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### Contention 1 is US-China War

#### China-Taiwan tensions are a ticking time bomb—Tsai and China are on a collision course that draws in the US.

Carpenter 16 — Ted Galen Carpenter, Senior Fellow for Defense and Foreign Policy Studies and former Director of Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, holds a Ph.D. in U.S. Diplomatic History from the University of Texas, 2016 (“America Should Step Back from the Taiwan Time Bomb,” *The National Interest*, July 6th, Available Online at http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/america-should-step-back-the-taiwan-time-bomb-16864?page=show, Accessed 07-11-2016)

Tensions between Taiwan and Mainland China rose another notch on July 1 when the Republic of China Navy accidentally launched a missile in the Taiwan Strait toward Mainland China. The supersonic Hsiung-feng III (“Brave Wind”) antiship missile flew some forty-five miles before striking a Taiwanese fishing trawler, killing the skipper and injuring three crew members. Beijing’s initial reaction was relatively restrained. Although Chinese authorities immediately demanded a “responsible explanation” for the mishap, they did not take steps to shamelessly exploit the situation for propaganda purposes. Later that day, though, a spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council charged that the incident “caused severe impact at a time when the mainland has repeatedly emphasized development of peaceful cross-strait relations.” More fundamentally, the accident was yet another step in the deterioration of relations between Beijing and Taipei since the election of Democratic Progressive Party president and legislature. Chinese leaders were unhappy about the victory of the DPP’s Tsai Ing-wen as Taiwan’s new president, even though she was not as strident in her advocacy of formal independence for the island as the last DPP president, Chen Shui-bian, had been. Even before she took office in May, Beijing warned Tsai and her supporters that they must accept the so-called 1992 consensus that there was one China, however much the two sides might disagree about the specific definition of that concept. And that attitude has not softened in the slightest. Zhang Zhijun, the head of the Taiwan Affairs Office, put it bluntly to a visiting Taiwanese business delegation in late May. “There is no future in Taiwan independence, and this cannot become an option for Taiwan’s future. This is the conclusion of history.” He added that “some people say you must pay attention to broad public opinion in Taiwan,” but he would have none of that reasoning. “Taiwan society ought to understand and attach great importance to the feelings of the 1.37 billion residents of the mainland.” At first Tsai waffled, and then openly balked at accepting the 1992 consensus. Beijing’s irritation mounted quickly in response. In late June, barely a month after Tsai took office, China severed all liaison contacts between the Taiwan Affairs Office and its Taiwanese counterpart. Rejecting the 1992 consensus was hardly Tsai’s only offense from Beijing’s standpoint. Allies of her administration have pushed Taiwan’s independent territorial claims in the South China Sea. She had embarked on an extremely conciliatory policy toward China’s archstrategic adversary, Japan. And in early June, Taiwan for the first time held a commemorative ceremony for the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. That was an especially bold thumb in the eye of Beijing’s authorities. And to top matters off, Taiwan will be testing its new antimissile systems in the United States later this month. As the last item indicates, the United States is far more than a mere spectator to these developments. America has a loosely-defined but nonetheless real obligation to defend Taiwan under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act. Washington also continues to sell weapons systems to Taipei. Beijing has complained about both aspects of this relationship, but that seemed little more than an exercise in pro forma diplomatic protests during the eight years that the conciliatory Ma Ying-jeou and the Kuomintang party governed Taiwan. That period of stability has clearly come to an end, and the United States needs to reconsider the wisdom of its security commitment to Taiwan. Impatience on the part of Beijing, rash action on the part of pro-independence Taiwanese, or just a bad accident could trigger a crisis with devastating consequences for the United States. The latest incident highlights the danger. Imagine if the fishing trawler the Taiwanese missile struck had been from the mainland rather than Taiwan. Imagine if it had been a Chinese naval vessel that was struck. One suspects that Beijing’s response would have been a lot less restrained. The Taiwan Strait is a ticking time bomb. The Taiwanese people seem ever more determined to chart their own destiny distinct from the mainland. The mainland authorities are determined that reunification will take place at some point, and their patience is not inexhaustible. It’s hard to see how this turns out well, and unless the United States extricates itself from this increasingly dangerous commitment, it will be one of the casualties when the time bomb explodes.

#### Xi *can’t* back down — he’s politically vulnerable in the run-up to the 19th Party Congress.

Glaser and Vitello 15 — Bonnie S. Glaser, Senior Fellow with the Freeman Chair in China Studies and Senior Associate with the CSIS Pacific Forum at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Institute of International Strategic Studies, holds an M.A. in International Economics and Chinese Studies from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and Jacqueline Vitello, Research Associate and Program Coordinator in the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2015 (“Xi Jinping's Great Game: Are China and Taiwan Headed Towards Trouble?,” *The National Interest*, July 16th, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/xi-jinpings-great-game-are-china-taiwan-headed-towards-13346?page=show>, Accessed 07-16-2016)

Taiwan’s presidential election is still six months away, but it seems increasingly likely that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)’s Tsai Ing-wen is going to win. In the latest TVBS public opinion poll on July 7, Tsai leads the Kuomintang (KMT)’s Hung Hsiu-chu 42 percent to 30 percent. Among the those closely watching the possible return of the DPP to power is the People’s Republic of China, which worries that if elected, Tsai will deny that the two sides of the Strait belong to one China and pursue de jure independence. This fear derives from Tsai’s past history as the creator of the “two states theory” in the Lee Teng-hui era as well as her current unwillingness to accept the existence of “one China” even as she pledges to maintain the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. Beijing could react harshly if Tsai is elected on January 16 as the next president of Taiwan, including by taking punitive economic measures, suspending communication and cooperation mechanisms, stealing away some of Taiwan’s diplomatic allies, or even using military coercion or force. Xi Jinping’s reaction to a Tsai Ing-wen victory should not be underestimated. When it comes to sovereignty issues, the Chinese leader has shown little willingness to compromise. Since becoming General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2012, Xi has been sending tough signals to Taiwan, and these warnings have only intensified in the run up to the presidential elections on the island. As he continues to deepen the anti-corruption campaign and maneuvers to put his own supporters on the Standing Committee of the Politburo at the 19th CCP Congress in 2017, Xi is likely to prioritize protecting his flank. Appearing soft toward Taiwan could create a vulnerability for his opponents to exploit at a sensitive time.

