following the announcement of the New York summit, Jiang Zemin, accompanied by China’s senior military leadership, observed PLA Air Force and Navy exercises and boarded a command ship to observe a “high-tech war game” of submarines and destroyers, and missile launchings. Also on display were China’s bombers and nuclear and conventional submarines. The focus of the event was Chinese military modernization, but the foreign ministry stressed that the

maneuvers also demonstrated China's resolve to safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁵⁰ Equally important, Jiang had directly associated himself with China's determination to resist militarily Taiwan independence, underscoring the unity of the Chinese leadership on this issue.

The October maneuvers were a prelude to more serious coercive diplomacy aimed at Taiwan's December 2 election for members of the legislative assembly. The mere holding of an election on Taiwan might enhance the international legitimacy of Taiwan's independence movement. The election was also an important opportunity for the people of Taiwan to pass judgment on Lee's Teng-hui's mainland policy. Given Lee's recent successes and the impression of U.S. support for Taiwan, China was concerned that public optimism might result in a victory for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Taiwan's pro-independence party. Finally, Lee might use the election and the pressures of campaign politics as an excuse to take another step toward establishing formal sovereignty for Taiwan.

On November 15, just as the two-week campaign period before the Taiwan election began and when Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye was in Beijing to resume the U.S.-China military dialogue, China began another round of military activities. Unlike the previous exercises, Beijing openly declared that these exercises were aimed at Taiwan and designed to maintain the "unity" of China and to resist the "splittist" activities of the Taiwan's pro-independence forces. It also declared that the "Nanjing military theater," rather than the Nanjing military region, was responsible for the exercises, suggesting that China had gone on war-footing. The exercise included a simulation of an amphibious PLA landing on a Taiwan-held island and attacks on a mock-up of Taiwan's largest airport. The exercise included Chinese land, naval, and air forces. It demonstrated the "military's resolve and capability to defend national sovereignty and...safeguard the motherland's unity."⁵¹ It was a "most serious warning" of China's "determination to firmly oppose and contain Taiwan independence" through "so-called 'democratic procedures' with the support of foreign sources."⁵²

Beijing could draw considerable satisfaction from its coercive diplomacy. Lee Teng-hui's Nationalist Party, which had been expected to win an easy victory, held onto its majority by only two seats. The most surprising outcome was the success of the New Party, composed of candidates highly critical of Lee's provocative mainland policy. Although the New Party had been formed only two years earlier, all of its candidates were elected and it increased its total seats in the legislature. The outcome had "vindicated" Chinese forceful opposition to Taiwan independence.⁵³

Although China's latest round of exercises were by far the largest and most threatening, the United States responded with conspicuous silence. No officials at the White House, the State Department, or the Defense Department discussed the maneuvers with the media or in public speeches. In his mid-November visit to Beijing, despite the recent exercises and strong Chinese warnings to him against U.S. "interference" in the Taiwan issue, Assistant Secretary of Defense Nye privately reiterated U.S. advice that China's exercises were counterproductive. The focus of his visit remained his briefing for Chinese leaders on the U.S.-Japan alliance, which stressed that the strengthened alliance was not aimed at China, and U.S. interest in renewing the U.S.-China military dialogue. When a Chinese foreign policy analyst asked how the United States would respond to a mainland attack on Taiwan, Nye responded that it would depend on the immediate circumstances. He observed that in 1950 the United States had said that it would not become involved in Korea, but that it quickly reversed itself. Other than this cautious response to a question from a think-tank analyst, Nye did not press China on its military activities.⁵⁴

On December 19, the U.S. aircraft carrier *Nimitz* passed through the Taiwan Strait, the first such transit by a U.S. aircraft carrier since the normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979. But the transit was intended neither as a political gesture nor as a quiet warning to Chinese leaders, but in fact was a detour to avoid delays caused by bad weather. It was an unpublicized transit and the carrier avoided advertising its presence to China. U.S. officials believed that Chinese leaders were unaware of the carrier's presence.⁵⁵

The administration's response to China's military exercises was intentionally low-key. Since the first round of the exercises in the summer, U.S. officials understood that the White House had contributed to U.S.-China conflict by failing to keep its pledges regarding Taiwan and they did not want to further aggravate the situation by overreacting to China's exercises. They also believed that as the "offended party" Beijing needed to express its anger. Moreover, as one NSC official later explained, the United States wanted Taiwan to understand that its "actions have consequences," that provoking China was not cost-free. Thus, so long as China did not threaten Taiwan with war, the United States was not anxious to rise to its defense.⁵⁶

But China did not simply want to blow off steam and coerce Taiwan to end its independence diplomacy. Its exercises were also targeted at U.S. policy. They were a key part of China effort to coerce the United States to change its Taiwan policy. In this respect, U.S. silence suggested disinterest for Chinese capabilities and threats and its intention to continue to resist Chinese demands. To Chinese leaders, the White House had yet to get the message

that the United States was challenging a vital Chinese interest and that it had to adjust its policy. China's leaders thus concluded that the next round of PLA activities should be even more provocative to show the United States its determination to use force against Taiwan independence.⁵⁷

Chinese planning had considerable urgency because Taiwan was preparing for March 23, 1996, direct elections for president. This would be the first democratic election of a Taiwan leader and would add domestic and international legitimacy for sovereignty for Taiwan. Furthermore, campaign politics might encourage Lee to use the independence issue to raise support for his candidacy. Finally, China had to worry about the possibility of a victory for Peng Ming-min, the outspoken pro-independence DPP candidate for president.

In the lead-up to the March 1996 elections, Taiwan's candidates insisted that Taiwan could challenge mainland threats. Lee Teng-hui declared that of all the presidential candidates, only he had the "capability, wisdom, and guts to handle cross-strait relations." Two weeks later he said that the effect of the PLA exercises was "diminishing" and that the mainland was "not pleased with our foreign trips, but we must also say that we are not pleased with their military exercises. Shall we say that we have broken even?"⁵⁸ DPP candidate Peng Ming-min promised a friendly policy toward the mainland, but only if it "recognizes Taiwan as a sovereign and independent state." If the PLA carried out aggression against Taiwan, Taiwan's military capability would inflict a "heavy price" on the mainland.⁵⁹

Simultaneously, Taiwan stressed U.S. support for Taiwan. In late January it revealed to the media that the *Nimitz* had passed through the Taiwan Strait in December, declared its appreciation to the U.S. Congress for appealing to the White House to expedited delivery of the Patriot missiles to Taiwan, and announced forthcoming antisubmarine exercises. In early February it announced that it had taken delivery of a missile frigate, which would contribute to Taiwan's antisubmarine and air defense, and that it would substantially increase its defense budget to deal with the greater military threat from the mainland. Taiwan seemed on using the United States to resist mainland pressure.⁶⁰

Moreover, Washington seemed to support Taiwan's independence drive. On January 6, despite China's "solemn representations," the Clinton administration approved a visa for Taiwan Vice President Li Yuan-zu to transit Los Angeles on his way to Guatemala, insisting that the decision was not inconsistent with unofficial relations with Taiwan. China expressed its "strong displeasure" at the decision.⁶¹ Then on January 31, the White

House again ignored Chinese warnings and approved two additional transit visas for Li to travel round-trip between Taiwan and Haiti. En route to Haiti, he planned to spend two nights in the United States, visiting San Francisco and Miami. On his return to Taiwan, he planned to stay one night in Los Angeles. Although the administration needed more than a week to make the decision, it insisted that the visa was a “routine matter” that should not affect U.S.-China relations.⁶²

China attacked Washington’s encouragement of Taiwan independence and warned Taiwan to go no further toward independence. In late December 1995, the director of the Institute of Taiwan Studies wrote that Taiwan’s “separatists” were on the verge of danger and that the Taiwan people should “warn these separatists in all seriousness...to rein themselves in at the brink of the precipice.”⁶³ In January Prime Minister Li Peng said that China’s commitment to use force was “directed...against the schemes of foreign forces...to bring about ‘Taiwan independence.’” Since Lee’s visit to Cornell, China had demonstrated its “determination and ability to safeguard...sovereignty and territorial integrity.” In early March Jiang Zemin told China’s National People’s Congress (NPC) that if Taiwan did not abandon its independence activities “the struggle between China and Taiwan will not stop.” Qian Qichen told NPC delegates that the main danger is Taiwan independence with international support. “If this situation occurs, it will be disastrous.”⁶⁴

