

Innovation in Education

The U.S. One China Policy: A Primer for Professional Military Education Faculty

Written by¹

Luke Bellocchi, JD, LLM, MSSSI, MBA

Introduction

Professional Military Education (PME) has pivoted to focus on strategic competitors, and the focus has rightly been on student education about strategic competition. In making that shift in focus, it is easy to forget to teach the teachers. A well-informed faculty, indeed, a faculty primed on the issues related to China, is indispensable in efficiently and accurately educating PME students. The issue of Taiwan, while often well-known, is not always deeply understood by faculty members, which can have deleterious consequences in the classroom and warrants a quick and basic understanding of the U.S. relationship with Taiwan and policies. Educating faculty on the issue, even in the most basic way, is important to understanding and accurately explaining why the People's Republic of China (PRC), expresses uproar regarding U.S. interactions with Taiwan, in what they deem interference in a PRC internal affair.

¹ The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Joint Forces Staff College, National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the U. S. Government.

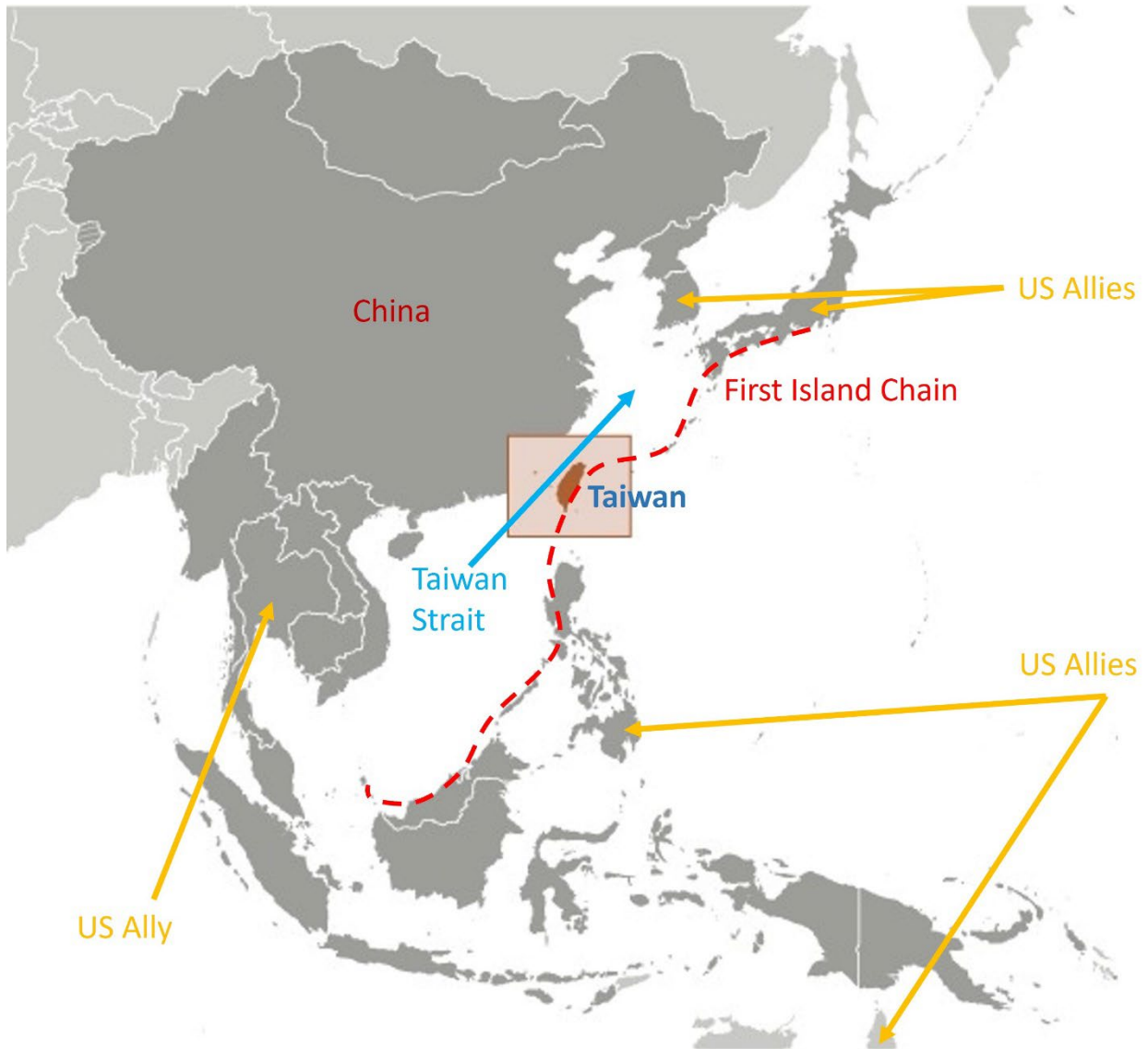


Figure 1: Map of China and Southeast Asian Countries identifying key geographic points. Source: Central Intelligence Agency, “Taiwan,” CIA World Factbook 2021, accessed March 14, 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/static/72473a8cc0468e70e5a829b4b1d27047/TW-locator-map.jpg>.