#### The US gets drawn in

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

The most direct benefit of ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would be a reduction in the probability of war between the United States and China over Taiwan's status. Current U.S. policy is designed to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence and to make clear that the United States will not come to Taiwan's aid if it does. Nevertheless, the United States will find itself under pressure to protect Taiwan no matter what the source of a Chinese attack. Whether Taiwan provoked an attack might be unclear, which would increase pressure for U.S. involvement. Moreover, the United States has limited control over Taiwan's policy, which puts it in the unfortunate position of being hostage to decisions made in Taipei.

#### It escalates—no checks.

Littlefield and Lowther 15 — Alex Littlefield, Assistant Professor in the Department of International Trade at Feng Chia University (Taiwan), holds a Ph.D. in International Politics from National Chung Hsing University (Taiwan), and Adam Lowther, Research Professor at the Air Force Research Institute at Maxwell Air Force Base, Director of the School of Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies at the Air Force Global Strike Command, former Assistant Professor of Political Science at Arkansas Tech University and Columbus State University, holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Alabama, 2015 (“Taiwan and the Prospects for War Between China and America,” *The Diplomat*, August 11th, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/taiwan-and-the-prospects-for-war-between-china-and-america/>, Accessed 06-25-2016)

Possible Scenario

While there are several scenarios where conflict between the United States and China is possible, some analysts believe that a conflict over Taiwan remains the most likely place where the PRC and the U.S. would come to blows. Beijing is aware that any coercive action on its part to force Taiwan to accept its political domination could incur the wrath of the United States. To prevent the U.S. from intervening in the region, China will certainly turn to its anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy, beginning with non-lethal means and non-lethal threats to discourage the American public from supporting the use of force in support of Taiwan.

If thwarted in its initial efforts to stop Chinese aggression against Taiwan, the United States may be tempted to resort to stronger measures and attack mainland China. A kinetic response to a cyber-attack, for example, although an option, would very likely lead to escalation on the part of the Chinese. Given the regime’s relative weakness and the probability that American attacks (cyber and conventional) on China will include strikes against PLA command and control (C2) nodes, which mingle conventional and nuclear C2, the Chinese may escalate to the use of a nuclear weapon (against a U.S. carrier in China’s self-declared waters for example) as a means of forcing de-escalation.

In the view of China, such a strike would not be a violation of its no-first-use policy because the strike would occur in sovereign Chinese waters, thus making the use of nuclear weapons a defensive act. Since Taiwan is a domestic matter, any U.S. intervention would be viewed as an act of aggression. This, in the minds of the Chinese, makes the United States an outside aggressor, not China.

It is also important to remember that nuclear weapons are an asymmetric response to American conventional superiority. Given that China is incapable of executing and sustaining a conventional military campaign against the continental United States, China would clearly have an asymmetry of interest and capability with the United States – far more is at stake for China than it is for the United States.

In essence, the only effective option in retaliation for a successful U.S. conventional campaign on Chinese soil is the nuclear one. Without making too crude a point, the nuclear option provides more bang for the buck, or yuan. Given that mutually assured destruction (MAD) is not part of China’s strategic thinking – in fact it is explicitly rejected – the PRC will see the situation very differently than the United States.

China likely has no desire to become a nuclear peer of the United States. It does not need to be in order to achieve its geopolitical objectives. However, China does have specific goals that are a part of its stated core security interests, including reunification with Taiwan. Reunification is necessary for China to reach its unstated goal of becoming a regional hegemon. As long as Taiwan maintains its de facto independence of China it acts as a literal and symbolic barrier to China’s power projection beyond the East China Sea. Without Taiwan, China cannot gain military hegemony in its own neighborhood.

China’s maritime land reclamation strategy for Southeast Asia pales in scope and significance with the historical and political value of Taiwan. With Taiwan returned to its rightful place, the relevance to China of the U.S. military presence in Japan and South Korea is greatly diminished. China’s relationship with the Philippines, which lies just to the south of Taiwan, would also change dramatically.

Although China criticizes the United States for playing the role of global hegemon, it is actively seeking to supplant the United States in Asia so that it can play a similar role in the region. While Beijing may take a longer view toward geopolitical issues than Washington does, Chinese political leaders must still be responsive to a domestic audience that demands ever higher levels of prosperity.

Central to China’s ability to guarantee that prosperity is the return of Taiwan, and control of the sea lines of commerce and communication upon which it relies. Unfortunately, too many Americans underestimate the importance of these core interests to China and the lengths to which China will ultimately go in order to guarantee them – even the use of nuclear weapons.

Should China succeed it pushing the United States back, the PRC can deal with regional territorial disputes bilaterally and without U.S. involvement. After all, Washington invariably takes the non-Chinese side.

China sees the U.S. as a direct competitor and obstacle to its geopolitical ambitions. As such it is preparing for the next step in a crisis that it will likely instigate, control, and conclude in the Taiwan Straits. China will likely use the election or statement of a pro-independence high-ranking official as the impetus for action. This is the same method it used when it fired missiles in the Straits in response to remarks by then-President Lee Teng-hui, ushering in the 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis. The U.S. brought an end to the mainland’s antics when the U.S.S Nimitz and six additional ships sailed into the Straits.

Despite the pro-China presidency of Ma Ying-jeou, China continues to expand its missile force targeting Taiwan and undertakes annual war games that simulate an attack on Taiwan.

China has not forgotten the humiliation it faced in 1996 and will be certain no U.S. carrier groups have access to the Strait during the next crisis. The Second Artillery Corps’ nuclear capabilities exist to help secure the results China seeks when the U.S. is caught off-guard, overwhelmed, and forced to either escalate a crisis or capitulate.

#### Mismatched perceptions cause escalation.

Kulacki 16 — Gregory Kulacki, China Project Manager in the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, former Associate Professor of Government at Green Mountain College, former Director of External Studies at Pitzer College, former Director of Academic Programs in China for the Council on International Educational Exchange, holds a Ph.D. in Political Theory from the University of Maryland-College Park, holds graduate certificates in Chinese Economic History and International Politics at Fudan University (Shanghai), 2016 (“The Risk of Nuclear War with China: A Troubling Lack of Urgency,” Union of Concerned Scientists, May, Available Online at <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2016/05/Nuclear-War-with-China.pdf>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

No Technical Exit

As long as both sides remain committed to pursuing technical solutions to their unique strategic problems, they are condemned to continue competing indefinitely. But stalemate is not a stable outcome; rather, it is a perpetual high-wire act. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, the governments of the United States and China are a few poor decisions away from starting a war that could escalate rapidly and end in a nuclear exchange.