China’s backed up its verbal threats with coercive diplomacy. From late January through February the PLA massed over 100,000 troops in Fujian Province.⁶⁵ The size of China’s deployments caught Washington’s attention. Administration officials stressed that they did not believe that the exercises were a prelude to an attack and that there was no military threat to Taiwan, but they warned Beijing not to adopt provocative actions. When Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing visited Washington in early February, U.S. officials told him that China should not intimidate Taiwan and work to reduce tension in the strait. The administration also used military signals to weigh in against Chinese policy. On February 6 Secretary of Defense William Perry said that he did not yet consider China’s use of its military a threat to Taiwan, but he that he was concerned. The same day, the Pentagon reported that a U.S. naval vessel was transiting the Taiwan Strait. The next day, Assistant Secretary of State Lord told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the administration had stressed to Beijing its “deep concern” over PLA activities. He warned that the administration was closely watching developments and that if hostilities occurred, the “impact...would be extremely serious.” The State Department announced that since January 26 the

administration's senior national security advisers had held a series of meetings to assess Beijing's activities and that these meetings would continue.⁶⁶

Nonetheless, China pushed ahead with its plans for military maneuvers. It believed that it had to raise the stakes to make the United States understand the risks of its Taiwan policy.⁶⁷ U.S. silence during the December maneuvers suggested that Washington had become accustomed to Chinese military exercises, so that to get U.S. attention China had to carry out more provocative exercises.⁶⁸ Moreover, Taiwan seemed unfazed by PRC threats. During the first months of 1996 it conducted military maneuvers suggesting its resistance to the mainland's 'anti-splittist, anti-Taiwan struggle.'⁶⁹

On March 4, China announced that the PLA would conduct surface-to-surface missile tests from March 8 to March 18. The target areas were waters just off the coast of Taiwan's two largest port cities, one of which was barely twenty miles from the northern port of Keelung. After careful study, Chinese leaders had concluded that if the target zones were not close to Taiwan, the tests would be ineffective in opposing Taiwan "spittism" and U.S. policy toward Taiwan.⁷⁰ When asked whether the likelihood of a mainland attack on Taiwan had increased, a foreign ministry spokesperson responded that "if Taiwan declares 'independence' or if foreign forces meddle, the Chinese Government will not sit by idly."⁷¹

On March 7, despite vigorous and repeated discussions between U.S. and Chinese diplomats and U.S. advice that China not proceed with its missile tests, the PLA fired three M-9 missiles into the target zones.⁷² That day, Defense Minister Chi Haotian explained to the Fujian delegates to the NPC that "we have more troops stationed in Fujian because we are facing a grim situation, in which Lee Teng-hui and his gang are vainly attempting to split China....We must heighten our vigilance." A March 8 joint editorial of People's Daily and the PLA's Liberation Army Daily warned of the danger of allowing Lee Teng-hui to continue to advocate Taiwan independence. It explained that China retained the right to use force to oppose "interference by foreign forces...and their attempt to promote 'Taiwan independence.'" We will "exert all our efforts to defend our country's reunification. We mean what we say."⁷³

The Clinton administration understood that the PLA was not preparing to attack Taiwan but instead was trying to affect the election and Taiwan's independence movement. As Secretary of State Perry explained, attacking Taiwan would be "a dumb thing" for China to do, observing that it was not capable of invading Taiwan. Although

Perry believed that China had the ability to harass Taiwan, he observed that “it does not make any sense....I do not expect China to be attacking Taiwan.” The State Department explained that the missile tests were an exercise in the political use of force and did not “presage any broader military effort.” Moreover, following the March 7 missile launches, through various diplomatic channels, including Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu’s discussions in Washington, China had assured the United States that it did not intend to attack Taiwan.⁷⁴

Nonetheless, Washington had to react. China had ignored U.S. warnings, and its missile tests challenged U.S. credibility. Administration officials believed that if the United States did not forcefully respond, China would doubt Washington’s commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan conflict. China would be encouraged to escalate its threat in the coming years, increasing the likelihood of hostilities and a far more serious U.S.-China crisis. The Defense Department explained that Washington needed to communicate its determination that China resolve its differences with Taiwan peacefully. It could not allow Chinese leaders to conclude that “the U.S. had lost interest in that area of the world.” As Perry later recalled, the United States had to demonstrate its “military resolve” regarding its Taiwan policy.⁷⁵

Equally significant, American leaders believed that failure to respond to China’s actions would have called into doubt U.S. commitments to remaining an active East Asian power in the post-Cold War era and to fulfilling its bilateral security commitments to regional allies. The United States’ reputation as a “loyal” ally was at stake. Christopher explained that “because Asian and Pacific nations looked to the United States to preserve stability in the region, we had to take action to calm the situation.”⁷⁶

On March 7, Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu visited Washington to hold pre-arranged discussions with National Security Adviser Anthony Lake. Earlier that day, China had tested its M-9 missiles. Liu’s visit offered the administration an opportunity to express its determination to respond to China’s exercises and to forcefully advise China to end its missile tests. To strengthen the administration’s message, Secretary of State Christopher and Secretary of Defense Perry joined Lake for his evening meal with Liu. As secretary of defense, Perry delivered the tough words. He told Liu that the Chinese missile tests “bracketing Taiwan” were “reckless” and “aggressive” and could be seen as a threat to American interests. He warned Liu that the United States “had more than enough military capability to protect its vital national security interests in the region and is prepared to demonstrate that.” He then said that China would make a mistake if it continued the missile tests. Lake then told Liu that the Chinese

exercises threatened vital U.S. security interests in the western Pacific and that China should stop its provocations and resume its cooperative policies toward Taiwan.⁷⁷

China ignored Washington's warnings. On March 9 it announced that from March 12-March 20 it would conduct air and naval exercises with live ammunition in the waters near Taiwan.⁷⁸ China and the United States were involved in a test of wills. But their respective objectives were very different. China aimed to coerce Taiwan leaders to abandon their independence activities, to coerce the Taiwan voters to vote against independence, and to coerce the United States to adopt more public and determined opposition to Taiwan independence. Washington, on the other hand, however much it may have opposed Taiwan's movement toward independence, aimed to uphold the credibility of its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan conflict and to remain a reliable security partner to its regional allies. Despite their different objectives, China and the United States both had important interests at stake.

Following dinner with Liu Huaqiu on March 8, Perry decided that China's missile tests required the United States to conduct a show of force. He suggested that a carrier battle group sail through Taiwan strait. But after consultations with NSC advisers, who advocated a less provocative display of force, and with General John Shalikashvili, who preferred to keep the carrier further from China's coastal weaponry, Perry agreed to a more cautious plan.⁷⁹ Perry then announced that the United States would deploy two aircraft carrier battle groups to observe China's behavior. He ordered the *Independence* battle group from Okinawa to the waters east of Taiwan and the *Nimitz* carrier group from the Persian Gulf to the Philippine Sea, which would allow it to join the *Independence* on short notice. Perry explained that China's insistence that its missile tests were routine is "baloney" and that they were meant to intimidate Taiwan. He said that the message of the U.S. carriers is that "the United States has a national interest in the security and the stability in the western Pacific region. We have a powerful military force there to help us carry out our national interests." The State Department concurred, explaining that the carriers indicate U.S. interest in a peaceful outcome to mainland-Taiwan differences.⁸⁰

The United States was determined to protect its credibility to defend its interests, but China was equally determined to protect its territorial integrity. Indeed, Beijing feared that the U.S. carrier deployments and the associated U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan might encourage Lee to take another step toward independence. The Chinese foreign ministry warned the United States that it is unwise for it to deploy the carriers: "If this...is regarded

by the Taiwan authorities as... supporting and conniving” with Taiwan’s “splitting the motherland, that would be very dangerous.” Foreign Minister Qian said that it was not China but the United States that was “reckless.”⁸¹

China launched its second set of March exercises as scheduled on March 12 and on March 13 it launched its fourth M-9 missile test. Then on March 15 it announced that from March 18 to March 25 the PLA would conduct joint air, ground, and naval exercises near Pingtan island, with ten nautical miles from Taiwan-controlled islands. The March 15 joint editorial of People’s Daily and Liberation Army Daily warned that if Lee Teng-hui “insists on going his way and clings obstinately to promoting ‘Taiwan independence’...or if foreign forces interfere in China’s unification,” then China would “make every effort to safeguard the motherland’s reunification.”⁸²

Despite China’s succession of exercises and missile tests, the Clinton administration remained confident that the PLA would not attack Taiwan. Throughout the confrontation there was no sense of tension in U.S. decision making. Having deployed the two carriers, the administration believed that its credibility was secure. Thus, with the exception of some verbal boasting of its naval prowess, Washington did not engage in further escalation of military signaling.⁸³ The United States observed the remainder of China exercises, Taiwan conducted its first presidential election, and there was neither war nor a Taiwan declaration of independence.

THE AFTERMATH: ASSESSING COERCIVE DIPLOMACY VERSUS DETERRENCE

The United States and China held two very different objectives in the 1995-96 confrontation over Taiwan. China used force to achieve tangible policy gains; the United States used force to achieve reputational gains. Because they sought different types of objectives, each was able to achieve its respective objective. But each also paid a price for its success.