Pundits blamed President Biden for a diplomatic *faux pas* when he said “we have a commitment” to defend Taiwan against a PRC attack, and media outlets similarly blamed President Trump, in 2016, after he accepted a congratulatory call from the democratically elected President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen. Most experts agree that the media portrayal was inaccurate, and that Taiwan is a strategically important island to both the PRC and to the U.S. allies in the vicinity.¹

Regardless of the expert consensus, there remains much unaddressed confusion when it comes to U.S. foreign policy with China and in particular the U.S. One China Policy (OCP).² Media outlets often portray the OCP as if it was an agreement between the U.S. and PRC on the status

of Taiwan and fail to explain the history leading up to the U.S. strategy and policy regarding Taiwan. Failure to address those areas can leave faculty, and thus graduating PME students, blind to each nation's strategic choices and gray zone approaches.

The U.S. History and its Ramifications on the Present

The U.S. allied with Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of the nationalist government of the Republic of China (ROC) during World War II. After Japan surrendered to the allies, civil war between the ROC and Chinese communists, led by Mao Ze-dong. Mao prevailed and established the current PRC government and by 1949. Chiang fled to Taiwan with his remaining ROC forces and government. In 1972, President Nixon opened relations with the PRC in an attempt to “play the China card” against the Soviet Union, and then in 1979, President Carter formally switched diplomatic recognition from the ROC to the PRC. The PRC and the ROC continue to dispute the legitimacy of each other's claims as the rightful government of China. The nature of the dispute, however, has manifested in different ways and shifted its point of emphasis over time.

One China Policy – Just the Basics

The U.S. One China Policy (OCP) has often been misstated, which is unsurprising given how, over time, it has morphed. In some ways, the confusion is both feature and flaw. The U.S. policy is sometimes said to maintain “strategic ambiguity” towards Taiwan. Through ambiguity, and thus some confusion, two tenets of *our* OCP are clear and established. First, *our* OCP recognizes the PRC as the sole legal government of China. Second, though it recognizes the PRC, that does not mean that it agrees with the PRC's position that Taiwan is part of the PRC.

The controversial and disputed part of *our* OCP is whether Taiwan is part of China. There are three communiqués establishing the U.S. recognition of the PRC diplomatically, but the translation of the communiqués between English and Chinese leads to vastly different interpretations. The PRC version states the U.S. “recognizes” Taiwan to be part of China, but the U.S. version states that the U.S. “acknowledges the Chinese position.”³ The full English text declares that: “The Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.”⁴

When national security agencies discuss *our* OCP, they often reiterate that the U.S. “continues to abide by” and “there is no change” in *our* OCP. They also refer to one or more additional documents, and the most common additional reference they make is to the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). They make the additional references because without them the U.S. statement above does not mean much with regards to Taiwan.

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The TRA was enacted as the U.S. officially switched diplomatic relations from the ROC to the PRC in 1979. At that time, the PRC officially established its embassy in Washington D.C., the ROC closed its embassy, and the U.S. abrogated its 1954 mutual defense treaty with the ROC.⁵ Despite the abrogation, Congress created a mechanism through which unofficial relations with and arms sales to Taiwan could continue.

After the diplomatic switch of recognition, the U.S. government ceased any official reference to “ROC” and generally referred to the governing institutions on Taiwan as “Taiwan” or “Taiwan authorities.”

The TRA explicitly states that the U.S. will provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character and that the U.S. will maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that will jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.⁶ Recent statements and the executive branches increased statements involving the TRA indicate a move towards strategic clarity and suggest closer relations with Taiwan.⁷ Moreover, formal U.S. allies, such as Japan and Australia, expressed concern over any PRC aggressive intent, both militarily and commercially, towards Taiwan because of its strategic location.⁸

Six Assurances. In addition to the three communiqués, other communications attempt to clarify the U.S. policy regarding Taiwan. In 1982, President Reagan generated a communication to Taiwan which became known as the Six Assurances, and later President Clinton made a statement that the Taiwan issue must be made with the assent of the people of Taiwan.⁹ In their modern application, several concepts underpin each of the statements:

- The TRA and the third communiqué set an expectation that the U.S. will resolve the issue of Taiwan through peaceful means by establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC.¹⁰
- The TRA also made clear that any form of commercial boycotts would be of grave concern to the U.S., and it will resist such threats to the social/economic system of the people of Taiwan.¹¹
- The U.S. opposes change in the sovereign status of Taiwan without the assent of the people of Taiwan.¹²
- There is no change to the U.S. position on the issue of sovereignty over Taiwan.¹³
- For the U.S., there is no certain date established for ending arms sales to Taiwan.¹⁴

Basics of Unofficial Relationship with Taiwan – American Institute in Taiwan (AIT)

In 1979, when the U.S. broke diplomatic ties to the ROC and recognized the PRC as the government of China, it did not officially take a position on the issue of sovereignty over Taiwan. In fact, the issue had never been resolved at any of the conferences after WWII. The Japanese simply ceded its official sovereignty over the colony they held since 1895. The ROC had accepted the Japanese surrender in 1945, and the Japanese had fully retreated its forces from Taiwan by 1949.¹⁵ The sovereignty status of Taiwan is thus unsettled, and the lack of settlement remains the U.S. position. Note, however, that unlike Germany and Korea, the PRC and ROC both insisted that only one government could be recognized by the U.S. and international community to avoid dividing China into East and West countries.