Lack of mutual trust and a growing sense that their differences may be irreconcilable incline both governments to continue looking for military solutions—for new means of coercion that help them feel more secure. Establishing the trust needed to have confidence in diplomatic resolutions to the disagreements, animosities, and suspicions that have troubled leaders of the United States and the PRC for almost 70 years is extremely difficult when both governments take every new effort to up the technological ante as an act of bad faith.

The bilateral dialogues on strategic stability aim to manage the military competition, but they do not seek to end it. Although the two governments work very hard at avoiding conflict, they have yet to find a way out of what Graham Allison called their “Thucydides trap”—the risk of conflict between a rising power and an established power invested in the status quo (Allison 2015). Allison’s warning not to minimize the risks of war is sage advice, even if he does not say how the United States and China can escape the trap he describes. [end page 8]

PRC leaders believe it is possible to prosecute a major war without risking a U.S. nuclear attack. The leaders of the United States believe stopping the PRC from prosecuting such a war may depend, in certain contingencies, on a credible threat to use nuclear weapons—a threat U.S. leaders state they are prepared to execute. These mismatched perceptions increase both the possibility of war and the likelihood it will result in the use of nuclear weapons.

Well-informed U.S. officials tend to dismiss the possibility that the United States and the PRC could wander into a nuclear war. For example, Admiral Dennis Blair, a former Director of National Intelligence whose final military post was Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, assured a large gathering of U.S. arms-control experts that “the chances of a nuclear exchange between the United States and China are somewhere between nil and zero.” J. Stapleton Roy, a former U.S. ambassador to the PRC, wholeheartedly agreed (Swaine, Blair, and Roy 2015). Similarly, PRC military strategists and arms control experts believe that the risk of nuclear war with the United States is not an urgent concern even if that risk may not be zero (Cunningham and Fravel 2015).

This lack of urgency is troubling. For example, the United States reportedly told the PRC it would risk military escalation to prevent or stop a proposed PRC island reclamation project in the Scarborough Shoal (Cooper and Douglas 2016). The PRC reportedly responded by committing to move ahead with the project later in 2016 (Chan 2016). This particular contest of wills is part of a steadily increasing number of unresolved diplomatic spats that have escalated to the level of overt military posturing reminiscent of U.S.-Soviet jousting during the Cold War.

The United States and the PRC are decades-old enemies, preparing for war and armed with nuclear weapons. Good faith efforts by the leaders of both nations have failed to stop accelerating preparations for war, including new investments in their nuclear forces. Miscommunication, misunderstanding, or poor judgment could spark a conflict that both governments may find difficult to stop.

War between the United States and the People’s Republic of China is not inevitable, but failing to acknowledge the risks is certain to make it more likely. Both governments should confront these risks with a greater sense of purpose. Only then will they devote the same measure of creativity, effort, and resources to the diplomacy of reducing those risks as they now spend preparing for war.

#### Conventional attacks trigger counterforcing which escalates.

Talmadge 16 — Caitlin Talmadge, Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Member of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at The George Washington University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016 (“Preventing Nuclear Escalation in U.S.–China Conflict,” Policy Brief — U.S.-China Nuclear Project, February, Available Online at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/china_policy_brief_talmadge_0.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 2)

The Dangers of Nuclear Escalation in the Event of U.S.–China Conflict

Five factors suggest that a U.S.–China conventional war could activate this escalatory mechanism.

First, the United States embraces highly offensive conventional concepts of operations in the Pacific, despite the nuclear pressures these approaches might place on China. A U.S. campaign in a conventional war with China could target Chinese submarines, missile sites, command and control systems, air defense networks, and other sites well inside the Chinese mainland. From China’s perspective these assets may be relevant to China’s assured retaliation capability. Thus what the United States may view as a purely conventional operation might look to China like the prelude to a counterforce strike, creating strong use-or-lose pressures. Indeed, some Chinese statements indicate that conventional attacks on China’s nuclear capabilities could vitiate China’s no-first-use pledge.

Second, U.S. alliance commitments could further exacerbate this danger. The Pacific Ocean may insulate the United States from much of China’s striking power, but U.S. allies, particularly Japan and Taiwan, would be much more militarily and economically exposed in the event of a U.S.–China war. Even if the United States believed it could achieve security through a slower and more limited conventional campaign, U.S. allies might not share that conviction. This reality again suggests that U.S. conventional operations could quickly expand in ways that could appear to impinge on Chinese nuclear capabilities.

Third, the U.S. military’s organizational tendencies also tilt in the direction of a more conventionally aggressive campaign. For understandable reasons, militaries have a well-developed general preference for the offense. Militaries also tend to pursue tactical and operational advantages at the expense of broader strategic and political objectives. Historically this behavior has resulted in a U.S. approach that is very good at general deterrence (preventing the outbreak of war) but less adept at intra-war deterrence (that is, preventing ongoing wars from escalating).

Fourth, civilian control of the U.S. military is unlikely to check these tendencies. Some civilian policymakers may not be fully aware of the potentially escalatory implications of such approaches, while others may actually embrace these approaches. The historical record suggests that civilian oversight of conventional operations with nuclear implications has not always been robust.

Fifth, situational awareness is likely to deteriorate rapidly for the United States and especially China during a conventional conflict, in ways that further compound all of the escalatory pressures just discussed. After all, denying China knowledge of the battle space through the destruction of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets (ISR) and command and control networks is likely to be one of the primary objectives of any U.S. military strategy. These sorts of attacks will be essential to U.S. conventional success but also will make it increasingly difficult for China to feel confident that U.S. aims are limited and that China’s nuclear retaliatory capabilities remain intact. Similarly, the United States may cross Chinese nuclear tripwires without realizing it.

#### U.S.-China war immediately kills millions — and the fallout would destroy the planet.

Wittner 11 — Lawrence S. Wittner, Emeritus Professor of History at the State University of New York at Albany, holds a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University, 2011 (“Is a Nuclear War with China Possible?,” *Huntington News*, November 28th, Available Online at http://www.huntingtonnews.net/14446, Accessed 02-07-2013)

But what would that “victory” entail? A nuclear attack by China would immediately slaughter at least 10 million Americans in a great storm of blast and fire, while leaving many more dying horribly of sickness and radiation poisoning. The Chinese death toll in a nuclear war would be far higher. Both nations would be reduced to smoldering, radioactive wastelands. Also, radioactive debris sent aloft by the nuclear explosions would blot out the sun and bring on a “nuclear winter” around the globe—destroying agriculture, creating worldwide famine, and generating chaos and destruction. Moreover, in another decade the extent of this catastrophe would be far worse. The Chinese government is currently expanding its nuclear arsenal, and by the year 2020 it is expected to more than double its number of nuclear weapons that can hit the United States. The U.S. government, in turn, has plans to spend hundreds of billions of dollars “modernizing” its nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities over the next decade. To avert the enormous disaster of a U.S.-China nuclear war, there are two obvious actions that can be taken. The first is to get rid of nuclear weapons, as the nuclear powers have agreed to do but thus far have resisted doing. The second, conducted while the nuclear disarmament process is occurring, is to improve U.S.-China relations. If the American and Chinese people are interested in ensuring their survival and that of the world, they should be working to encourage these policies.