The Costs and Benefits of Chinese Use of Force

Following the confrontation, Washington exercised caution in U.S.-Taiwan relations. Although it would not automatically deny visas to Taiwan officials, it issued only transit visas and limited the time and activities of Taiwan leaders in the United States. When Washington issued a transit visa for Taiwan Vice President Lien Chan in January 1997, it insisted that he agree not to conduct any public activities. When his spokesman held a meeting with

reporters at the Los Angeles airport, the White House required him to cut short his visit. When Lee Teng-hui requested a transit visa in September 1997, he was permitted to transit through Hawaii, but he was unable to schedule appointments with Hawaiian state officials. China appreciated Washington's effort to control Taiwan's independence activities.⁸⁴ Its silence on subsequent visas for Taiwan officials suggested that it was satisfied with U.S. sensitivity to Chinese interests.

Washington signaled its caution in other ways. When Taiwan's leaders traveled to Washington in late March 1996 to purchase U.S. arms, the Clinton administration did not agree to new sales. Then, in mid-1997, in his Senate confirmation hearings, Stanley Roth, the Clinton administration's nominee for assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific, acknowledged that the 1995 decision to grant Lee Teng-hui a visa was a "serious mistake."⁸⁵

Most important, China made gains in influencing U.S. policy toward Taiwan's status in world affairs and in bilateral U.S.-China relations.⁸⁶ Prior to March 1996, the Clinton administration had followed the practice presidents since Richard Nixon by making only confidential assurances regarding its opposition to Taiwan independence. It refused to change its declaratory policy on Taiwan's role in international politics, and it insisted that the negotiations over Taiwan issue be removed from the agenda of U.S.-China summits. It was also reluctant to hold an "official" summit with Jiang Zemin.

Following the March exercises, there was widespread recognition in the administration that the U.S.-China relationship was "broke" and that it had to be "fixed." Thus, Secretary of State Christopher's May 1996 speech on U.S.-China relations reflected the administration's first effort to place the U.S.-China relationship, and the Taiwan issue, within a larger, comprehensive strategic perspective. The State Department also believed that U.S.-China summits could help to put the relationship on the right track. In July 1996, during his visit to Beijing, NSC advisor Lake suggested that the two countries exchange summits. Then, in November 1996 Clinton and Jiang met in Manila and agreed to exchange state visits in 1997 and 1998.⁸⁷

China was pleased with U.S. initiatives, but it remained focused on the Taiwan issue. From November until the Washington summit in October 1997, China publicly pressed the United States to strengthen its opposition to Taiwan independence. In his June 1997 meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to plan for the summit, Foreign Minister Qian insisted that Taiwan was the most important and sensitive issue in the relationship. In August he repeated this to National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and warned that the Taiwan issue has the

potential to set back U.S.-China relations.⁸⁸

In contrast to the 1995 diplomacy over the Clinton-Jiang meeting in New York, in 1997 not only did the Clinton administration not insist that China drop its demands on U.S. Taiwan policy as a precondition to a summit meeting, but it also made a concession. During the October summit, Clinton assured Jiang that the United States did not support a two-China policy, did not support Taiwan independence, and did not support Taiwan membership in the United Nations or in other international organizations requiring sovereignty for membership. White House and State Department officials publicly reported the president's assurances. Although China had wanted Clinton's assurances included in the official summit statement, this was nonetheless the first time that the U.S. government publicly and explicitly stated that it did not support Taiwan independence. Thereafter, other U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Albright, made similar statements. The administration made important gains on arms proliferation, human rights, and other issues, but in a clear break with the past it had negotiated and compromised on the Taiwan issue.⁸⁹

Taiwan remained on the negotiating agenda during the preparations for President Clinton's 1998 visit to Beijing. This time China wanted Clinton to make a public announcement in China of U.S. policy toward Taiwan independence. In light of China's concessions, including providing the president with an opportunity to deliver on Chinese television an unedited speech and an agreement to a nuclear nontargeting pact, the president expressed personally U.S. policy on Taiwan in an open forum in Shanghai.⁹⁰ Although China had not secured a written U.S. statement or a fourth communique and the president's statement of the "three nos" contained nothing new regarding actual U.S. policy toward Taiwan and did not require change in U.S. behavior, this was the first time that a U.S. president had ever publicly stated that the U.S. did not support Taiwan independence. Since 1971 China had sought such a statement, and the United States had adamantly refused to make it. Prior to March 1996 Washington had refused to even consider changes in its Taiwan policy, regardless of Chinese quid pro quos, but in the aftermath of China's coercive diplomacy the Taiwan issue had become an undisputed part of U.S.-China summit negotiations.

China was only partly successful regarding Taiwan. On the one hand, the DPP fared poorly in the March elections and subsequently adopted a cautious mainland policy to increase its appeal to the voters.⁹¹ In addition, immediately after the elections, Taiwan postponed plans for live-fire military exercises based on Mazu, the offshore island close to the mainland, and Lee Teng-hui indicated that he would limit his travel abroad. He explained that

having just been elected president, he would have a “full agenda” and he would “have no time for overseas visits for quite a while, and now I certainly have no plans to visit the United States.” His foreign minister explained that Lee would only make trips that would not create trouble and that he did not want “to bring damage” to Taiwan.⁹²

Nonetheless, Lee Teng-hui won a significant victory in the three-way presidential race, capturing 52 percent of the vote.⁹³ Moreover, it was clear that Lee’s post-election caution was only a tactical response to the U.S.-China confrontation and Chinese pressure. He soon resumed Taiwan’s effort to join the United Nations and his subordinates resumed transit diplomacy. The next year he sought a transit visa from the United States. Then, in July 1999, just prior to an important meeting in the cross-strait dialogue, he provocatively described the mainland-Taiwan relationship as a “special state-to-state relationship.” His aides explained that the state-to-state formulation had been under discussion for more than a year, that Taiwan could no longer adhere to the one-China formula, and that the new formulation was Taiwan’s new definition for mainland-Taiwan ties. Lee seemed bent on seeking Taiwan independence and Chinese leaders were outraged. Beijing canceled the forthcoming meeting between senior leaders Wang Daohan and Koo Chen-fu, conducted extensive military exercises in Fujian, and repeatedly sent its military aircraft over the mid-line of the Taiwan strait.⁹⁴

Nonetheless, China’s new relationship with the United States paid off. Because Washington was concerned that Lee’s statement could lead to renewed tension, it pressured on him to modify his policy. The State Department indicated that it held Lee responsible for the suspended mainland-Taiwan dialogue and that it expected Taiwan to make the necessary clarification to allow the dialogue to resume. President Clinton quickly called Jiang Zemin to reassure him that the United States remained committed to a one-China policy, effectively aligning the United States with China in opposition to Taiwan’s policy. The president also announced that he had postponed an arms sales mission to Taiwan by Defense Department officials to avoid exacerbating the situation. When Clinton met with Jiang in New Zealand in September, he cautioned China from using military force against Taiwan, but he also raised the Taiwan issue to reassert U.S. support for a one-China policy and to explain to that he believed that Lee’s statement “had made things more difficult for both China and the United States.”⁹⁵

China’s successful coercive diplomacy came at a price. Its missile tests aggravated concern for Chinese power in Southeast Asia. After the March confrontation, the region intensified its focus on “the rise of China” and its implications for regional stability. Surprisingly, however, this was a short-lived phenomenon. First, some of the

countries in Southeast Asia held Taiwan's diplomacy responsible for China's missile tests and for the ensuing regional tension. In addition, Beijing's currency policy following the onset of the Asian financial crisis in late 1997 earned widespread praise for China's responsible use of its financial power. Since then, although the region remains concerned about Chinese power in the evolving regional order, China's reputation is no worse than it was prior to the 1996 confrontation.⁹⁶

China incurred a greater cost in its relationship with the United States. The March confrontation exacerbated controversy in the United States over U.S. policy toward China and Taiwan and gave Taiwan's supporters a greater voice in U.S. policy debates. Thus, although members of Congress have been more reluctant to force the president's hand on potentially provocative issues, having learned a lesson from China's reaction to Lee's visit to Cornell, they have been increasingly eager to use China policy to score political points with the electorate and weaken the White House. This has made it more difficult for the president to develop cooperative policies toward China and to manage the U.S. arms sales relationship with Taiwan.

