KEY TO PEACE ON THE TAIWAN STRAIT: ENHANCING DETERRENCE

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Dispensing with the Elephant in the room, and the Donkey

There is a good chance (very) that the basic U.S. policy toward Taiwan will continue regardless of what happens in November.

**Republican:** While Donald Trump has not spoken specifically about his Taiwan policy, there are strong indicators:

1. Economic Advisor Peter Navarro: “maintaining Taiwan as an independent, pro-U.S. ally is absolutely critical”…sell submarine technology, allow participation in RIMPAC, better integration with regional C4ISR. (National Interest, 7/19/16)

2. Strong 2016 Republican Party Platform: Affirms TRA; Six Assurances; clear statement US will defend Taiwan if China violates “principle that all issues regarding the island’s future must be resolved peacefully;” sell submarine technology; “timely” arms sales.

**Democrat:** “Secretary Clinton supports the current administration’s policy on China and Taiwan, and will continue to do so…So you won’t find any surprises or significant departures from the secretary’s position on the relationship than you do with [US] President [Barack] Obama over the last few years,” Clinton Campaign Foreign Policy Director Jake Sullivan, 7/25/16

**Congress:** Longstanding very strong support; Taiwan Caucus the 2nd largest in the House.

**Challenge:** While the status quo in U.S. policy may be fine for deterring conflict on the Taiwan Strait for the near term, for the medium and long term it will not do so and will fail U.S. security interests.
But to understand what is required, we must review the threats

1. China’s threat to Taiwan, is part of a medium term quest for hegemony in Asia, and then for long term global hegemony. 
   
   Taiwan’s democracy remains an existential threat to the Communist Party of China, so its conquest remains a crucial near term goal on the way to China’s global ambitions.

2. The PLA’s recent reorganization will enable more effective surprise joint operations; PLA modernization to prepare for a Taiwan scenario continues apace.

3. China’s quest for the neutralization of South Korea and isolation of Japan are part of Beijing’s medium term goal to surround Taiwan and divide Washington from its Asian allies.

4. Control of the South China Sea and East China Sea/Taiwan are crucial for China’s global projection, space control projection—and to militarily surround Taiwan.

5. Despite their deep historic rivalry, China and Russia today show increasing willingness to cooperate tactically: missile defense today, but missile offense tomorrow? Conventional military cooperation in Asia? Crisis cooperation?
Enduring Threat: The Chinese Communist Party’s objective to take over Taiwan has not changed since 1949.
1. China drops regular hints that will not wait forever for “peaceful unification” with Taiwan.
2. This objective become more important as Taiwan’s democratic culture strengthens, undermining CCP legitimacy.
3. Taiwan’s younger generation is less interested in “unification” as their Taiwan identity deepens—Sunflower Movement.
4. Control of Taiwan is necessary to realize the power projection ambitions inherit in the “China Dream.”
5. Taiwan would be the optimal base for PLA nuclear bombers, nuclear missiles and nuclear ballistic missile submarines.
6. New PLA Theater Command structure allows concentration of three or four Theater Commands for rapid offensive operations.
Growing Military Threats To Taiwan

1. 1,200 SRBMs could grow to 4,000-5,000 if next generation CASC and CASIC system replace DF-11 and DF-15. As most SRBMs are aimed at Taiwan, such growth would overwhelm Taiwan’s anti-missile defenses.

2. By 2020 the PLA could have 1,500 4th generation combat aircraft, with 5th generation fighters just entering service. This will greatly stress Taiwan’s combat aircraft force, which may not grow much beyond the current 400 fighters.

3. Formal amphibious lift may only transport up to 2 Divisions to Taiwan, but adding informal lift, this increases up to 12 Divisions—TODAY. As this will only grow, the threat of an actual PLA invasion of Taiwan is very real.
Strategic Centrality of the South China Sea and East China Sea

Goal to consolidate control of South and East China Seas in the 2020s?
Threat to Taiping Island is used for blackmail, but control of SCS and ECS can help militarily surround Taiwan.
Consolidating control over the South China Sea unopposed; building 7 island bases; Scarborough Shoal next?
Increased tempo of military ops: air and naval exercises in South China Sea; intimidation in East China Sea.
SCS control necessary for Hainan Island to become a secure base for SSBNs plus sea and space power projection.
China and Russia Pivot Against America

Russia has long recognized China’s “core interest” over Taiwan. Would Russia tilt vs. US in a conflict over Taiwan?

16 China-Russia military exercises since 2005: 7 on land; 6 at sea; 2 air force exercise; 1 missile defense command post exercise (CPX).

Plus 7 multilateral military exercises under the aegis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

First formal Russia-China naval exercise in Mediterranean Sea last May; first in the South China Sea soon.

New arms sales plus agreements possible for: wide body airliner; heavy helicopter; space system development; and Moon exploration?

Can we expect Russia-China defensive and offensive nuclear cooperation against the U.S. in the future?
• What Should the U.S. Do?

1. Recognize that Taiwan is a critical political and military asset to the United States. A democratic Taiwan stands as a living example for the coexistence of political and economic freedom undermining the legitimacy of the CCP dictatorship. Taiwan’s holds the essential capstone position in the First Island Chain, making the whole First Island Chain a viable buffer to China under the aegis of U.S. leadership with its Japan and Philippine military alliances.

2. State that China’s accelerating military threats to Taiwan trigger the 3rd and 4th policy clauses of the Taiwan Relation Act.

   “3. to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means.”

   “4. to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.”

A judgement that China’s various threats trigger these clauses should then give Washington cause to justify a higher diplomatic and military relationship with Taiwan. At a minimum, this should include more sophisticated exercises with Taiwan’s military.

4. Move ahead quickly to enhance Taiwan’s main deterrent by sale of submarine technology and sale of small number of KC-135 aerial refueling tankers to give Taiwan a retaliation capability in the event of an attack against Taiping Island.

5. Move quickly to equip Taiwan with a range of new asymmetric military capabilities: new guided artillery shells; small inexpensive but long range cruise missiles; future energy weapons like railguns.

6. Work with Taiwan to expand opportunities for U.S. companies to assist new indigenous Taiwan programs, such as a potential future trainer or fighter.

7. Quickly expand U.S. regional conventional and nuclear deterrent capabilities: New MRBMs/IRBMs; Arsenal Ships, Arsenal Aircraft, Arsenal Submarines; expand 5th generation fighter sales to eventually include option for Taiwan

8. Modernize and expand the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal and reintroduce tactical nuclear weapons to U.S. forces in Asia; sustain capability to deter a combined Russia-China nuclear threat.
Consider another major “Arms Package”

Are we backed into the requirement to consider another new large arms package in 2017?

It may be possible to envision a Taiwan “bipartisan” list of requirements:

1. If business is still possible: package to either directly assist, or to gather foreign technology for IDS.
2. Immediate air power package—new or used F-16s? V/STOL? Harriers? KC-135 refuelers?
3. Assistance for potential indigenous trainer and then fighter programs—especially a real engine.
4. Advance “asymmetric” options.”
5. Increase opportunities for training with U.S. forces, consider new forms of “virtual” training.