#### A grand bargain solves war in the South and East China Seas.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“Time for a U.S.-China Grand Bargain,” Belfer Center Policy Brief, July, Available Online at <http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/glaser-us-china-jul15-final.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 2)

Reevaluating The U.S. Commitment To Taiwan

China’s rise poses difficult challenges for the United States. If military competition and political frictions continue to intensify, the United States could find itself engaged in a new cold war. China has long made clear that unification with Taiwan is a paramount political and security goal. The United States is currently committed to defending Taiwan if China launches an unprovoked attack. This commitment is a deep source of Chinese distrust of, and tension with, the United States. Consequently, the United States should consider ending this commitment. Doing so would have both benefits and costs. Benefits. Eliminating the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would have three main benefits. First, it would reduce the probability of war between the United States and China over Taiwan. China’s improved military capabilities are reducing the United States’ ability to come to Taiwan’s aid in the event of a challenge from Beijing. These capabilities, combined with China’s expectation of growing regional influence, may lead China to decide to seek reunification with Taiwan through military means. Second, U.S. support for Taiwan may be the most important policy-driven source of China’s suspicions about U.S. motives and intentions in East Asia. Consequently, ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan has the potential to dramatically improve U.S.-China relations. Third, terminating this commitment could also greatly moderate the intensifying military competition between the United States and China. Much of China’s military modernization, including its growing capability to control the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the South China and East China Seas, is dedicated to defending Taiwan. The United States has devised a concept, widely known as AirSea Battle, to counter China’s increasing capabilities and maintain dominance of these SLOCs. Ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would eliminate the scenario most likely to draw the United States into a large war with China, thus reducing the importance that China places on controlling these SLOCs and helping to significantly moderate U.S.-China competition.

#### **South China Sea conflict is likely and draws in the US**

CFR 7/11 - (Council on Foreign Relations, July 11, 2016, “Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea”, http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/conflict/territorial-disputes-in-the-south-china-sea)//HH

Recent Developments Territorial and jurisdictional disputes in the South China Sea continue to strain relationships between China and other countries in Southeast Asia and risk escalation into a military clash. The United States has sought to uphold freedom of navigation and support other nations in Southeast Asia that have been affected by China’s assertive territorial claims and land reclamation efforts. In the fall of 2015, the United States signaled that it will challenge China’s assertion of sovereignty over disputed territory by flying military aircraft and deploying ships near some of the islands. In recent years, satellite imagery has shown China’s increased efforts to reclaim land in the South China Sea by physically increasing the size of islands or creating altogether new islands. In addition to piling sand onto existing reefs, China has constructed ports, military installations, and airstrips—particularly in the Spratly Islands. Background China’s sweeping claims of sovereignty over the sea—and the sea’s alleged 11 billion barrels of untapped oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas—have antagonized competing claimants Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines. As early as the 1970s, countries began to claim as their own islands and various zones in the South China Sea such as the Spratly islands, which may possess rich natural resources and fishing areas. China maintains that under international law, foreign militaries are not able to conduct intelligence gathering activities, such as reconnaissance flights, in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). According to the United States, countries should have freedom of navigation through EEZs in the sea and are not required to notify claimants of military activities. China’s claims threaten sea lines of communication, which are important maritime passages that facilitate trade and the movement of naval forces. In response to China’s assertive presence in the disputed territory, Japan sold military ships and equipment to the Philippines and Vietnam in order to improve their maritime security capacity and to deter Chinese aggression. In recent years, China has built three airstrips on the contested Spratly Islands to extend its presence in disputed waters, and militarized Woody Island by deploying fighter jets, cruise missiles, and a radar system. China has warned its Southeast Asian neighbors against drilling for oil and gas in the contested region, which has disrupted other nations’ oil exploration and seismic survey activities. To challenge China’s claims in international waters, the United States has occasionally deployed destroyer ships on freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea to promote freedom of passage. Currently, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague is hearing a claim brought by the Philippines against China, although Beijing refuses to accept the court’s authority. Concerns The United States, which maintains important interests in ensuring freedom of navigation and securing sea lines of communication, has expressed support for an agreement on a binding code of conduct and other confidence-building measures. The United States has a role in preventing military escalation resulting from the territorial dispute. However, Washington’s defense treaty with Manila could draw the United States into a China-Philippines conflict over the substantial natural gas deposits in the disputed Reed Bank or the lucrative fishing grounds of the Scarborough Shoal. A dispute between China and Vietnam over territorial claims could also threaten the military and commercial interests of the United States. The failure of Chinese and Southeast Asian leaders to resolve the disputes by diplomatic means could undermine international laws governing maritime disputes and encourage destabilizing arms buildups.

#### Beijing will escalate an SCS dispute—concessions solve

Kazianis 9/8/16 (Harry, director of Defense Studies at the Center for the National Interest and Executive Editor of The National Interest, “The Perfect Time for China to Make a Big Move in the South China Sea Is Now”, The National Interest, September 8th 2016, http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-perfect-time-china-make-big-move-the-south-china-sea-now-17632?page=2)

No, Beijing wants more, and could soon seek to transform the status-quo in Asia, especially in the South China Sea, in its favor. Indeed, recent reports suggest that Beijing’s surge for hegemony might be around the corner, as its leaders take advantage of a window of opportunity during the final weeks of the US presidential election as America’s gaze turns inward.

Many Asia specialists argued that China would boldly push forward in some aggressive manner after losing in the Hague to the Philippines over Manila’s challenge of Beijing’s claims in the South China Sea. However, China has bided its time, despite some reckless statements, provocative photo-ops including “bomber selfies” over the area and a Global Times July editorial that called Australia a "paper cat," threatening “If Australia steps into the South China Sea waters, it will be an ideal target for China to warn and strike.”

Indeed, any rising great power embracing the most basic elements of strategy must pick the most opportune time to seize an initiative, something not lost on Chinese military strategists and senior Communist Party officials. Any escalatory move after the Hague ruling would have been a strategic mistake. Beijing had committed to host the G20 summit slated to start seven weeks after the ruling, and the United States would soon be largely sidelined thanks to one of the most divisive presidential elections in its history. China, by waiting just a few weeks, would be in the best position in years to undertake any number of bold actions in South China Sea, ensuring its dominance over what it refers to as its own sovereign territory.