The 1996 confrontation focused the Pentagon's attention on the U.S.-China conflict over Taiwan as the most likely source of U.S. involvement in a major war. Since then, planning for war with China has become a Pentagon priority, with implications for budgets and weapons acquisition. Pentagon and congressional interest in theater missile defense, including cooperation with Taiwan on this system, has been to a significant degree a reaction to China's March 1996 missile tests.. In addition, during the confrontation, the Pentagon were alarmed at how little communication there was between Taiwan and American defense officials. Since then, it has sought greater coordination between the two militaries in preparation for U.S.-Taiwan cooperation in a war with China, with implications for U.S.-Taiwan military relations and for China's effort isolate Taiwan.⁹⁷

Chinese leaders acknowledge the costs of their coercive diplomacy. But they believe that had they adopted less provocative policies and failed to get Washington's attention, independence sentiments in Taiwan would have remained high and U.S. policy would have continued to encourage Taiwan independence. Shortly after the confrontation, Premier Li Peng gloated that Americans in and out of government "have come to realize the importance of China." He observed that this is "progress because before they miscalculated the situation. They thought that...China was no longer important....But facts have negated these ideas." Chinese leaders accept the costs of coercive diplomacy as the necessary trade-off for the gains they made in U.S. policy toward Taiwan and the

resulting caution among the Taiwan electorate.⁹⁸

Chinese threats made the people of Taiwan less likely than ever to consider unification. The New Party has become irrelevant in Taiwan politics while the victory of Chen Shui-bian, the DPP candidate in the 2000 presidential election, suggests Taiwan's growing resentment at mainland threats. Greater threat perception has also further encouraged Taiwan to develop political and military relationship with the United States. Thus China's ability to expand mainland-Taiwan economic relations and to develop the cross-strait dialogue on the basis of the "one-China principle" has been more difficult since March 1996. Nevertheless, China's policy had never been predicated on the assumption that diplomacy could win the affection of the people on Taiwan or persuade Taiwan to reduce its ties with the United States. Rather, economic cooperation aims to make Taiwan increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy, diplomacy aims to manage the relationship to maintain stability for the long term, during which Taiwan would be absorbed into the mainland, and deterrence aims to prevent independence in the short term. Hence, from China's perspective, coercive diplomacy did not hurt the prospects of unification but it did reduce the momentum towards independence.

The Costs and Benefits of U.S. Use of Force

The United States benefited from deterrence diplomacy. It maintained its reputation for resisting Chinese use of force against Taiwan and maintained the confidence of its allies that it was prepared to use force to maintain regional stability. Many Chinese leaders were surprised by the U.S. deployment of the two carriers, underscoring they had miscalculated U.S. resolve to resist Chinese use of force. Their miscalculation not only affected U.S.-China relations, but also the outcome of the Taiwan election. The U.S. response offset any impact China's use of force might have otherwise had on Beijing's effort to curb Taiwan's independence movement. Following the confrontation, uncertainty in China over U.S. intentions significantly diminished. Chinese policy makers must now assume that regardless of the source of a future crisis, including a formal Taiwan declaration of sovereign independence, the United States will almost certainly intervene militarily against Chinese use of force.⁹⁹

Greater Chinese certainty regarding U.S. intervention has injected an element of uncertainty into China's Taiwan policy. Now that the cost for China of military retaliation against Taiwan independence is better understood - military conflict with the United States and thus derailment of China's economic modernization program and

greater inability to manage its complex and troubling societal issues - Beijing has given greater attention to retaliatory measures that reduce the likelihood of U.S. intervention. A few well-informed Chinese question China's commitment to retaliate militarily against Taiwan independence and suggest less costly options, including political use of force.¹⁰⁰ Although all Chinese recognize that the alternatives to military retaliation are fraught with problems, including implications for Chinese strategic credibility in Asia and the government's domestic legitimacy, that even a quiet and limited discussion exists underscores the success of U.S. use of force for its deterrence posture.

Washington's deployment of the two carriers also bolstered its strategic position in Asia. In the aftermath of the Cold War there had been considerable regional uncertainty over the U.S. role in Asia and heightened concern over the "rise of China." The combination of these two trends had challenged Washington's reputation to defend its regional strategic partners. Following the 1996 U.S. show of force, there has been greater confidence throughout Asia that the United States is committed to remaining an Asian power. This heightened confidence reflects many factors, including the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan security treaty. Nonetheless, the U.S. response to Chinese use of force made an important contribution to sustaining regional confidence in U.S. resolve.¹⁰¹

The costs for the United States of deterrence diplomacy mirrored Chinese costs for its coercive diplomacy. Although Washington achieved its immediate policy objectives, U.S. policy affected perceptions of the United States in China's political arena and within the PLA. American ability to threaten China without risk angered, frustrated and embarrassed many Chinese. U.S. "gunboat diplomacy" reminded Chinese of their humiliation at the imperialists' gunboat diplomacy directed at China during the nineteenth century. Some Chinese policymakers were especially angry insofar as the United States had been assured that China would not attack Taiwan, so that they believed the deployment of the aircraft carriers was unnecessary and aimed only to humiliate China. The net effect of U.S. policy was to establish a consensus in China among both urban citizens and elites that the United States is China's "semi-enemy."¹⁰² Just as America's reaction to China's "missile diplomacy" strengthened opposition in the United States to U.S.-China cooperation, U.S. "gunboat diplomacy" hardened Chinese attitudes toward the United States, making it more difficult for Chinese policymakers to cooperate with U.S. foreign policy interests, even as they understand the imperative to avoid U.S.-China conflict.

U.S. policy also influenced the PLA. Chinese leaders believe that the deployment of the two carriers increased the U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan, tying U.S. credibility to Taiwan's security. They are now

convinced that mainland-Taiwan conflict will compel the United States to intervene.¹⁰³ Thus the PLA is planning for war against the United States, with implications for both the domestic politics of China's U.S. policy and for PLA hardware acquisitions. China's increased deployment of M-9 missiles in Fujian Province and its cruise missile program reflects its understanding that missiles may be the only weapon that China can use to deter Taiwan independence because it is the only Chinese conventional weapon that the United States cannot defeat.¹⁰⁴ China began negotiations to purchase Russian Sovremennyi destroyers in 1996 after the U.S.-China confrontation. One important mission for the destroyers and their Sunburn missiles is to give pause to the United States before it decides to intervene in the next confrontation in the Taiwan Strait. Although China's military modernization program might have led to such deployments on its own, the pace, quantity, and quality of China's deployments have been affected by the assumption that war with Taiwan means war with the United States.¹⁰⁵ U.S. policy contributed to the development of a more capable and determined Chinese adversary.

Finally, similar to the outcome of China's coercive diplomacy, U.S. policy influenced America's relationship with Taiwan. Since 1979, U.S. policy toward mainland-Taiwan relations had been characterized by considerable ambiguity. Washington had opposed mainland use of force, but it had also implicitly opposed provocative Taiwan diplomacy that promoted Taiwan sovereign independence. These two policies created ambiguity over how the United States would respond to mainland use of force against a Taiwan declaration of independence, which promoted caution in both Beijing and Taipei. But just as U.S. deterrence diplomacy reduced uncertainty in Beijing over U.S. policy, it increased confidence in Taiwan that regardless of the source of conflict, the United States will intervene to protect Taiwan. Although Washington retains considerable leverage over Taiwan, it is now more difficult for the United States to persuade Taiwan to forgo destabilizing diplomacy.

The benefits of its policy outweighed the costs. The United States gained Chinese caution and regional confidence in its presence in Asia. On the other hand, the costs of inaction could have been very high -- greater Chinese militancy against Taiwan and less cooperation from its Asian security partners. At stake was the post-Cold War regional security order. Administration officials also believed that the deployment of two carriers was the minimum display of force that would have succeeded. Just as China had to use missile tests to get the attention of U.S. leaders, Washington's response had to get the attention of Chinese leaders and leaders throughout Asia. U.S. deterrence diplomacy was necessary and justified the costs.

CONCLUSION: THE LESSONS OF 1996

U.S. policy drift and the March 1996 confrontation reflected White House susceptibility to congressional pressure, which in turn reflected Taiwan lobbying on behalf of its independence diplomacy. Administration policy makers understood U.S. interests lay in rejecting a visa for Lee Teng-hui and they resisted further change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan, but they were unable to sway the president's thinking. Following the confrontation, the White House readily returned U.S. policy to the status quo of 1994, suggesting that the intervening U.S.-China confrontation, including the U.S. show of force, was unnecessary and avoidable. The missed opportunity and the resultant costs are thus all the more deplorable.

The source of instability in U.S.-China-Taiwan relations was Taiwan's revisionism and its affect on U.S. policy. After coming to power, Lee Teng-hui sought a new international role for Taiwan that was destined to provoke the mainland and cause U.S.-China friction. He was also determined to use Taiwan's relationship with the United States to further his goals. In responding to Lee's efforts, the Clinton administration not only deviated from its understanding with Beijing regarding U.S.-Taiwan relations, but also implicitly abetted Taiwan's attempt to move the United States toward abandon its one-China policy and establish for itself an independent status in international politics.

Beijing used coercive diplomacy to attempt to compel Taiwan curtail its independence activities and to accommodate itself to a declaratory policy that Taiwan is part of Chinese sovereignty. Beijing also adopted coercive diplomacy to end the trend in President Clinton's Taiwan policy and compel him return to the policy of his predecessors. Beijing understood that domestic politics was the source of U.S. policy change, including the 1992 F-16 sale, the 1994 Taiwan policy review, and the 1995 decision to issue a visa to Lee Teng-hui. But it was the policy, rather than its sources, that mattered to China. It used force to persuade the administration that appeasement of the "Taiwan lobby" was not risk-free and to compel him to incur the domestic costs necessary to change U.S. policy toward Taiwan. The 1997 and 1998 U.S.-China summits and the administration's statements on Taiwan -- the "three nos" -- reflected the changes in U.S. policy.

