## Alliances

#### Plan destroys U.S. security alliances in Asia, sparks an arms race, and ends U.S. primacy in East Asia.

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Abandoning Taiwan would erode American credibility in the Indo-Pacific and add fuel to an ongoing regional arms race.

Towards Asia. Decision-makers in Seoul, Tokyo, and Manila would naturally question U.S. resolve and Washington’s commitment to their security in the event of an abandonment of Taiwan. Japan, in particular, would feel threatened by the stationing of Chinese forces on Taiwan—in essence losing a valuable geopolitical buffer—in such close proximity to its southwestern approaches. Heightened threat perceptions in Tokyo Taiwan policy cannot be compartmentalized, and viewed in isolation from the pivot and U.S. policy, if combined with a lack of faith in the credibility of U.S. conventional and nuclear deterrence, could lead Japan to acquire a nuclear-weapons capability.

The corrosive effect of forfeiting Taiwan would also extend to other key allies such as South Korea, which might question Washington’s determination to defend it from North Korean aggression. Indeed, recent public-opinion polls have indicated that a growing proportion of the South Korean public now favors the development of a South Korean nuclear arsenal. Revealingly, the reasons invoked for such a shift were growing concerns over North Korea’s increasingly unpredictable and belligerent behavior, as well as over the continued viability of the United States’ security guarantee.

Meanwhile, smaller regional states might find themselves both disinclined to place their faith in the United States, and cowed into submission by a more self-assured and advantageously positioned China. An abandonment of Taiwan could thus lead to a creeping Finlandization—or rapid nuclearization—of large tracts of the Indo-Pacific, and, in time, to the sunset of American primacy in Asia. Taiwan, therefore, most certainly matters.

#### Nuclear War

Tan 15 — Andrew T.H. Tan, Used to work in King’s college in London, recently appointed as Chief Executive of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, MA from Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2015 (Security and Conflict in East Asia, April 14th, Available Online at <https://books.google.com/books?id=33OhCAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Security+and+Conflict+in+East+Asia&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiA3q-YqsHNAhVM0h4KHUndBboQ6AEIHjAA#v=onepage&q=east%20asia's%20arms%20race&f=false>, Accessed 06-24-2016, SP)

East Asia’s arms race leads to the classic problem of the security dilemma, in which a state that is perceived as becoming too powerful leads to counter-acquisitions by other states. This results in misperceptions, conflict spirals, heightened tensions and ultimately open conflict, thereby destroying the very security that arms are supposed to guarantee (Jervis 1976). East Asia’s sustained economic rise since the end of the Korean War in 1953 and the lack of any major conflict since has lulled many into believing that growing economic interdependence will make war unlikely in that region (Khoo 2013: 47-48). However, this is a false premise as significant historical antagonisms have remained Japan’s imperialism prior to 1945 and its failure adequately to account for its past continues to stir up strong nationalist emotions in China and South Korea. In addition, the divisions between North Korea and South Korea are as strong and intractable as ever, leading to an arms race on the Korean peninsula. The situation is compounded by the weakness or absence of regional institutions, regimes and laws that could regulate interstate relations, build trust and confidence, and otherwise put a stop to the arms race. None of the distinctive confidence- and security-building measures which were in place in Europe during the Cold War and helped to calm tensions as well as contain the arms race exist in Asia Within East Asia itself, the Six-Party Talks have focused only on the Korean issue and have not managed to stem North Korea’s open brinkmanship that in early 2013 almost brought the Korean peninsula to war again. The arms race in East Asia is dangerous owing to the increased risk of miscalculation as a result of misperception. Chinese policymakers appear to be convinced that Japan is dominated by right-wing conservatives bent on reviving militarism (Glosserman 2012). At the same time, there is also a perception within China that given its growing strength, it should now aggressively assert what it perceives to be its legitimate claims in the East and South China Seas. Thus, China’s nationalist discourse perceives that the problems about disputed territory emanate from other powers, not China (Sutter 2012). The consequences of conflict between China and Japan, on the Korean peninsula or over Taiwan, however, will not stay regional. As a key player in East Asia, the USA, which has security commitments to Japan and South Korea, residual commitments to Taiwan and troops on the ground in East Asia and in the Western pacific, will be drawn in. The problem is that any conflict in East Asia is not likely to remain conventional for long. In fact, it is likely that it would rapidly escalate into a nuclear war because three of the key players, namely China, North Korea and the USA, possess nuclear weapons.

## Elections

#### Hillary will win now but Trump’s gaining ground

Silver 9/6

Nate Silver, Elections god, 9-6-2016, "Election Update: Clinton’s Lead Keeps Shrinking," FiveThirtyEight, <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/election-update-clintons-lead-keeps-shrinking/>, Accessed: 9-7-16//SRawal

The clearest pattern is simply that Trump has regained ground since Clinton’s post-convention peak. He now has a 31 percent chance of winning the election according to our polls-only model, and a 33 percent chance according to polls-plus. For a deeper look, let’s run through our set of 10 framing questions about the election1 in light of the most recent polling:

1. Who’s ahead in the polls right now?

Clinton’s ahead, by a margin of about 3 percentage points in an average of national polls, or 4 points in our popular vote composite, which is based on both national polls and state polls. While the race has tightened, be wary of claims that the election is too close to call — that isn’t where the preponderance of the evidence lies, at least for the moment. If one candidate is ahead by 3 or 4 percentage points, there will be occasional polls showing a tied race or her opponent narrowly ahead, along with others showing the candidate with a mid- to high single-digit lead. We’ve seen multiple examples of both of those recently.