Taiwan is a major trading hub and commercial center and listed among the world’s most advanced economies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), so most countries seek to continue their commercial relationship. For instance, under the Taiwan Relations Act, the U.S. established a non-profit organization funded by the U.S. Government (USG) called the American

Institute in Taiwan (AIT). The Institute, has since its establishment provided all the functions of a U.S. embassy in Taiwan. In fact, it has been staffed by American career diplomats and other government employees. The ROC has their counterpart in the U.S. called The Taipei Economic Cultural and Representative Office (TECRO) that provides the same diplomatic and government functions. Most countries have an equivalent construct to conduct unofficial diplomacy with Taiwan.

In the past, the State Department issued numerous, sometimes excessively restrictive, rules regarding any Taiwan officials traveling through the U.S. and U.S. executive branch behavior towards Taiwan in an effort not to disturb the PRC diplomatic relationship; however, of late, the rules have slowly been loosened to allow for increased operational contacts between official Americans and Taiwan.¹⁶ For example, a requirement existed that all AIT staff had to resign from the State Department and get rehired after their AIT assignment, and only recently did AIT start hoisting an American flag.¹⁷ In 1994, the DOS essentially restricted the President of Taiwan from leaving his plane while it refueled in Hawaii on the way to Nelson Mandela's inauguration.¹⁸ In response, Congress passed unanimous legislation the next year to grant him a visa to privately visit his alma mater.¹⁹ In 2019, Current President Tsai Ing-wen was allowed to give a speech in Honolulu as part of a planned stop in route to other international meetings.²⁰ According to press reports, new guidelines now allow U.S. officials to hold working-level meetings in federal buildings or at the Taiwan de facto consular offices in New York.²¹

Current Political Situation and Taiwan's Calls for Independence

After Chiang and the ROC moved to Taiwan in 1949, the island, essentially, existed under martial law until 1987. Restrictions lasted until the early 1990s, when the ROC President, Li Teng-hui, instituted major reforms to allow for free elections in Taiwan, an island about the size of Belgium and populated by 24 million people.²² One of the main issues that affect Taiwan electoral politics is ethnicity. Although Chiang had brought his army and a significant population to the island in 1949, most of the population had family roots in the island dating back centuries and considered themselves "Taiwanese." Those who consider themselves Taiwanese or indigenous to the island have their own language,²³ which is believed to be based in Fujianese rather than Mandarin Chinese.²⁴ Although the differences have not played a definitive role in party politics, the two main parties in Taiwan have certain historical roots. The party of Chiang that controlled the island through its martial law years, the Kuomintang (KMT), has roots in the mainlander population, while the other predominant party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has roots with those who call themselves Taiwanese. However, descendants of those who moved in 1949 increasingly identify as Taiwanese regardless of their family history.

Not surprisingly, even the descendants of those who retreated to Taiwan in 1949 find fewer connections to mainland China, and many on Taiwan have called for declaring outright independence from China, considering themselves to always have been separate from China.²⁵ In Taiwan's vibrant and free democracy, the DPP—a party that has declared Taiwan to already be an independent country—²⁶ has won the Presidency four times, including the current administration of Tsai Ing-wen. In the past, it appears the U.S. placed pressure on the DPP

leadership to state that they will not declare independence or hold a referendum on the question, apparently in an effort to stave off a PRC military reaction.²⁷

At the same time, the U.S. has slowly come to support Taiwan's participation in world institutions, such as the World Health Organization (WHO).²⁸ Part of the U.S. shift relates to the depth of the ROC democracy. When the ROC adopted its take-it-or-leave-it diplomatic stance regarding U.S. and United Nations (UN) diplomatic recognition, it was not the vibrant democracy it is today. That lack of democratic values and institutions left its people without representation in international organizations without their assent. Despite seeming anachronistic, for now, Taiwan is still called the Republic of China (ROC) or sometimes ROC Taiwan, and it remains locked out of most international organizations even though it has clearly operated as a separate *de facto* governing body for more than 70 years.