Senior officials at the Pentagon and a top diplomat representing an ASEAN nation in Washington have confided that Asia experts anticipate a Chinese move in the South China Sea that could escalate tensions, due to the circumstances and timing.

“If China is going to strike in the South China Sea, mid-September right until the November presidential election could not be a better time,” explained a senior US Department of Defense official who agreed to be interviewed if not identified. Or, put a different way by another US defense official, again speaking on background, explained: “Beijing’s best window to take advantage of certain trend lines and cement its claims in the South China Sea is right after the G20. American newspapers won’t give front-page status to a China story during the heart of the election, well, unless they start shooting, and they won’t be that stupid. For Beijing, the timing is perfect.”

Such analysis is not limited to American military circles, and a senior ASEAN nation diplomat holds almost an identical view. “China is ready to cast off any illusions of a peaceful rise. Having worked with Chinese diplomats in Asia and here in Washington for decades now, Beijing seems ready to remove any hidden aspirations of what it really wants: to dominate the South China Sea.” President Obama has warned "there will be consequences," but the senior diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, continued: “China seems poised to make a serious move to solidify its hold on the South China Sea after the G20. Why wouldn’t it? America is obsessed with its elections. And if [US President Barack] Obama would not even enforce a ‘red line’ when Assad was killing his own people with chemical weapons, ASEAN nations know he won’t come to our aid over some rocks – as many in the media will surely spin in – when his time in office is almost up.”

Beginning the morning of September 3, global media began quoting extensively from a piece in The New York Times indicating Beijing massed vessels around Scarborough Shoal, claimed by China, the Philippines and Taiwan each. The controversial move is one of a long stream of Chinese aggressions in recent years. Reports indicated that troop ships as well as barges – which could be utilized for dredging, the first steps in turning rocks into islands and islands into military bases, a play China has utilized in the past in the South China Sea – were less than 2 kilometers from the shoal.

Making matters worse, and handing China even greater incentive to begin reclamation efforts, was what can be best described as an untimely comment by Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, who threatened to insult President Obama during a proposed meeting at the East Asia Summit if he raised human rights issues. With Washington and Manila at odds, Duterte gave Beijing a golden opportunity to push forward, cementing its grasp on Scarborough.

While relations between the United States and the Philippines, at least in the short term, are strained, Manila has every incentive to work with Washington to ensure that Beijing does not begin reclamation work at Scarborough Shoal. As a first step towards such an effort, in a move to attempt to deter and prevent Chinese action, President Obama should voice his opposition, in no uncertain terms, that any attempt to seize Scarborough would constitute a challenge to the peace and stability of Asia and would force Washington to rethink many areas of cooperation with Beijing. These could include future participation in RIMPAC and a pause in bilateral investment treaty negotiations.

At the same time, the trend lines in the South China Sea suggest that China can increase its military might in the region dramatically for months and years to come thanks to its new island bases. The United States must actively begin crafting a strategy for if Beijing does move forward on reclamation with the goal of negating China’s growing military muscle. Options could include rotational or permanent US naval assets, especially attack submarines, in Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam and a permanent naval presence, including an aircraft carrier battle group, once again in the former US naval base at Subic Bay in the Philippines, about 200 kilometers east from Scarborough Shoal. No matter what plan of action is adopted, the goal must be to reinforce America’s critical alliances and strategic partnerships as well as ensure that the South China Sea will remain a part of the global commons – a body of water all nations have the sacred right to utilize.

#### China is escalating East China Sea tensions—draws in the US and escalatese

CFR, 6/29---Council on Foreign Relations, 2016 (“Tensions in the East China Sea,” *Conflict Tracker,* Center for Preventative Action (CPA), June 29th, 2016, Available Online at: <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/conflict/tensions-in-the-east-china-sea>, Accessed 6/29/16, DSF)

In June 2015, the Japanese government revealed that China came closer to Japan’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) by establishing natural gas projects along the border between the two countries. Chinese and Japanese naval and air patrol vessels continue to operate closely in the area, making the risk of a miscalculation that could lead to an armed confrontation a real danger. To maintain its strategic advantage, China has converted naval warships of considerable size and capability to coast guard vessels, These actions, as well as Chinese coast guards’ constant patrolling, present serious concerns for Japan. In 2015, Chinese aircrafts approached Japan’s airspace more than 570 times, causing the Japanese government to scramble in response. There has been a sharp increase in the number of jet fighter scrambles in the past year; Japan’s air force recorded a 16 percent increase in airspace incursions, which represents the second highest number of interactions since the 1980s. Aside from a brief period after World War II when the United States controlled the territory, the Senkaku/Daioyu islands have formally been a part of Japanese territory since 1895, although owned by a private Japanese citizen. China began to assert claims over the Senkaku/Daioyu islands in the 1970s. Tensions resurfaced in September 2012 when Japan purchased three of the disputed islands from the private owner. The economically significant islands, which are northeast of Taiwan, have potential oil and natural gas reserves, are near prominent shipping routes, and are surrounded by rich fishing areas. Each country claims to have economic rights in an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of two hundred nautical miles, but that space overlaps because the sea only spans three hundred and sixty nautical miles. After China discovered natural gas near the overlapping EEZ-claimed area in 1995, Japan objected to any drilling in the area due to the fact that the oil reserve could be connected to a field that spans into the disputed zone. In April 2014, President Barack Obama became the first U.S. president to explicitly state that the disputed islands are covered by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, although the United States takes no formal position on their ultimate sovereignty. An accidental military incident or political miscalculation by China or Japan could embroil the United States in armed hostilities with China.