In swing states, the race ranges from showing Trump up by 1 point in Iowa to a Clinton lead of about 6 points in her best states, such as Virginia. That’s a reasonably good position for Clinton, but it isn’t quite as safe as it might sound. That’s because the swing states tend to rise and fall together. A further shift of a few points in Trump’s favor, or a polling error of that magnitude, would make the Electoral College highly competitive.

2. What’s the degree of uncertainty?

Higher than people might assume. Between the unusually early conventions and the late election — Nov. 8 is the latest possible date on which Election Day can occur — it’s a long campaign this year. But just as important, many voters — close to 20 percent — either say they’re undecided or that they plan to vote for third-party candidates. At a comparable point four years ago, only 5 to 10 percent of voters fell into those categories.

High numbers of undecided and third-party voters are associated with higher volatility and larger polling errors. Put another way, elections are harder to predict when fewer people have made up their minds. Because FiveThirtyEight’s models account for this property, we show a relatively wide range of possible outcomes, giving Trump better odds of winning than most other statistically based models, but also a significant chance of a Clinton landslide if those undecideds break in her favor.

3. What’s the short-term trend in the polls?

It’s been toward Trump over the past few weeks. Clinton’s lead peaked at about 8.5 percentage points in early August, according to our models, and Trump has since sliced that figure roughly in half. Of Trump’s roughly 4-point gain since then, about 2 points come from Trump’s having gained ground, while the other 2 points come from Clinton’s having lost ground — possibly a sign that her lofty numbers in early August were inflated by a convention bounce.

One slight caveat: If you’re talking about the very short term, it’s not quite as clear who’s gaining, as the most recent daily and weekly tracking polls have been flat lately instead of showing continued gains for Trump. By late this week, we should have a better sense of whether Trump’s position is still improving.