Arms Sales

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) requires the U.S. to continue arms sales to Taiwan to provide for their self-defense. At times, the U.S. has indicated that it might gradually reduce the armament provided to Taiwan, but such reductions are premised on the PRC pursuing a peaceful resolution.²⁹ At other times, the PRC sought to demonstrate they could peacefully manage the transition of Hong Kong from the British in 1997 and that their "one country, two systems" policy could be applied to Taiwan.³⁰ Recent suppression of the rights of speech, the press, peaceful demonstrations, and fair elections in Hong Kong have proven otherwise. Such PRC efforts seem to have played a decisive role in Taiwan's latest elections, favoring the DPP and increased anti-PRC political agendas. Further, instead of de-escalating arms build-up across from Taiwan and renouncing the use of force against Taiwan, the PRC has increased its offensive missile capability in the region and recently conducted dangerous military exercises aimed at Taiwan.³¹

Much of the arms sales to Taiwan involve direct sales of finished products such as F-16s and Abrams tanks, but they are often only sophisticated parts that the ROC is fully capable of integrating. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, the balance of economic power and a corresponding military production capacity has clearly shifted to the PRC. Much is written about the PRC's increased ability to wage a conventional war, and whether the PRC is able to take Taiwan quickly and declare a *fait accompli*.³² One could argue, however, that any initial stages of a war for unification are likely to be asymmetric in nature. In fact, the PRC has engaged in cyberattacks against Taiwan³³ and has used economic pressure on foreign companies and countries doing business with Taiwan to create a stranglehold.³⁴

Competing in the Gray Zone

Much has been discussed within national security circles concerning gray zone activities against the U.S. Taiwan, PRC, and gray zone activities are clearly related. And while much ado is made about U.S. competitors acting in the gray zone, it is wise to remember that the opacity of gray

zone activity is mutual for all competitors. The U.S. has “adhered to” *our* One China Policy basically since its inception, but over the past few years has started to push back against China’s aggression against Taiwan through countering activities. In one way, the U.S. has been operating in the gray zone respective to Taiwan through “strategic ambiguity.”³⁵ In the past strategic ambiguity has allowed the U.S. to employ Taiwan as a bargaining chip and extract concessions from the PRC, recent PRC military aggression may require more overt countering actions. Taiwan is too strategically important, militarily and commercially, to be allowed to be controlled by an authoritarian competitor regime.³⁶ Taiwan is also, undeniably, a vibrant democracy, and it belongs in league with democracies to resist authoritarianism.³⁷

The PRC has engaged in its own gray zone actions for many years. Although it has never renounced the use of force to unify itself with Taiwan, it has made numerous statements that appear to the world as if it seeks a peaceful resolution, including the “one country, two systems” policy. Furthermore, the PRC has used its international leverage in the UN to exclude Taiwan from any international participation, including the World Health Organization (WHO), even during the entire COVID pandemic.³⁸ Using its financial leverage, the PRC has lured away the few countries that still recognize the ROC diplomatically,³⁹ and taken diplomatic and commercial countermeasures whenever other countries and their businesses commit what they consider a *faux pas* in doing business with Taiwan.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the PRC has tried to covertly build missile and amphibious military capabilities across the Taiwan Straits for many years while overtly denying they have any intention of reclaiming Taiwan by force.

The more China makes aggressive military moves towards Taiwan, the more it makes sense for the U.S. and its allies to clarify its strategic intent to defend Taiwan and to allow Taiwan to join international organizations.⁴¹ In fact, Japan and Australia have been increasingly pointed in their statements to addressing recent aggression, and Japan appears to be calling for outright strategic clarity on the matter.⁴² The U.S. has recently begun operational planning with Japan for a Taiwan contingency.⁴³ Europe has—like the United States—attempted to follow an engagement approach with China, during the past few years there has been a major shift towards also viewing China as a strategic competitor. In early December, the EU announced new measures to deter economic coercion, specifically aimed at China.⁴⁴

Strategic ambiguity, however, favors incremental moves that viewed discretely do not raise the specter of war but push the issue in a favorable direction, and incremental approaches are very often incident and context dependent. For example, right after abrogation of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan, it would have been impossible to send any U.S. military personnel or diplomats to Taiwan in an official capacity. Though, recently, the U.S. staffed the AIT with a Marine guard contingent just like most other U.S. embassies, and there are more overt reports of U.S. military personnel involved in training.⁴⁵ Ostensibly, reason suggests that the U.S. has always included training as part of the arms sales to Taiwan. In the past, the U.S. has said the Taiwan issue should be resolved by both sides, but more recently it has stated that the issue must be resolved with the assent of the people of Taiwan. In the past, *our* OCP was often stated by itself, but increasingly, the White House and State Department state *our* OCP “in accordance with” the TRA and/or Six Assurances.⁴⁶ While seemingly innocuous in isolation, such

modifications suggest incremental movement towards strategic clarity that are likely to continue but still constitute gray zone, i.e., ambiguous, activities that move the “needle” favorably.