The 1996 Taiwan Strait confrontation further reveals how easy it can be for the United States and China to

stumble into a collision. The United States is committed to the defense of Taiwan, but it found itself in a confrontation with China that originated over a conflict of interest peripheral to U.S. security - the international legal status of Taiwan. The United States and China will deal with the Taiwan issue well into this century. If they are to avoid similar confrontations, Washington cannot permit American ideological support for Taiwan's democracy or Taiwan's democratic politics to determine the politics of war and peace between the United States and China.¹⁰⁶ Nor can the United States cannot allow its China policy to be determined by Taiwan's diplomacy. To avoid policy drift, U.S. administrations will have to make policy in the U.S. interest, not in Taiwan's interest.

NOTES

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¹See, for example, John W. Garver, Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); and Arthur Waldron, "How Not to Deal with China," Commentary, vol. 103, no. 3 (March 1997), pp. 44-49.

²The distinction between coercive diplomacy and compellence is not obvious. Thomas C. Schelling's description of compellence is nearly identical to Alexander L. George's later definition of coercive diplomacy: action that aims to "persuade an opponent to stop or reverse an action." See Schelling, Arms and Influence (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), pp. 69-72; and George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics," in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, eds., The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994), p. 7. Either term can capture Chinese behavior. This article uses the term coercive diplomacy rather than compellence to describe Chinese policy, if only because coercive diplomacy has become the more familiar term.

Moreover, the coercion and deterrence is sometimes is often not clear. As Schelling observes, when a state seeks to end the continuance of another state's policy, there are elements of both deterrence and compellence (coercion). Schelling, Arms and Influence, p. 77. It can be argued that there are elements of both deterrence and coercion in Chinese behavior. But compellence/coercive diplomacy better captures Chinese behavior, because China took the initiative and maintained its policy of threatening use of force until it received a response from Taiwan and the United States in terms of concrete policy change. Paul Gordon Lauren calls this pattern "defensive coercion." See Lauren, "Theories of Bargaining with Threats of Force: Deterrence and Coercive Diplomacy," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy (New York: Free Press, 1979), pp. 192-93. See also Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 195-96; and Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," in Lawrence Freedman, ed., Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 15-20.

³The relationship between reputation, credibility, commitment, and deterrence follows Schelling, Arms and Conflict, p. 42-43. For an extensive discussion of the relationship between reputation and deterrence, see Jonathan Mercer, Reputation and International Politics (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), chap. 1.

⁴Much of the following analysis of Chinese policy is based on extensive interviews conducted during visits to Beijing between 1996 and 2000 with senior civilian and military specialists on U.S.-China relations and Taiwan in government think tanks and universities. These policy analysts are advisors to such government agencies as the state council, the ministry of foreign affairs, the ministry of security, and the People's Liberation Army. They frequently participate in government meetings regarding policy toward the United States and Taiwan. For obvious reasons, I have not disclosed their identities.

⁵On the role of use of force in coercive diplomacy see, Alexander L. George and William Simons, "Findings and Conclusions," in George and Simons, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, pp. 273-79; and Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," pp.20-23.

⁶This use of deterrence follows the definition of deterrence in Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 3. Washington believed that its commitments were “interdependent,” so that its follow-through in March 1996 on its commitment to Taiwan would affect the credibility of its future commitment to both Taiwan and other regional actors. On the interdependence of commitments, see Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, pp. 55-59; and Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics*, p. 36-37. On the difficulty of managing allies perceptions to maintain a reputation for loyalty, see Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997). On the role of force in signaling reputation to both adversaries and allies, see Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970). For a more general discussion of the political use of force, see Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1978). On the role of the U.S. navy in signaling intentions, see James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1979* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1981), pp. 81-83.

⁷As Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics*, points out, sometimes leaders believe commitments are interdependent when, in fact, they are not. This case, however, is one in which U.S. behavior in March 1996 clearly affected China’s assessment of U.S. future resolve on the Taiwan issue and likely affected the assessment of other countries toward their own security, so that U.S. policy was appropriate and successful.

⁸The three communiqués are the 1992 Shanghai communique, the 1979 normalization of relations communique, and the 1982 communique on U.S. arms sales to China. The text of the communiqués can be found in Robert S. Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation: U.S.-China Relations, 1969-1989* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁹Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 286-87; interview with Robert Suettinger, Director of Asian Affairs, National Security Council. On the role of Congress and domestic politics in U.S. policy toward Taiwan, see Robert G. Sutter, “Domestic Politics and U.S.-China-Taiwan Triangle: The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Conflict and its Aftermath,” in Robert S. Ross, ed., *After the Cold War: Domestic Factors and U.S.-China Relations* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

¹⁰“PRC Foreign Ministry Statement (May 23, 1995),” *Xinhua*, May 22, 1995, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service--China (hereafter FBIS-China), May 23, 1995, pp. 2-3.

¹¹Commentary, “Where Does the United States Really want to Lead Sino-U.S. Relations?” *Xinhua*, June 17, 1995, in FBIS-China, June 19, 1995, pp. 10-12; Commentary, “A Self-Vindication of Advocacy for Splitting the Motherland,” *Xinhua and People’s Daily*, July 23, 1995, FBIS-China, July 24, 1995, pp. 91-93. Also see, for example, Ren Fan, “The U.S. Government Should Change Its Course Immediately,” *People’s Daily*, June 13, 1995, in FBIS-China, June 16, 1995, p. 7. Taiwan’s military exercises are reported in *Lien-Ho Pao* (Taipei), May 26, 1995, in FBIS-China, June 5, 1995, p. 89-90; Agence France-Presse, May 30, 1995, in FBIS-China, May 30, 1995, p. 85. For China’s reaction to the exercises, see *Xinhua*, June 27, 1995, in FBIS-China, June 27, 1995, p. 90. Taiwan’s effort to enter the UN is discussed in Di Xiangqian, “Money Diplomacy Goes against the Popular Will in Taiwan,” *People’s Daily*, July 12, 1995, FBIS-China, July 18, 1995, p. 77-78; and in *Central News Agency* (Taipei), June 28, 1995.

¹²For a discussion of the arms sales communique, see John. H. Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide: An Insider’s Account of Normalization of U.S.-China Relations* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), chaps. 13 and 14; Robert S. Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation: U.S.-China Relations, 1969-1989* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), chap. 6. See also James Mann, *About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

¹³See the remarks by Wang Jisi in *Wen Wei Po*, August 29, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 13, 1995, pp. 6-7. See also the discussion of U.S. policy in 1994 in Wang Li, *Bolan Qifu: Zhong Mei Guanxi Yanbian de Quzhe Licheng* (Roaring waves: The tortuous process of the evolution of U.S.-China relations) (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1998), p. 297-298. On the new U.S. policy toward Taiwan officials, see also Steven Greenhouse, “U.S., Despite Critics, Is to Expand Taiwan Ties,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1994, p. A5.

¹⁴Author interviews with Chinese analysts. Ren Fan, “The U.S. Government Should Change Its Course Immediately,” p. 7; Zhongguo Tongxun She, May 29, 1995, in FBIS-China, June 2, 1995, p. 5.

¹⁵Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts; commentary, “The Protective Umbrella and Chief Behind-the-Scenes Backer for ‘Taiwan Independence,’” Xinhua, August 2, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 3, 1995, p. 43-44.

¹⁶For a sophisticated analysis of the domestic politics of U.S. China policy, see Niu Jun, “Perspective of U.S. Policy toward China,” Guangming Ribao, September 14, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 26, 1995, pp. 4-6.

¹⁷“PRC Foreign Ministry Statement (May 23, 1995),” p. 3. See also Commentary, “Where Does the United States Really want to Lead Sino-U.S. Relations?” p. 11.

¹⁸Author interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger; Department of State Daily Press Briefing, May 24, 1995; and on-the-record briefing by Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord, May 30, 1995. Christopher’s remarks were made on the July 11, 1995, Public Broadcasting System’s “News Hour.” See the Chinese analysis of U.S. “ambiguity” in He Chong, “Will the Talks between the Chinese Foreign Minister and the U.S.-Secretary of State Improve Sino-U.S. Ties?” Zhongguo Tongxun She, August 1, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 1, 1995, p. 6. Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

¹⁹Qian Qichen’s and Li Peng’s remarks are in Xinhua, July 4, 1995, in FBIS-China, July 5, 1995, pp. 8-9. See also the July 8, 1995, statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman in Zhongguo Xinwen She, July 13, 1995, in FBIS-China, July 14, 1995, p.1; and Chen Dawei, “To Make Amends for the Damage Done to U.S. Relations with China, The United States Must Give Up its Cold War Mode of Thinking,” Zhongguo Tongxun She, June 23, 1995, in FBIS-China, June 29, 1995, pp. 3-4;

²⁰On the cancellations, see Department of State Daily press briefing, May 24 and May 26, 1995, and the May 30 press briefing by Assistant Secretary of State Lord; and Xinhua, May 26, 1995, in FBIS-China, May 26, 1995, p. 3. For subsequent Chinese moves, see Xinhua, June 16, 1995, FBIS-China, June 19, 1995, p. 1; Agence France-Presse, June 22, 1995, FBIS-China, June 22, 1995, p. 1.