#### Japan will unilaterally escalate the crisis—draws in the US

White 2014 (Hugh, is professor of strategic studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. His book The China Choice: Why We Should Share Power was published in the US last year by Oxford University Press. , 2014 (“A Great War in the East China Sea: Why China and Japan Could Fight,” The National Interest, July 15, 2014, Accessible Online at: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/great-war-the-east-china-sea-why-china-japan-could-fight-10877>, Accessed on 7/1/16, DSF)

What about Japan? Is there any risk that Tokyo might decide deliberately to start an armed clash with China? On the face of it this seems a much less likely possibility, but it cannot be dismissed completely. Japan’s leaders might decide that their interests would be served by bringing on a clash and settling the question of U.S. commitment to Japan’s security once and for all. They could well think that time is not on their side. After all, if they are worried today that America might not be willing to confront China on their behalf, how much less confident can they be about what would happen if they clashed with China five or ten years from now? That might lead them to think that it would be better to bring a conflict on now, hoping that Washington would step forward with a robust military response which would force China to back off and drop its challenge to U.S. leadership in Asia, while restoring Japanese confidence in America’s security guarantees. Students of history will see some echoes here of the thinking which brought Japan to Pearl Harbour in 1941. Of course, Japan’s leaders would recognize the real possibility that America would fail a test of its commitment. But they might think Japan would be better off knowing now that America will not protect them from China, rather than remaining uncertain. It is not hard to imagine Japanese leaders like Shinzo Abe concluding that if Japan must in the future stand on its own against China without U.S. support, the sooner this becomes clear, the better. And the sooner Japan can start to take the necessary steps to defend itself independently, the better.

#### Thus the plan: The United States federal government should negotiate a grand bargain with the People’s Republic of China by offering to end its commitment to defend Taiwan against Chinese aggression in return for China peacefully resolving its maritime and land disputes in the South China and East China Seas and officially accepting the United States’ long-term military security role in East Asia.

### Contention 2 is Solvency

#### A quid-pro-quo grand bargain is key—demonstrates US resolve and reveals valuable information.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

Insisting on Chinese concessions would also demonstrate U.S. resolve to protect American interests. By making its willingness to end its commitment to Taiwan contingent on Chinese concessions, the United States would make clear that it is willing to run the risk of protecting Taiwan and its allies' interests in the South China and East China Seas, if China were uncompromising. Once again, the key issue from the U.S. perspective comes back to information—if China is more likely to have unlimited aims, then the risks of U.S. accommodation are larger and the United States should therefore be less willing to adopt this strategy. As argued above, China's refusal to accept a grand bargain, especially one that is so clearly weighted toward its interests (unless China is determined to push the United States out of Northeast Asia), would indicate more ambitious Chinese aims. Thus, compared to unilateral concessions, insisting on a package deal that included Chinese concessions would demonstrate a higher level of U.S. resolve. In addition, resolution of the maritime disputes would directly increase U.S. security by eliminating disputes that, via alliance commitments, could draw the United States into dangerous crises with China.

#### China will say “*yes*”.

Glaser 16 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2016 (“Grand Bargain or Bad Idea? U.S. Relations with China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

Nevertheless, the grand bargain would provide China with a major achievement at arguably little cost. Current Chinese nationalist claims have blown the importance of the maritime and sovereignty disputes in the South China and East China Seas far out of proportion to their material value. If China’s leaders decide to prioritize other goals, they might be able to deflate these nationalist claims, bringing them back in line with their actual value and selling this new interpretation domestically. At the same time, Chinese leaders should see that the grand bargain would provide large benefits to China, including elimination of the United States as a barrier to bringing Taiwan under its full sovereign control and, closely related, a large reduction in the security threat posed by the United States. The grand bargain, therefore, could be appealing to a Chinese leadership that faces daunting domestic challenges and intensifying regional opposition to its assertive policies and growing military might. Thus, while the probability of China accepting the grand bargain may be low, one should not entirely discount the possibility.

#### China’s response to the plan provides valuable information about its intentions and motives --- if they say “no,” there’s no disadvantage — insisting on a QPQ demonstrates U.S. resolve and preserves alliance credibility.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

The Logic of a Grand Bargain

The United States' choice of whether to end its commitment to defend Taiwan is complicated further by uncertainty about the nature and extent of China's goals. If China places relatively little value on expanding its control and influence beyond Taiwan, then even if U.S. accommodation generated doubts about U.S. resolve, they would be of little consequence. In contrast, if China highly values winning all of its maritime disputes and pushing the United States out of Northeast Asia, then reductions in U.S. credibility would be more costly. Similarly, if China's aims are both limited and stable, then U.S. accommodation would not risk creating a more dangerous China. In contrast, if China's goals are still evolving and if U.S. accommodation would empower domestic hard-liners, then U.S. security would be reduced.

Therefore, the question arises whether policies exist that would reduce the risks while preserving the benefits of U.S. accommodation on Taiwan. If combining certain concessions by China in an overall package—a grand bargain, for lack of a better term—could achieve this goal, then the United States' best option might be to make ending its commitment to Taiwan contingent on China making concessions of its own. The preceding analysis suggests that the United States should design such a grand bargain with a variety of purposes in mind: to gain information about the nature and extent of China's motives; to demonstrate its resolve to retain U.S. security commitments in the region; and, related, to preserve the credibility of its commitments to its allies. Likely the most common way to envision a grand bargain is as an agreement in which two actors make concessions across multiple issue to create a fair deal—that is, one in which both benefit equally—that would have been impossible in an agreement that dealt with a single issue. A different way to envision a grand bargain is as an agreement in which the states trade across multiple issues, making both states better off, but not necessarily equally. A grand bargain in Northeast Asia is likely to take the latter form, partly because the agreement would be in response to a power shift that favors China and partly because China's interests in the region are greater than those of the United States. The first component of a grand bargain, and probably the most important, would be for China to resolve its maritime disputes on “fair” terms.100 Oddly, there seems to be both a little and a lot at stake in these disputes. Gaining sovereignty over the offshore islands would strengthen China's claims to the oil and gas reserves, which have increased the importance of the disputes. At the same time, however, the disputes have severely hindered the exploration and extraction of these resources, and joint extraction and sharing agreements could provide all parties with substantial resource benefits. Growing nationalism has given the disputed territorial claims importance far beyond their material and strategic value, and it has damaged the prospects for any type of agreement. An ideal solution would be for China and its neighbors to place the territories under some sort of international control as a maritime preserve and to share the resources.101 Other solutions include joint governance over the use of the islands/islets, agreement not to object to other states' sovereignty claims, and agreement to end unilateral military patrols near the disputed territories.102 China's willingness to reach an agreement on the offshore islands and related maritime disputes would provide the United States with valuable information. Most obviously, it would demonstrate that China's aims are limited (at least for now). Closely related, it would demonstrate a degree of reasonableness in Chinese foreign policy priorities and decisionmaking: given that the value of Taiwan dwarfs the value of these maritime disputes, Chinese unwillingness to reach this type of bargain would indicate deep inflexibility in its emerging foreign policy and possibly overconfidence in its ability to use its growing power to achieve all of its aims. China's claims in these disputes are also weaker than its claims to Taiwan: for example, China did not claim the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands until 1970, which suggests that it should be able to moderate this claim if the benefits were sufficiently large. In addition, an agreement would provide the United States with insights into the balance of power within China's foreign policy decisionmaking. If China's more assertive policies have reflected the growing influence of the People's Liberation Army, narrow nationalist pressures, or both, then Chinese concessions would demonstrate that the country's leaders could control these forces when the stakes are sufficiently large. Taken as a whole, this information about China's goals would make U.S. accommodation over Taiwan less risky.