Congress just passed, and the President signed, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2022 (NDAA FY22).⁴⁷ The NDAA FY22 contains several sections providing Congressional determinations that the TRA and the Six Assurances provide the “foundation for U.S.-Taiwan relations.”⁴⁸ It also requires the DoD to issue an annual report on Taiwan’s asymmetric defensive capabilities and provide a plan “for assisting Taiwan in improving its defensive asymmetric capabilities,” while reporting on PRC influence operations.⁴⁹ The new NDAA also requires the DoD to provide a brief on “enhanced cooperation between the National Guard and Taiwan” in areas ranging from disaster relief to communications security.⁵⁰ Even more recently, the March 2022 Omnibus appropriations bill contains a section prohibiting the State Department (and its contractors) from purchasing or using maps that depict Taiwan as part of the PRC.⁵¹ Essentially, the U.S. is slowly addressing Chinese gray zone activities with strategic clarity. Japan, Australia, and other allies may follow suit, in which case, the situation may eventually evolve into a *de facto* defense arrangement. The goal, it seems to suggest, is to create deterrent conditions, in which the PRC reevaluates the cost that endangering significant numbers of U.S. and U.S. allied personnel might bring if it applies military force against Taiwan.

The whole impetus for *our* OCP began with Nixon’s diplomatic effort “play the China card” against the Soviets. The Soviet Union no longer exists, and the authoritarian regimes that are Russia and China appear to be gaining closer ties. Dramatic shifts to the strategic environment and geo-political context fundamentally alter the basis by which *our* OCP is founded and whether it remains a valid strategic approach.

Some Final Points

The U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity towards Taiwan lends itself, by design, to learn about the proper language for discussing Taiwan in semi-official or official discussions, internal and external, which includes the classroom.

- Refer to it as “*our* One China Policy” or the U.S. OPC and not “the” One China Policy, which might imply that the U.S. and PRC are in agreement on what that means.⁵²
- The U.S. does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, leading to confusion as to whether Taiwan is a country, but the U.S. also does not have diplomatic relations with North Korea and Iran either. Taiwan is still diplomatically recognized by some countries. Nevertheless, the PRC has an adverse reaction whenever Taiwan is labelled a country.⁵³
- The legal status of Taiwan is unsettled per the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951, meaning the U.S. has not taken a position on the future status of the island and favors a resolution that is arrived at peacefully.⁵⁴
- The U.S. simply *acknowledges* the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China, but the U.S. does *not* agree with or recognize that position.
- Use “unification” or a similar word rather than “reunification” because the PRC has never held any sovereignty over Taiwan.

- When referring to *our* OCP, also state “in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act” with or without also referring to the Six Assurances.
- Always state the U.S. has an expectation that the Taiwan issue be resolved peacefully and without coercion.
- Improved ties between the PRC and Taiwan are dependent on the wishes of the people in democratic Taiwan, and not discouraged because of U.S. arms sales.
- Regarding increased military ties to Taiwan, there is no change in the U.S. OCP and the obligation under the TRA to provide arms, with training, to support Taiwan’s self-defense capabilities.
- The current U.S. position is to support Taiwan’s participation in international organizations, including UN organizations, but not full membership in the UN.

Conclusion

Presidents have been unfairly scrutinized by the media despite the complex and detailed history and policies the U.S. adopted since Nixon’s opening of China. There is wide consensus from across the ideological and political spectrums that such scrutiny is unwarranted.⁵⁵ Scathed or unscathed, confusion over U.S. policy on Taiwan continues, especially to non-experts. PME faculty can be forgiven for confusion related to teaching China related issues in the classroom. Much like during the Cold War, the distance, language, and culture of China are foreign to PME faculty.

As the PRC has moved more aggressively against Taiwan, there appears to be movement from the strategic ambiguity of the past toward strategic clarity, but the U.S. remains opaque in many policy regards. The entire policy is a delicate balance. If the U.S. or Taiwan say too much or too little, it might start a military conflict. As with all successful gray zone tactics, each move provides incremental advantage without providing a *casus belli*. While strategic ambiguity has allowed the U.S. some incremental moves, such as a slowly increasing military presence on the island, it has also started to clarify whether the U.S. and its allies will become more directly engaged in the defense of Taiwan. Teaching China in the classroom also requires faculty to find such balance. For most students, in-depth discussions of policy don’t necessarily service the interests and purposes of the program, but a balanced discussion, pointing out the essential details, can lead to necessary clarity, promote learning, and help develop leaders capable of developing options that continue to balance policy and action until all other options are exhausted.

Note- This article was originally published on May 11th, 2022. It was updated on December 1st, 2023, with an updated graphic for Figure 1.

¹ Alan Wachman, *Why Taiwan: Geostategic Rationales for China’s Territorial Integrity*, (Stanford University Press, 2007), 118. Wachman quotes Jiefanjun Bao of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) as saying, “With Taiwan in hand, the Pacific Ocean will become China’s open field to the East ... strategic importance of Taiwan cannot be overstated.” Wachman’s point is the degree of importance China places on Taiwan to achieving their long-term strategic goals as opposed to considering Taiwan a mere symbolic obsession for the PRC.

² U.S. policy makers sometimes refer to it as “our” One China Policy, with “our” meaning the U.S. Government and not a mutually agreed upon policy with the PRC. This article uses “our” OCP interchangeably with U.S. OCP.