²¹Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts. For a discussion of the politics of China’s hard-line policy preferences, see Michael D. Swaine, “Chinese Decision-Making toward Taiwan, 1978-1997,” in David M. Lampton, The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform: 1978-2000 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, forthcoming); and You Ji, “Changing Leadership Consensus: The Domestic Context of the War Games,” in Zhao, ed., Across the Taiwan Strait.

²²Xinhua, July 18, 1995, in FBIS-China, July 19, 1995, p. 13; and Agence France-Press, August 11, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 11, 1995, p. 13.

²³Quoted in South China Morning Post, August 1, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 1, 1995, p. 5.

²⁴For a discussion of the domestic politics of Taiwan’s mainland policy, see Steven M. Goldstein, “The Cross-Strait Talks of 1993 -- The Rest of the Story: Domestic Politics and Taiwan’s Mainland Policy,” in Zhao, Across the Taiwan Strait.

²⁵See Suisheng Zhao, “Changing Leadership Perceptions: The Adoption of a Coercive Strategy,” in Suisheng Zhao, ed., Across the Taiwan Strait: Mainland China, Taiwan, and the 1995-1996 Crisis (New York: Routledge, 1999); and Swaine, “Chinese Decision-Making toward Taiwan, 1978-1997.”

²⁶Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

²⁷See the State Department text of the August 1, 1995, press availability of Christopher and Qian, released in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, on August 1, 1995.

²⁸Mann, About Face, p. 330. On the commitments of previous administrations, also see Ross, Negotiating Cooperation. See also the Chinese account of the meeting in Xinhua, August 1, 1995, FBIS-China, August 2, 1995, p. 4.

²⁹Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 289. See also Christopher's July 28, 1995, speech to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.; Michael Dobbs, "U.S., China Agree to Talks On Relations," Washington Post, August 2, 1995, p. A27.

³⁰Department of State daily press briefing, July 14, 1995, and August 11, 1995, interview with Robert Suettinger, Director of Asian Affairs, National Security Council.

³¹Xinhua, August 1, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 2, 1995, p. 4; Xinhua, August 17, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 17, 1995, p. 5; and Xinhua, August 24, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 24, 1995, pp. 1-2.

³²Commentator, "Lee Teng-hui Stubbornly Challenges the 'One-China' Principle," Xinhua, August 23, 1995, in FBIS/China, August 23, 1995, p. 50. On Taiwan's maneuvers, see Agence France-Presse, July 25, 1995, in FBIS-China, July 25, 1995, p. 41; and Voice of Free China, August 1, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 2, 1995, p. 78. Liu's comments are in Ta Kung Pao, September 4, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 7, 1995, p. 32.

³³Agence France-Press, August 26, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 28, 1995, pp. 81-82; Zhongguo Tongxun She, August 15, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 17, 1995, p. 57; and Ming Pao, August 16, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 18, 1995, pp. 27-28;

³⁴Gong Li, Zhong Mei Guanxi Redian Toushi (Perspective on hotspots in China-U.S. relations), (Harbin: Heilongjiang Chuban She, 1996, p. 159; Department of State daily press briefing, August 11, 1995, and August 28, 1995. Xinhua, August 27, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 28, 1995, p. 3; and Xinhua, August 29, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 30, 1995, p. 1.

³⁵Xinhua, September 8, 1995, and Xinhua, September 11, 1995, both in FBIS-China, September 11, 1995, pp. 13-15.

³⁶NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger and other administration officials.

³⁷Department of State daily press briefing, September 18, 1995, and September 21, 1995.

³⁸Department of State daily press briefing, September 18, 1995.

³⁹Department of State daily press briefing, September 22, 1995; and Xinhua, September 23, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 25, 1995, p. 7.

⁴⁰Central News Agency, September 25, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 25, 1995, p. 73.

⁴¹On the Chinese suspension of the nuclear energy agreement and the decision to move ahead with summit discussions between Tarnoff and Li, see Department of State daily press briefing, September 29, 1995. Qian's remarks are in Xinhua, September 27, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 28, 1995, pp. 11-12; and Xinhua, October 1, 1995, FBIS-China, October 2, 1995, p. 11; The return of the ambassador is reported in Kyodo, October 17, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 17, 1995, p. 1. On military exchanges, see Zhongguo Tongxun She, October 31, 1995, in FBIS-China, November 1, 1995, p. 1.

⁴²See the October 24, 1995, post-summit briefing in New York at the Warwick Hotel by State Department and NSC officials; Zhu Chenghu, ed., Zhong Mei Guanxi de Fazhan Bianhua ji qi Qushi (Developing change in China-U.S. relations and its trend) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chuban She, 1998), pp. 190-191; and Xinhua, October 25, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 25, 1995, p. 18; interview with and administration official.

⁴³Department of State daily press briefing, October 2, 1995; author interview with Policy Planning Staff Deputy Director .

⁴⁴October 24, 1995, post-summit briefing in New York at the Warwick Hotel by State Department and NSC officials.

⁴⁵November 16, 1995, press availability of Christopher and Qian at the New Otani Hotel, Tokyo; and briefing by Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord at the Royal Hotel Osaka, Japan, November 16, 1995.

⁴⁶Gong, Zhong Mei Guanxi Redian Toushi, p. 160; author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

⁴⁷Xinhua, October 1, 1995, FBIS-China, October 2, 1995, p. 11; Xinhua, October 26, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 27, 1995, pp. 2-3; and November 16, 1995, press availability of Christopher and Qian at the New Otani Hotel, Tokyo.

⁴⁸Chung-Yang Jih-Pao, September 15, 1995, in FBIS-China, September 18, 1995, p. 53; and Central News Agency, October 4, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 4, 1995, p. 91. For a Chinese analysis of the exercises, see Tang Zhengshui, Zhong Mei Qiju zhong de Taiwan Wenti: 1969.1-1999.12 (The Taiwan issue in U.S.-China chess: 1969.1-1999.12) (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 2000), p. 413-414. On the APEC meeting, see Central News Agency, October 18, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 18, 1995, p. 89.

⁴⁹Central News Analysis, August 17, 1995, in FBIS-China, August 17, 1995, p. 58; Chung-Yang Jih-Pao, December 1, 1995, in FBIS-China, December 6, 1995, p. 101; and Central People's Radio, November 4, 1995, in FBIS-China, November 6, 1995, p. 60.

⁵⁰Xinhua, October 18, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 18, 1995, pp. 25-26; and Zhongguo Xinwen She, October 19, 1995, in FBIS-China, October 20, 1995, p. 2.

⁵¹Tang, Zhong Mei Qiju zhong de Taiwan Wenti, p. 414; Xinhua, November 25, 1995, in FBIS-China, 95-227; Ping Kuo Jih Pao, November 27, 1995, in FBIS-China, November 27, 1995, pp. 24-25; author interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger. On the Nye visit, see Zhongguo Xinwen She, November 15, 1995, in FBIS-China, November 16, 1995, p. 4-5.

⁵²See the comments of Xin Qi in Wen Wei Pao, November 27, 1995, in FBIS-China, November 28, 1995, p. 72.

⁵³Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts; and Hong Kong Standard, December 4, 1995, in FBIS-China, December 4, 1995, p. 15. For a full discussion of the elections, see Shelley Rigger, Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 172-174.

⁵⁴Author Interview with former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Joseph Nye; Patrick E. Tyler, "China-U.S. Ties Warm a Bit as China-Taiwan Relations Chill," New York Times, November 18, 1995, p. A3; and "Perry Voices Concern for Taiwan," New York Times, February 7, 1996, A3.. Cf., Garver, Face Off, pp. 85-86.

⁵⁵Central News Agency, January 27, 1996, in FBIS-China, January 29, 1996, p. 83; and Department of State daily press briefing, January 26, 1996. The State Department and the NSC were persuaded by the Pentagon that its interest in sending the *Nimitz* through the strait was to avoid bad weather, rather than to send China a quiet yet persuasive signal and, thus, did not object. Author interview with former Assistant Secretary of Defense Nye, NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger, and other administration officials.. Cf., Garver, Face Off, pp. 87-89; Li Yihu, ed., Zhengzhi Dubo zhong de Taiwan (Taiwan in a political gamble) (Beijing: Youyi Chubanshe, 1999), p. 224.