#### The plan provides concrete evidence about China’s intentions—prevents miscalculation.

Varrall 16 — Merriden Varrall, Director of the East Asia Program at the Lowy Institute for International Policy—an Australian think tank, former Assistant Country Director and Senior Policy Advisor at the United Nations Development Programme in China, former Lecturer in Foreign Policy at the China Foreign Affairs University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Anthropology from Macquarie University (Sydney) and the Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam) and an M.A. in International Affairs from the Australian National University, 2016 (“The real danger in the South China Sea is repeating assumptions until they become truth,” *The Interpreter*—a publication of the Lowy Institute for International Policy (an Australian think tank), May 6th, Available Online at <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2016/05/06/Real-danger-in-South-China-Sea-is-reiterating-assumptions-until-they-become-truth.aspx>, Accessed 07-24-2016)

Let us for a moment remember that 'common sense' is not universal. It's not even necessarily shared between two people from within the same social group, let alone across vastly different cultures. Interpretation of what we think we see is not flawless; each individual has their own lens through which meaning is created. So let us just for a moment pause to ask what hard evidence we have — apart from our own interpretation of what we see — of China's intentions. This is of course almost impossible; where would one turn for such evidence? The Global Times says one thing. The spokesperson from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs says another. The high profile academic something different. The retired army general something else again, and what we can gauge of public opinion is a whole other matter. So, all that we can really conclude is that there are different views within China about what China wants to achieve, and how best to achieve it, and we on the outside cannot really know for sure. Considerable debate exists around the extent to which actors behave independently or as part of a grand, directed strategy. No one, in fact, really knows. Xi Jinping no doubt has a pretty strong view of what he wants to achieve — the 'China Dream' — but the specifics of that vision are not universally agreed. Yes, Xi has consolidated a great deal of power, but its debatable whether he has been successful in owning and operating the entire system. It is the very lack of certainty about what China wants that constitutes a large part of the concern over its activities. There have been a lot of calls for China to clarify its intentions. Without this clarity, though, many analysts conclude that determining meaning from what we see is the only reliable method. From what we see, interpreted through our own understanding of how international geopolitics works, China's activities certainly look like it is trying to push the US out of the region to replace it as the predominant power. If that's the case, what does it matter what its motivations are? What difference does it make why it wants to be predominant? Is it relevant if Chinese notions of predominance are different from our own? These issues are important when we are weighing up risks and when developing responses, if we want those responses to be effective in the long term. There is little point, in the long run, trying to quash the symptoms without addressing the cause. As I have argued elsewhere, Chinese policy elites see the world and China's role in it differently from Western policymakers. Something as apparently obvious as 'predominance' is actually a very culturally nuanced concept. Can we safely assume it means to the Chinese exactly what it means to us? Even a fleeting study of Chinese language and culture will show how many variations there are to something that we think has a clear meaning. Chinese Culture 101 teaches that Chinese people don't like to say 'no' to requests – but it doesn't mean there are things they can't or don't want to do. The term 'it's not convenient' doesn't mean 'it's not convenient', it means 'no', but many an over-enthusiastic foreigner has pushed ahead regardless, to everyone's frustration and embarrassment. These are of course simple examples, but what they indicate is that if there is space for misunderstanding and misinterpretation at the most mundane level, there is certainly a significant possibility for misunderstanding and misinterpretation in international geopolitics, with far more serious implications. I do not mean to single this article for particular scrutiny; it is just one of many, largely from within the defence and security community in Australia and the US, that places the onus of responsibility for peace in the region at China's feet. The authors are of course well intentioned: in their line of business, being acutely sensitive to and highly anxious about the national interest is their bread and butter. But, like all of us, their background and position colours their perspective. As such, their analyses tend to rest on assumptions of what China is trying to achieve and why, or on a conviction that motivations don't actually matter when the reality is so clear. But the truth is, most of them, like the rest of us, actually do not know. In fact, 'the real danger' is that we continue to allow discussion about China's regional behaviour and aspirations to be dominated by views from only one field based on a shared perspective, in a circular reiteration of a particular set of assumptions, until they become solidified as unquestionable 'truths'. If (and most analysts could probably agree on this) the current period is becoming increasingly tense, it is paramount that we ensure that we are seeing the picture in all its nuance, and not just in black and white.

#### The plan removes the biggest potential flashpoint for U.S.-Sino nuclear conflict. This creates sustainable peace and strong U.S.-Sino relations — containment strategies are counterproductive.

Glaser 11 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2011 (“Will China's Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 90, Number 2, March/April, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Lexis-Nexis)

The prospects for avoiding intense military competition and war may be good, but growth in China's power may nevertheless require some changes in U.S. foreign policy that Washington will find disagreeable -- particularly regarding Taiwan. Although it lost control of Taiwan during the Chinese Civil War more than six decades ago, China still considers Taiwan to be part of its homeland, and unification remains a key political goal for Beijing. China has made clear that it will use force if Taiwan declares independence, and much of China's conventional military buildup has been dedicated to increasing its ability to coerce Taiwan and reducing the United States' ability to intervene. Because China places such high value on Taiwan and because the United States and China — whatever they might formally agree to — have such different attitudes regarding the legitimacy of the status quo, the issue poses special dangers and challenges for the U.S.-Chinese relationship, placing it in a different category than Japan or South Korea. A crisis over Taiwan could fairly easily escalate to nuclear war, because each step along the way might well seem rational to the actors involved. Current U.S. policy is designed to reduce the probability that Taiwan will declare independence and to make clear that the United States will not come to Taiwan's aid if it does. Nevertheless, the United States would find itself under pressure to protect Taiwan against any sort of attack, no matter how it originated. Given the different interests and perceptions of the various parties and the limited control Washington has over Taipei's behavior, a crisis could unfold in which the United States found itself following events rather than leading them. Such dangers have been around for decades, but ongoing improvements in China's military capabilities may make Beijing more willing to escalate a Taiwan crisis. In addition to its improved conventional capabilities, China is modernizing its nuclear forces to increase their ability to survive and retaliate following a large-scale U.S. attack. Standard deterrence theory holds that Washington's current ability to destroy most or all of China's nuclear force enhances its bargaining position. China's nuclear modernization might remove that check on Chinese action, leading Beijing to behave more boldly in future crises than it has in past ones. A U.S. attempt to preserve its ability to defend Taiwan, meanwhile, could fuel a conventional and nuclear arms race. Enhancements to U.S. offensive targeting capabilities and strategic ballistic missile defenses might be interpreted by China as a signal of malign U.S. motives, leading to further Chinese military efforts and a general poisoning of U.S.-Chinese relations. Given such risks, the United States should consider backing away from its commitment to Taiwan. This would remove the most obvious and contentious flash point between the United States and China and smooth the way for better relations between them in the decades to come. Critics of such a move argue that it would result in not only direct costs for the United States and Taiwan but indirect costs as well: Beijing would not be satisfied by such appeasement; instead, it would find its appetite whetted and make even greater demands afterward — spurred by Washington's lost credibility as a defender of its allies. The critics are wrong, however, because territorial concessions are not always bound to fail. Not all adversaries are Hitler, and when they are not, accommodation can be an effective policy tool. When an adversary has limited territorial goals, granting them can lead not to further demands but rather to satisfaction with the new status quo and a reduction of tension.