³ For the full text of the communiqués, see <https://www.ait.org.tw/our-relationship/policy-history/key-u-s-foreign-policy-documents-region/>.

⁴ For the full text of the second communique, see <https://www.ait.org.tw/our-relationship/policy-history/key-u-s-foreign-policy-documents-region/>. Italics added by author for emphasis. It is important to note the PRC refer to their interpretation as “One China Principle,” and U.S. government officials distinguish between the two interpretations by calling it the U.S. or *our* “One China Policy.”

⁵ U.S. Department of State, Office of Historian, <https://history.state.gov/countries/china>. See Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States of America and the Republic of China, 6 U.S.T. 433, TIAS No. 3178, 101 Cong. Rec. 1379. *Goldwater v. Carter*, 444 U.S. 996 (1979) in which Senator Goldwater challenged the termination of the treaty without consultation with the Senate.

⁶ See TRA, section 2(b).

⁷ Keikichi Takhashi, “How Unique is Trump’s China Policy,” *The Diplomat*, June 17, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/how-unique-is-trumps-china-policy/>. The U.S. policy has not changed and is likely to continue. Both Presidents Bush and Biden have stated that there is a commitment to defend Taiwan should it be attacked by the PRC, even if later White House statements indicate that there is “no change” in our OCP.

⁸ Miki Okuyama, “Taiwan features in Japan-Australia 2+2 statement,” *Nikkei Asia*, June 10, 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Taiwan-features-in-Japan-Australia-2-2-statement> (accessed March 15, 2022); Reuters, “‘Inconceivable’ Canberra would not Join US to defend Taiwan, Australian defense chief says,” November 12, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/inconceivable-australia-would-not-join-us-defend-taiwan-australian-defence-2021-11-12/> (accessed March 15, 2022); Anthony Kuhn, “After Being Silent for Decades, Japan Now Speaks Up About Taiwan – And Angers China,” *NPR*, August 2, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/26/1020866539/japans-position-on-defending-taiwan-has-taken-a-remarkable-shift>. Yashide Nakayama, Japan Defense Minister, stated: “We have to protect Taiwan, as a democratic country.”

⁹ Susan V. Lawrence, *President Reagan’s Six Assurances to Taiwan*, CRS Report No. IF11665 (Washington D.C. Congressional Research Service, 2020), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11665>. Note that the recent 2022 White House USINDOPACOM strategy also reaffirmed the Six Assurances.

¹⁰ TRA, section 2(b)(3).

¹¹ TRA, section 2(b)(4).

¹² See *New York Times*, “Full Text of Clinton’s Speech on China Trade Bill,” March 9, 2000, https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/Full_Text_of_Clinton_Speech_on_China_Trade_Bi.htm. President Clinton stated: “we will continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question, making absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.”

¹³ Susan V. Lawrence, *U.S.-Taiwan Relationship: Overview of Policy Issues*, CRS Report No. IF10275 (Washington D.C. Congressional Research Service, 2021), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10275>. Taiwan’s status is unsettled in accordance with the outcome of the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty. President Truman also declared in 1950 that the “determination of the future status of Formosa (Taiwan) must await the restoration of security in the Pacific,” while ordering the 7th Fleet in the Taiwan Straits.

¹⁴ See text of (now declassified) State Department cable 238183, Assurances for Taiwan,” August 17, 1982, from Secretary of State George Schultz to American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), <https://www.ait.org.tw/our-relationship/policy-history/key-u-s-foreign-policy-documents-region/six-assurances-1982/>.

¹⁵ This situation might be akin to when Jordan ceded its sovereignty over the West Bank with no indication over which entity it ceded it to. Note Taiwan had also been formerly Dutch and Spanish colonies, and Taiwan is sometimes called the island of Formosa from the Portuguese name (as used in the San Francisco Treaty 1951). The last of the Ming Dynasty forces had retreated to Taiwan in the 17th century and displaced the Dutch. Eventually, the Qing Dynasty (the last dynasty of China, and as Manchus, some considered them not to be Han Chinese) gained nominal control over the island. During this time much of the island was really controlled by an indigenous population (genetically, closer to Polynesians). See PLOS Biology (NIH), Mitochondrial DNA Provides a Link between Polynesians and Indigenous Taiwanese,” (July 2005), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1166355/>.

¹⁶ See April 2021 State Department revised guidelines on interacting with Taiwan.

¹⁷ Inspector General, U.S. Department of State, “Inspection of the American Institute in Taiwan,” Report #ISP-I-12-12A, Feb. 2012, p. 3.

¹⁸ James Mann, “Between China the U.S.,” *Washington Post*, January 10, 1999, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1999/01/10/between-china-and-the-us/b540ea0c-3bdb-4b1a-8152-8230b7a47184/>.