⁵⁶Author interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger and former Assistant Secretary of Defense Nye.

⁵⁷Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

⁵⁸On Taiwan's publicizing the passage of the *Nimitz*, see Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 426; and Central News Agency, January 27, 1996, in FBIS-China, January 29, 1996, p. 83. On the defense policies, see Central News Agency, January 27, 1996, in FBIS-China, January 29, 1996; and Central News Agency, February 2, 1996, and Chung-kuo Shih-pao, January 28, 1996, both in FBIS-China, February 5, 1996, pp. 76-77. For Lee's remarks, see the English translation of his speech distributed by Nationalist Party campaign headquarters, in FBIS-China, February 12, 1996, pp. 83-84; and live telecast of Lee Teng-hui news conference, China Broadcasting Corporation (Taipei), February 23, 1996, in FBIS-China, February 26, 1996, p. 55.

⁵⁹"Taiwan Election Candidate Gives China Ultimatum," Reuters, February 23, 1996.

⁶⁰See the extensive discussion of this period in Taiwan's U.S. policy, in particular Taiwan's manipulation of the passage of the *Nimitz*, in Tang, Zhong Mei Qiju zhong de Taiwan Wenti, p. 417-421.

⁶¹"U.S. Visa to Taiwan Aide," New York Times, January 7, 1996, p. A9; and Department of State daily press briefing, January 5, 1996; and Xinhua, January 9, 1996, in FBIS-China, January 11, 1996, p. 2.

⁶²Department of State daily press briefing, January 23, 1996, and January 31; and China Radio International, February 2, 1996, in FBIS-China, February 2, 1996, p. 1.

⁶³Jiang Dianming, "Safeguarding State Sovereignty Is the Greatest Public Opinion," Wen Wei Pao, December 24, 1995, in FBIS-China, February 5, 1996, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁴Xinhua, January 30, 1996, in FBIS-China, January 31, 1996, pp. 75-77; and Zhongguo Xinwen She, March 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 11, 1996, p. 10. See also Yan Xuetong, "U.S. Policy toward Taiwan and Tension in the Taiwan Strait," Liaowang, March 4, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 15, 1996, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁵Associated Press, February 6, 1996; Department of State daily press briefing, February 14, 1996; R. Jeffrey Smith, "China Plans Maneuvers Off Taiwan," Washington Post, February 5, 1996, p. A1; and Steven Mufson, "China Masses Troops On Coast Near Taiwan," Washington Post, February 14, 1996, p. A16.

⁶⁶Associated Press, February 6, 1996; Testimony by Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord before the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 7, 1996; and Department of State daily press briefing, February 13, 1996, and February 14, 1996.

⁶⁷Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

⁶⁸Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

⁶⁹See the discussion in Tang, Zhong Mei Qiju zhong de Taiwan Wenti, p. 421-422.

⁷⁰Xinhua, March 4, 1995, FBIS-China, March 5, 1996, p. 68; and Central News Agency, March 7, 1995, in FBIS-China, March 7, 1996, p. 81. Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

⁷¹China Radio International, March 5, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 6, 1996, p. 1.

⁷²Agence France-Press, March 8, 1996, FBIS-China, March 8, 1996, p. 37; Department of State Daily Press Briefing, March 7, 1996, and March 8, 1996; and White House press briefing, March 7, 1996. Note that throughout the period, Chinese missile tests did not interfere with shipping in or out of Taiwan. See Central News Agency, March 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-47; and Central News Agency, March 13, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-50.

⁷³Wen Wei Po, March 9, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 11, 1996, p. 15; and editorial departments, "Lee Teng-hui Practicing Taiwan Independence Is the Biggest Danger for Taiwan," People's Daily and Liberation Army Daily, March 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 11, 1996, pp. 83-84.

⁷⁴Secretary of Defense William Perry's comments at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., February 28, 1996; Department of State daily press briefing, March 5, 1996; and Department of Defense news briefing, March 14, 1996. See also Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 427; Patrick E. Tyler, "China Signaling U.S. That It Will Not Invade Taiwan," New York Times, March 13, 1996, p. A3; and author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

⁷⁵Department of defense news briefing, March 14, 1996; Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1999), pp. 92-93.

⁷⁶Christopher, In the Stream of History, p. 427. Also see Department of Defense news briefing, March 14, 1996.

⁷⁷See Perry's comments at the Department of Defense news briefing, December 8, 1996; and Carter and Perry, Preventive Defense, p. 96.

⁷⁸Xinhua, March 9, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 9, 1996, p. 54.

⁷⁹Author interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger. See also Mann, About Face, pp. 336-37. Cf., Carter and Perry, Preventative Defense, p. 96-99; and Patrick Tyler, A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), p. 33.

⁸⁰American Forces Press Service, March 11, 1996; Department of Defense news briefing, March 12, 1996, March 14, 1996, and March 16, 1996; Department of State daily press briefing, March 11, 1996; author interviews with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger and other administration officials. Note that although the *Nimitz* was ordered to proceed to waters near Taiwan, it was also ordered to sail at a deliberate pace and it never reached Taiwan's vicinity, but was close to the Philippines. Author interview with U.S. official. Note also that Chinese leaders were aware of the deliberate pace of the *Nimitz*. Author interview with Chinese policy analysts.

⁸¹Central People's Radio, March 12, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-50; and Xinhua, March 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-47. See also He Chong, "Amassing U.S. Warships Is an Act of Playing with Fire," Zhongguo Tongxun She, March 13, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 14, 1996, p. 3.

⁸²Agence France-Press, March 12, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-50; Central News Agency, March 13, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-50; China Broadcasting Corporation (Taipei), March 15, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 15, 1996, p. 92; Central News Agency, March 20, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-55; and editorial departments, People's Daily and Liberation Army Daily, "Safeguarding the Motherland's Unity Is the People's Army Bound Duty," March 15, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 18, 1996, pp. 78-79. Note that China canceled two of its planned missile tests. It did not target the closure zone of the east side of Taiwan. These tests would have been the most provocative, because firing missiles into this zone would have required China to send the missiles directly over Taiwan. Author interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger. See also Tyler, A Great Wall, p. 31, which notes that China readied "more than a dozen missiles" for firing. Chinese leaders did not carry out these tests probably because they had determined that the prior tests had accomplished China's political objectives and because the U.S. show of force had made them more cautious. The final missile test reportedly carried a dummy warhead. China Broadcasting Corporation, March 13, 1996, p. 103; Ming Pao, September 19, 1999, in FBIS-China, 1999-1028; Agence France-Presse, May 5, 1999, in FBIS-China, 2000-0505.

⁸³White House press briefing, March 12, 1996; and interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger. Note that despite lack of tension, the NSC worked with the Defense Department to prepare a number of scenarios in which U.S. forces would engage the PLA. Regarding the bravado, Secretary of Perry used China's ongoing exercises to remind Beijing that the United States had the "best damn navy in the world." See Rupert Cornwell "Taiwan Fans Flames in the War of Words," Independent (London), March 20, 1996, p. 9; Department of State press briefing, March 19, 1996. See also Mann, About Face, pp. 337-338. China carried out its own bravado after the dispatch of the carriers. See the interviews with PLA generals in Ta Kung Pao, March 13, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-50. Also note that on March 22 the Defense Department and China reported that each had taken the initiative to delay a visit to the United States by Minister of Defense Chi Haotian. Department of Defense news release, ref. no. 149-96; and Xinhua, March 22, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 25, 1996, p. 3. See also Carter and Perry, Preventative

Defense, p. 99.

⁸⁴Interview with Richard Bush, director, American Institute in Taiwan; Central News Agency, January 15, 1996, in FBIS-China, 97-011; Central News Agency, January 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, 97-06; Central News Agency, July 24, 1997; Keith B. Richburg, "Taiwan Again an Issue in U.S.-China Relations," Washington Post, July 27, 1997, p. A24. China's appreciation of U.S. management of Taiwan's transit visas is reflected in He Jixiong, Lee Teng-hui's 'Transit Diplomacy' Can Hardly Succeed," Zhongguo Tongxun She, September 4, 1997, in FBIS-China, 97-248. China's protest of the Lien transit visa is reported in Agence France-Presse, January 7, 1997, in FBIS-China, 97-04.

⁸⁵Lien-Ho Pao, March 27, 1996, in FBIS-China, April 11, 1996, pp. 88-89. On Roth's statement, see his nomination hearing before the Foreign Relations Committee, United States Senate, July 27, 1997.

⁸⁶This is the consensus among Chinese policy analysts. Also see, for example, Zhu, Zhong Mei Guanxi de Fazhan ji qi Qushi, pp. 195-196; Tang, Zhong Mei Qiju zhong de Taiwan Wenti, p. 447-448.