#### Defensive realism best explains Chinese foreign policy.

Tang 8 — Tang Shiping, Professor at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs at Fudan University (Shanghai), Adjunct Professor at the Center for Regional Security Studies and former Associate Professor at the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Science (Beijing), former Senior Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), former Co-Director of the Sino-American Security Dialogue, holds a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Genetics from Wayne State University School of Medicine and an M. A. in International Studies from the University of California-Berkeley, 2008 (“From Offensive to Defensive Realism: A Social Evolutionary Interpretation of China’s Security Strategy,” *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, Edited by Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng, Published by Cornell University Press, ISBN 9780801446917, p. 152-156)

China’s Security Strategy: From Offensive to Defensive Realism There is little doubt that China’s security strategy is still firmly rooted in realism.37 In seeking to overcome the memory of “a century of national [end page 152] humiliation” (bainian guochi) at the hands of the West and Japan, generations of Chinese have strived to build a strong and prosperous China. Many Chinese elites believe that because of its size, population, civilization, history and, more recently, its growing wealth, China should be regarded as a great power (da guo). This strong belief in the utility of power and the motivation to accumulate power firmly anchors China’s security strategy within the realist camp. The more important question is whether China is an offensive realist or a defensive realist state.38 Mao: Offensive Realism China’s security strategy under Mao was largely offensive realist in nature.39 China under Mao expounded an intolerant ideology of overthrowing all imperialist or reactionary regimes in Asia and the world at large. More importantly, China under Mao (together with the former Soviet Union) actively supported revolutions (or insurgencies) in many developing countries, thus intentionally threatening those countries that it had identified as imperialists or their lackeys (zougou) and proxies (dailiren). This sense of being threatened was perhaps most severe among China’s neighboring states that were allies of the United States and its Western allies (e.g., Southeast Asian countries).40 Second, as a staunch Marxist- Leninist, Mao believed that conflicts in international politics were necessary and inevitable. To transform the world into a socialist world, struggles—including armed struggles—against imperialists and their proxies were necessary. As a result, despite having settled some major disputes with several neighboring states (e.g., Burma, Mongolia, Pakistan), seeking security through cooperation was never high on the agenda of China’s strategy at that time. [end page 153] Third, China under Mao largely believed that all of the People’s Republic’s security problems were due to other countries’ evil policies,41 rather than the interactions between China and other states. In essence, China under Mao had little understanding of the dynamics of the security dilemma.42 As a result, other than the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co- existence,”43 China under Mao initiated few measures to assure regional states of China’s benign intentions. Deng: The Transition to Defensive Realism Among China hands, there is little disagreement over the largely defensive realist nature of China’s security strategy today, whether China is labeled an “integrationist” power, a “globalist” power, a nonrevisionist and nonimperial power, or simply a state embracing “defensive realism and beyond”; or whether China’s grand strategy and diplomacy is characterized as neo- Bismarckian, “New Diplomacy,” or “engaging Asia.”44 At the very least, most analysts reject the notion that China is an offensive-realist state (i.e., an expansionist, revisionist, or imperialist one) today. There are at least four strands of evidence supporting the argument that post- Mao China has gradually transformed itself into a state embracing defensive realism. The first is perhaps the most obvious. China has toned down its revolutionary rhetoric and has backed up its words with deeds. Most clearly, it has stopped supporting insurgencies in other countries, even if they were initiated by communist elements. [end page 154] The second is that China has now clearly recognized some of the most critical aspects of the security dilemma and its implications.45 Touring several Southeast Asian countries in 1978, Deng Xiaoping was given his first lesson on the security dilemma. He was surprised to find that China’s earlier policies of exporting revolution and its unwillingness to resolve the issue of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia had made many Southeast Asian countries suspicious of China’s intentions.46 As a result, Deng realized that China’s security conundrum in the 1960s and 1970s had not been the work of external forces alone but was rather an outcome of the interaction between China’s behavior and the outside world. This interdependent and interactive nature of security is, of course, one of the major aspects of the security dilemma. The third strand of evidence is that China has demonstrated self-restraint and willingness to be constrained by others. This aspect is perhaps most prominently demonstrated in China’s memberships in international organizations and institutions as well as its increased presence in treaties since 1980s.47 Because international organizations, institutions, and treaties are all rule-based, China’s increasing membership in them and its compliance with the rules there were in place before its entry (i.e., that were made by others) unambiguously signals its willingness to be restrained by others.48 Finally, security through cooperation, the hallmark of defensive realism, has become a pillar of China’s security strategy under Deng. Two aspects of this dimension are worth noting. The first is that China has pursued a strategy of maintaining amicable relationships with its neighbors (mulin youhao, wending zhoubian) since Deng, mostly through reassurance and building [end page 155] cooperation.49 While such a strategy certainly has a dose of hedging against the bad times of U.S.- China relations embedded in it, the strategy still reduces the anxiety among neighboring countries about China’s rise, thus helping to alleviate the security dilemma between China and regional states. The second is that China has also ventured into multilateral security cooperation organizations and institutions, mostly prominently the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Shanghai Cooperative Organizations. While these security cooperation institutions may or may not have changed states’ choice of goals, they have institutionalized a degree of (security) cooperation among states, thus changing states’ preferences for strategies. As a result, the security dilemma between China and regional states has not been exacerbated but rather alleviated.50 Overall, there is ample evidence to support the interpretation that China’s current security strategy is firmly rooted in defensive realism, with a dose of instrumentalist institutionalism.