¹⁹ Steven Greenhouse, “Clinton Rebuffs Senate on Letting Taiwan President Visit the U.S.,” *The New York Times*, May 11, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/11/world/clinton-rebuffs-senate-on-letting-taiwan-president-visit-us.html> (accessed March 15, 2022). The Senate voted 97-1 and the House voted unanimously 360-0 to grant the visa.

²⁰ William Cole, “Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen visits Honolulu over Chinese government’s objections,” *Star Advertiser*, March 27, 2019, <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2019/03/27/hawaii-news/taiwan-is-a-trusted-partner-of-u-s-president-tsai-ing-wen-says-in-honolulu/>.

²¹ Robert Delaney, “US announces new policy encouraging government ties with Taiwan officials,” *South China Morning Post*, April 10, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3129013/us-announces-new-policy-encouraging-government-ties-taiwan>.

²² For population and size data, see SidmartinBio, <https://www.sidmartinbio.org/what-is-the-physical-size-of-taiwan/>.

²³ See Nick Kembel, “Taiwanese Language: History, Examples, and More About Taiwan’s Languages;” (November 2020), <https://www.nickkembel.com/taiwanese-language-guide/>. The Taiwanese language is probably based in Fujianese but is very different than what used to be the ROC official language of Mandarin.

²⁴ See Yu-hsiu Hsu, “Life Under Martial Law: It was Suddenly Over, But Then What?” *The Taiwan Gazette* (2019). <https://www.taiwanzette.org/news/2019/7/14/life-under-martial-law-it-was-suddenly-over-but-then-what>. Some have accused the ROC government of suppression while Taiwan was under martial law.

²⁵ Although there have been various polls, one might surmise that most of the people in Taiwan prefer a peaceful relationship with China but reject a fate similar to that of Hong Kong under PRC rule. The poll wording and apprehension that the PRC would attack Taiwan should it declare independence always affect the results.

²⁶ See Lev Nachman and Brian Hioe, “No, Taiwan’s President isn’t Pro-Independence,” *The Diplomat*, April 23, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/no-taiwans-president-isnt-pro-independence/>. Note: that the DPP used to have a party platform that sought formal independence, but now has simply declared that is already is.

²⁷ Monique Chu and Shu-ling Ko, “We Trust Chen on Plebiscite Pledge, U.S. Institute Says,” *Taipei Times*, June 24, 2003, <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2003/06/24/2003056520>.

²⁸ Lawrence Chung, “Coronavirus: U.S. supports Taiwan joining WHO events in ministerial phone call,” *South China Morning Post*, Apr 28, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3081885/coronavirus-us-supports-taiwan-joining-who-events-ministerial> (accessed March 15, 2022). Robert Delaney, “US announces new policy encouraging government ties with Taiwan officials,” *South China Morning Post*, Apr 10, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3129013/us-announces-new-policy-encouraging-government-ties-taiwan>.

²⁹ Richard C. Bush, “Thoughts on U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan,” *Brookings*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/thoughts-on-u-s-arms-sales-to-taiwan/>.

³⁰ Meaning the PRC could have a capitalist and quasi-democratic Hong Kong (and democratic Taiwan) within the sovereignty of the PRC.

³¹ Derek Grossman, “Why China is Intensifying Its Military Flights Against Taiwan,” *The Rand Blog*, February 21, 2022, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/02/why-china-is-intensifying-its-military-flights-against.html>. In 1995, to show displeasure that a candidate was about to be popularly elected as ROC President, and because Congress voted unanimously (minus one) to grant him a personal visa to visit the U.S. (over Secretary of State Christopher’s assurance that the U.S. would not), the PRC shot several rounds of missiles into the Taiwan Straits, prompting the U.S. to send two carrier groups into the region. The PRC has spent the past 25 years engaging in a massive military buildup aimed, in part, at denying the U.S. from access to the area should the PRC move against Taiwan militarily. Most recently, the PRC has conducted multiple amphibious exercises and mock air raids into Taiwan’s air defense perimeter.

³² See Oriana Skylar Mastro, Statement before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on ‘Deterring PRC Aggression Towards Taiwan,’ “The Precarious State of Cross-Strait Deterrence,” February 18, 2021, https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/Oriana_Skylar_Mastro_Testimony.pdf.

³³ Eric Cheung, Will Ripley, and Gladys Tsai, “How Taiwan is trying to defend against cyber ‘World War III,’” *CNN Business*, July 23, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/23/tech/taiwan-china-cybersecurity-intl-hnk/index.html>.

³⁴ John Feng, “China Wants to Take Taiwan ‘Without a Fight,’ Says Defense Report,” *Newsweek*, November 9, 2021. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-wants-to-take-taiwan-without-a-fight-says-defense-report/ar-AAQvkiH>.

³⁵ Some might define “strategic ambiguity” to primarily mean ambiguous with regards to whether the U.S. would actually defend Taiwan from attack.