⁸⁷Author interviews with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger and other administration officials. See Christopher's speech, "American Interests and the U.S.-China Relationship" presented to the Asia Society, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, May 17, 1996. Zhongguo Tongxun She, July 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-133; and Central People's Radio, June 8, 1996, in FBIS-China, July 9, 1996, pp. 6. On the Clinton-Jiang meeting in Manila, see Xinhua, November 24, 1996, in FBIS-China, 96-228.

⁸⁸Xinhua, June 30, 1997, in FBIS-China, 97-181; Xinhua, August 12, 1997, in FBIS-China, 97-224.

⁸⁹Background press briefing by senior administration officials, the White House, October 29, 1997; Department of State daily press briefing, October 31, 1997; and interview with an administration official. Albright's statement is in her April 30, 1998, press conference at the Beijing International Club Hotel, April 30, 1998. Note that the president's August 1995 letter to Jiang Zemin stated that Washington "opposed" independence for Taiwan. By the 1997 summit the administration had shifted to "does not support" independence for Taiwan. See Mann, About Face pp. 330, 355-58.

⁹⁰See the president's June 30, 1998, remarks at the Shanghai Library, the White House, Office of the Press Secretary (Shanghai, People's Republic of China); and interview with NSC Director of Asian Affairs Suettinger.

⁹¹For a discussion of the outcome of the 1996 presidential elections, see Rigger, Politics in Taiwan, pp. 175-177.

⁹²New York Times, April 3, 1996, p. A9; Central News Agency, April 3, 1996, in FBIS-China, April 3, 1996, p. 85; Central News Agency, March 28, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 28, 1996, pp. 92-93; and Agence France-Presse, March 19, 1996, in FBIS-China, March 19, 1996, p. 96. See also the text of Lee's interview with Newsweek magazine, in Central News Agency, May 13, 1996, in FBIS-China, May 14, 1996, pp. 70-71.

⁹³Rigger, Politics in Taiwan, pp. 175-177. Note that the outcome of the elections was likely influenced by the deployment of the two carriers, an implicit signal of U.S. support for Lee Teng-hui. This is a widespread view in China. See Wang Jisi, "Dui Hua Zhengce" (Policy toward China," in Wang Jisi, ed., Gaochu Busheng Han: Lenzhang hou Meiguo Quanqiu Zhanlue he Shijie Diwei (Intolerable Cold at the Height: Post Cold War U.S. global strategy and world position) (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chuban She, 1999), p. 263.

⁹⁴"Taiwan Foreign Minister Vows No Halt to UN Push," Reuters, June 10, 1996; Central News Agency, July 14, 1999, and Chung-Yang Jih-Pao, July 14, 1999, in FBIS-China, 1999-714; and Lien-Ho Pao, July 13, 1999, in FBIS-China, 1999-715. On the exercises, see Agence France-Presse, August 5, 1999, in FBIS-China, 1999-805; Ta Kung Pao, September 10, 1999, in FBIS-China, 1999-910; and Wen Wei Po, September 11, 1999, in FBIS-China, 1999-912. See also Department of State daily press briefing, August 3, 1999.

⁹⁵Department of State daily press briefing, July 13, 1999, and July 14, 1999; testimony of Deputy Secretary of State Susan Shirk before the House International Relations Committee, Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, September 15,

1999; Philip Shenon, "U.S. Cancels Military Aides' Visit to Taiwan," New York Times, July 22, 1999, p. A8; and David E. Sanger, "Clinton and Jiang Heal Rift and Set New Trade Course," New York Times, September 12, 1999, p. A1.

⁹⁶See Yuen Foong Khong, "Singapore: A Time for Economic and Political Engagement," and Amitav Acharya, "Containment, Engagement, or Counter-Dominance," in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 124-25, 138, 145; Jusuf Wanandi, "ASEAN's China Strategy: Towards Deeper Engagement," Survival, vol. 38, no. 2 (Autumn 1996), pp. 124-27.

⁹⁷For a discussion of U.S. missile defense cooperation with Taiwan, see Thomas J. Christensen, "Theater Missile Defense and Taiwan's Security," Orbis, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Winter 2000), pp. 79-90; Michael O'Hanlon, "Star Wars Strikes Back," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 78, No. 6 (November/December 1999), p. 77. See also Department of Defense, "Report to Congress on Theater Missile Defense Architecture Options for the Asia-Pacific Region," May 4, 1999. For a discussion of the implications of the March confrontation for U.S.-Taiwan relations, see Goldstein and Schriver, "The Taiwan Relations Act: Evolution and Implementation."

⁹⁸Author interview with Chinese policy analysts. Li Peng's comments are in Financial Times, June 11, 1996, in FBIS-China, June 11, 1996, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁹Shi Yinhong, "Kunnan yu Xuance: Dui Taiwan Wenti de Sikao" (Difficulty and choice: Thoughts on the Taiwan issue), Zhanlue yu Guanli (Strategy and management), no. 5, 1999, p. 3-4; and author interviews with Chinese policy analysts. Regarding the outcome of the election, this is the suggestion of Wang, "Dui Hua Zhengce", p. 263. This analysis is challenged by reports that Chinese deployment of its strategic and attack submarines on March 13 compelled the United States to redeploy the carrier independence an additional 100 miles from the Chinese coast. See Su Ge, Meiguo dui Hua Zhengce yu Taiwan Wenti (Beijing, Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1998), p. 750. Yet this report is, at best, unreliable, as it based on an uninformed U.S. Chinese-language newspaper account. See "Zhonggong Shisi suo He Qianting Chu Hai" (14 Chinese communist nuclear submarines go to sea), Shijie Ribao (World daily) (New York), March 19, 1996, p. 1; Su, Meiguo dui Hua Zhengce yu Taiwan Wenti, p. 750, n. 4. U.S. officials uniformly disagree with this and similar reports.

¹⁰⁰This is the argument of Shi, "Kunnan yu Xuance," p. 4; author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

¹⁰¹Countries throughout the region adopted a cautious attitude toward the U.S. response, lest they alienate China on a sensitive issue in Chinese foreign policy. Their reaction reflected the common concern of allies of entrapment versus abandonment, and they chose to split difference. They were concerned that enhanced U.S. commitment to the defense of Taiwan might enhance their security vis-a-vis China, but might also drag them into a conflict over Taiwan. See the discussion of entrapment and abandonment in Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," World Politics, Vol. 36, No. 4 (July 1984), pp. 461-495. Beneath the caution, there was evidence of general support for the U.S. response. See, for example, the transcript of the March 12, 1996, Japanese foreign ministry press conference in Foreign Broadcast Information Service-East Asia, March 13, 1996, pp. 7-12; Nigel Holloway, "Strait Talking," Far Eastern Economic Review, March 21, 1996, p. 16; "Asians Laud Us Privately," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 4, 1996, p. 17; and Strategic Survey, 1995/96 (London: Institute for International Strategic Studies, 1996), pp. 178-179.

¹⁰²Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

¹⁰³Shi, "Kunnan yu Xuance: Dui Taiwan Wenti de Sikao" p. 4; Author interviews with Chinese policy analysts.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.* For discussions of post-March 1996 Chinese strategy and military acquisitions relevant to the Taiwan theater, see You Ji, The Armed Forces of China (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 99-100; Tai Ming Cheung, "Chinese Military Preparations against Taiwan over the Next Ten Years," and Bates Gill, "Chinese Military Hardware and Technology Acquisition of Concern to Taiwan," in James R. Lilley and Chuck Downs, Crisis in the Taiwan Strait (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁵On the Sovremennyi destroyers, see Interfax, April 18, 1997, in FBIS-Central Eurasia, 97-108; and He Chong, "China's Purchase of Russian-Made Sovremenny-Class Destroyer Attracts Attention," Zhongguo Tongxun She, February 12, 2000, in FBIS-China, 2000-212. For a discussion of China's military modernization program and its implications for the Taiwan Strait, See Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon, "China's Hollow Military," in National Interest, No. 56, (Summer 1999), and Larry M. Wortzel, The Chinese Armed Forces in the Twenty-First Century (Carlisle, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1999).

¹⁰⁶Proving a negative is difficult, yet it is clear that the origins of the 1996 confrontation lay in Taiwan lobbying of Congress and congressional pressure on the president. It is also important to stress that Taiwan lobbying did not reflect the pressure of Taiwan's democracy, which is a constant in U.S.-Taiwan relations. Taiwan's electorate has been cautious regarding independence diplomacy and the risk of war with the mainland. Lee Teng-hui was not responding to public opinion, but leading public opinion and Chen Shui-bian had to abandon his support for independence in order to win the presidency in 2000, suggesting that a confrontation over Taiwan was not inevitable. This further suggests that Taiwan public opinion can be influenced by cautious U.S. policy toward Taiwan. On the politics of the 2000 campaign, including public attitudes toward Taiwan independence, see Shelly Rigger, "Taiwan Rides the Democratic Dragon," Washington Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 2000).