

Rebuttal Evidence

Jared M. **McKinney & Peter Harris**, 11-22-20**21**, "Broken Nest: Deterring China from Invading Taiwan," USAWC Press, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol51/iss4/4/> // MH

Unlike strategies placing the threat of military reprisal at their core, a **deterrence-by-punishment** strategy **does not rely on** the United States **bolstering** its **military forces** in Northeast Asia. This approach **leaves the United States some room to adopt a force posture capable of reassuring allies such as Japan and South Korea** about their collective defense, **while** also **convincing** both **Taiwan and China the United States is truly committed to maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. It also frees the US military to divest itself from vulnerable bases in Japan that may on balance make great-power war more**, rather than less, **likely— via a preemptive Chinese attack** in an active-defense situation. Shifting the burden of deterrence from military reprisal to non-military punishment might **also reduce the likelihood of a war caused by miscalculation**, while **also removing** the pretext that China's buildup is a response to **US** and Taiwanese **provocations. Of course, there are dangers associated with reducing the US military footprint around Taiwan. Careful** research and **planning must be conducted in conjunction with regional partners** to ascertain what level and type of US forward deployment would be necessary **to reassure allies** while also lessening the chances of war. **There should be no drawdown** of military forces **until** such a time as **a credible deterrence-by-punishment strategy has been put in place**; otherwise Beijing might perceive a window of opportunity to wage a successful attack. Additionally, Taiwan might be less encouraged to stage an independent fight against China if it no longer believes the United States would (or could) intervene on its behalf. **That said**, given reports about low morale in the Taiwanese Armed Forces, as well as low defense spending (around 2 percent of GDP), **a shock to the status quo** might be **just what the situation requires**. Regardless, **relying less on threats** of force **is not the same as ruling out the use of force** altogether. **Ambiguity will always exist** about whether the United States would use force in the event of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.³⁷

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There is a belief that the United States can head off **the** possibility of **Chinese** aggression by voicing its opposition to Taiwan independence. **The idea is that this will ease concerns in Beijing, which, beset by an ailing economy, will want to avoid the massive economic, social and diplomatic disruptions of starting a war.** But Taiwan provokes China simply by being what it is: A prosperous and free society. Taiwan's blooming national identity threatens China with the **prospect of** permanent territorial dismemberment; and Taiwan's elections, rule of law and free press make a mockery of Beijing's claim that Chinese culture is incompatible with democracy. America's words can't change any of that **Chinese law explicitly states that Beijing may use force if possibilities for peaceful unification are "completely exhausted."** **Because of politics in Taiwan and the United States, those possibilities are dwindling.** Taiwanese and American **political leaders need to** recognize this stark reality, do far more to improve military deterrence, **start national conversations** about the growing threat of war and work toward public unity about how to confront that threat, **all while avoiding** rhetoric or **actions that needlessly throw fuel on the fire.**