³⁶ See John Bolton and Derik Zitelman, “Why Taiwan Matters to the United States,” *The Diplomat*, August 23, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/why-taiwan-matters-to-the-united-states/>. They state: “To the U.S., Taiwan is a critical link, if replaceable, in the First Island Chain, while to the PRC the island acts as a “cork in the bottle” of China’s ability to project power in the East China Sea.” The strategic importance of Taiwan should be the subject of another paper or intelligence analysis, but in short, there are military, economic, and political reasons to consider Taiwan in such as way. Taiwan lies on the critical first island chain which may delay the break-out of any PRC blue water navy, the Taiwan Straits are an important commercial shipping zone, and the U.S. position towards Taiwan is seen by major allies as an indicator of U.S. resolve. For data on commercial shipping traffic can be tracked here: <https://www.marinevesseltraffic.com/TAIWAN-STRAIT/ship-traffic-tracker>.

³⁷ President Biden recently held a “Democracy Summit” of world democracies, including Taiwan, to emphasize just this policy. <https://www.state.gov/summit-for-democracy/>.

³⁸ Yu-jie Chen and Jerome A. Cohen, “Why Does the WHO Exclude Taiwan?” *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 9, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/why-does-who-exclude-taiwan>.

³⁹ <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/which-countries-recognize-taiwan-as-a-country.html>.

⁴⁰ Laurence Norman and Drew Hinshaw, “China Presses EU Over Taiwan by Targeting One of Smallest Members,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-presses-eu-over-taiwan-by-targeting-one-of-smallest-members-11639579784>; Andrew Higgins, “Lithuania vs. China: A Baltic Minnow Defies a Rising Superpower,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/30/world/europe/lithuania-china-disputes.html>; Shunsuke Tabeta, “Beijing slams 7-Eleven for labeling Taiwan a country on website,” *Asia Nikkei*, January 7, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Retail/Beijing-slams-7-Eleven-for-labeling-Taiwan-a-country-on-website>.

⁴¹ Richard Haas and David Sachs, “American Support for Taiwan Must Be Unambiguous,” *Foreign Affairs*, September 2, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/american-support-taiwan-must-be-unambiguous>.

⁴² Ken Moriyasu (Nikkei staff), “U.S. should abandon ambiguity on Taiwan defense: Japan’s Abe,” *Reuters*, February 27, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/U.S.-should-abandon-ambiguity-on-Taiwan-defense-Japan-s-Abe>.

⁴³ Kyodo News, “Japan, US draft operation plan for Taiwan contingency: sources,” December 23, 2021, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/12/f5ed60ab6502-japan-us-draft-operation-plan-for-taiwan-contingency-sources.html>.

⁴⁴ AP newswire, “China lashes out at US over support for Lithuania,” *The Independent*, January 6, 2022, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/lithuania-china-taiwan-beijing-washington-b1987787.html>; Reuters, “EU Seeks to Deter Economic Coercion with New Trade Defence,” *Reuters*, December 8, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/eu-seeks-deter-economic-coercion-with-new-trade-defence-2021-12-08/>; Lietuvos Nacionalinis Radijas, “US, UK, Germany, France express solidarity with Lithuania amid Chinese pressure,” *LRT News*, December 30, 2021, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1572734/us-uk-germany-france-express-solidarity-with-lithuania-amid-chinese-pressure>.

⁴⁵ Jack Detsch and Zinva Salfiti, “The U.S. is Getting Taiwan Ready to Fight on the Beaches,” *Foreign Policy*, November 8, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/11/08/us-taiwan-military-presence-china-biden-porcupine/>.

⁴⁶ National Security Council. 2022. *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States*. The White House. February 11, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>. For example, the White House Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States, February 2022, includes “supporting Taiwan’s self-defense capabilities, to ensure an environment in which Taiwan’s future is determined peacefully in accordance with the wishes and interest of Taiwan’s people.”

⁴⁷ P.L. 117-81, sections 1246-1250.

⁴⁸ P.L. 117-81, sections 1246-1250.

⁴⁹ P.L. 117-81, sections 1246-1250.

⁵⁰ P.L. 117-81, sections 1246-1250.

⁵¹ See section 7043(c)(4) of the “Omnibus appropriations bill, March 2022, otherwise known as “the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2471 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2002.” At the time of publication, this bill had passed the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and awaited the President’s expected signature.

⁵² Emphasis added by author.

⁵³ See John Tkacik, “Taiwan’s ‘Unsettled’ International Status: Preserving U.S. Options in the Pacific,” *Heritage*, June 19, 2008, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/taiwans-unsettled-international-status-preserving-us-options-the-pacific> (accessed March 15, 2022). Some high-level U.S. officials have referred to Taiwan as a country, and some have argued that it certainly is a country or “state” under the Montevideo Convention of 1933 (U.S. is a signatory).

⁵⁴ United Nations. 1952. Treaty of Peace with Japan, *United National Treaty Series 1952* (reg. no, 1832), vol. 136, pp. 45-164.

⁵⁵ Mark Landler and Jane Perlez, “Trump’s Call With Taiwan: A Diplomatic Gaffe or a New Start?” *The New York Times*, December 5, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/05/world/asia/china-donald-trump-taiwan-twitter.html>.