#### **China resonates in the national political psyche- voters concerned about threat to security**

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Following the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989, Americans began to worry deeply about another threat to the well-being of their country: the People’s Republic of China. Though the United States became the world’s only superpower at the end of the Cold War, strategists and analysts continued to search for dangers that might arise in the future. Among states that could potentially become big-power adversaries, China led the pack. Without doubt, the “China threat” today resonates deeply in the national political psyche, as Americans worry about China displacing the U.S. in Asia, taking U.S. manufacturing jobs, carrying out industrial espionage, modernizing its military forces, hacking into computers, and causing a multitude of other problems. Not so long ago, Americans considered another country to be the United States’ most dangerous adversary. During the Cold War, only the Soviet Union seemed to have the power and desire to unleash a devastating nuclear attack on cities and strategic targets across the U.S. Few seriously questioned the U.S.S.R. was masterminding an international communist conspiracy that threatened the “American way of life.” Though anticommunist fears peaked during the McCarthy period of the early 1950s, the ideological struggle continued through the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, the era of Glasnost, the break-up of the Soviet Union and beyond. While most Americans would admit that China does not possess the military prowess of Russia and is not actively seeking to export its ideological views around the world, many believe the U.S. should do all it can to prepare for an “inevitable” military conflict with China. They think it is only prudent to build up U.S. military bases and forces in the Pacific, in the face of China’s continuing military modernization. They are inclined to support U.S. trade policies imposing tariffs, quotas and other protectionist measures on Chinese imports that enter the country “illegally.” While they cannot help buying low-cost Chinese goods and enjoying low interest rates resulting from China’s large holdings of U.S. Treasury securities, they condemn policies that led the American government to borrow billions of dollars from China. On a gut level, many people fear “cheap Chinese labor” will cause the decline of the United States economy and that U.S. industry will continue to suffer from China’s “unfair trade practices.” From a values standpoint, Americans feel most comfortable when their leaders strongly criticize China for violating human rights and restricting political freedoms. Most believe in their hearts that China’s Communist Party still reverberates with the thoughts of Chairman Mao and that the Party is only willing to incrementally cede political controls through force or necessity. With so many reasons to fear, despise and worry about China, Americans nevertheless cannot help admiring China’s accomplishments and being intrigued with this emerging power. Many watched the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2008 Olympic Games and came away deeply impressed by the brilliant spectacle. Most cannot help but admire and be inspired by China’s achievement of raising more than 400 million people out of poverty, virtually wiping out widespread illiteracy, developing a large middle class and creating a dynamic, consumer society. Many realized that China was a different place altogether from the impoverished, dispirited and totalitarian country they had heard about for years. Nevertheless, most Americans shook their heads knowingly when television commentators dutifully noted that Chinese authorities sharply limited demonstrations and dissent in Beijing during the Olympics. They could not help but feel sympathy for Tibetans whose protests were violently suppressed only weeks earlier by the Chinese military (just as most Americans felt compassion for blind dissident Chen Guangcheng, who sought refuge and protection at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing in late April 2012). Looking back, the drumbeat of critical views about China among American academics, policy experts and journalists gathered strength during the Clinton administration and has continued to the present day. The “China threat” has many security, economic and political dimensions that experts frequently cite to justify their fears. On security matters, some critics assert, as an article of faith, that China is bent on pushing the U.S. out of Asia and eventually dominating the world. These “China hawks” argue that China could move at any time to forcibly occupy Taiwan and reunify the island with the mainland. Such a successful attack on Taiwan, bolstered by explicit and implied military threats against other countries in East Asia, would enable China to dominate the region as a whole. China would then double down on its ultimate goal, this reasoning goes: replacing the United States as the world’s only superpower. From the standpoint of the China hawks, a war between the United States and China is inevitable, since the U.S. stands in the way of China achieving its strategic objectives. Regarding China’s threat to U.S. jobs and economic growth, critics with strong protectionist views argue that the sharp increase in the United States trade deficit with China has had a devastating impact on American workers, causing the loss of nearly 2.8 million jobs between 2001 and 2010.1 They claim that China has unfairly achieved its large bilateral trade surplus with the United States, which reached approximately $295 billion in 2011, because in their view, China couples its aggressive export strategy with measures to manipulate and artificially undervalue its currency, giving Chinese products an unfair advantage in foreign markets.2 While both China hawks and protectionists condemn China for its one-party communist regime, lack of democracy and poor human rights record, they largely accept the country’s domestic political situation as an inalterable fact. Though they may hope for China’s eventual transition to full democracy and high human rights standards, their primary concern is protecting the United States against the threat that China poses to America’s security and economic well-being. shaping u.s. policy In many respects, it is the views of the China hawks that have informed ongoing American security policy toward China over the last decade. During the George W. Bush administration, the U.S. initiated a major buildup of forces in the Pacific as part of what it officially termed to be “hedging” against a potential Chinese military threat. Under the rubric of preparing for the “contingency” of a war with China, U.S. hedging has effectively amounted to a containment strategy. Beyond significantly increasing the number of naval, air and land forces at U.S. bases in the Pacific, the buildup strengthened close-in naval intelligence gathering along China’s coast as well as extensive air force surveillance and reconnaissance of the country as a whole. The Obama Administration hardened this policy through measures it announced in November 2011 that accelerate the strategic encirclement of China, including deploying U.S. marines to Australia’s northern territory and adopting a new “Air Sea Battle Concept” to carry out long-range strikes deep inside China in the event of war. Though the Bush administration, by encouraging market reform and promoting U.S. investment, pursued “engagement” with China on economic matters, it increasingly adopted restrictive trade measures such as imposing extensive import duties on Chinese products. Under pressure from protectionists in Congress, Bush officials moved to this more combative posture in their second term in the belief that China was benefiting unfairly from liberalized trade.3 The Obama Administration supported and magnified this approach. Preeminently, U.S. policy relies on trade measures called “anti-dumping” actions that penalize Chinese companies for allegedly selling their products in the U.S. market at below the cost of production. The Obama Administration also imposed high punitive tariffs on some Chinese products and created a new “enforcement unit” to ramp up U.S. investigations of Chinese trade practices. While critics often lament internal political conditions in China, they are far more focused on security and economic issues. The broad lack of interest in strengthening China’s democracy and human rights practices had a definitive policy impact during the Bush administration and remains in place during the Obama Administration: aside from cataloging political abuses and shortcomings in an annual State Department report, addressing individual cases of concern and making periodic official statements that emphasize American political values, the U.S. government does little that will effectively promote democracy and human rights in China.4 The views of critics who deeply fear a “China threat” have unduly shaped U.S. government policy and anaesthetized Americans to its weaknesses. To many people, United States security policy toward China seems prudently designed to prepare for an uncertain future. Given widespread fear of the threat China might someday pose, many Americans see strengthening defenses in the Asia Pacific as a matter of common sense. On economic issues, many believe it is only fair for the U.S. government to protect American jobs and manufacturers against purportedly nefarious Chinese commercial practices. If this policy sometimes requires confronting China over trade issues, they are willing to live with the consequences. Finally, while most Americans broadly dislike China’s authoritarian political system, they show little overall interest in adopting policies to help move it toward greater democracy and protection of human rights.

#### Plan flips election for the GOP- Obama approval

Needham 16 (Vicki, The Hill, 1/21, “Moody’s model gives Dem candidate advantage in 2016,” <http://thehill.com/policy/finance/266668-moodys-model-gives-dem-candidate-advantage-in-2016>)

But the trajectory of the president’s approval rating also makes a difference in who could win the White House. If President Obama’s approval rating shifts only a little more than 4 percentage points, a bit more than the margin of error for many presidential opinion polls, the move could further cut into Democratic hopes to retain the White House. Growing concern about terrorism and other issues could dent Obama’s approval rating further.Usually, if the sitting president’s approval rating is improving in the year leading up the election, the incumbent party receives a boost. But in most elections, the president’s rating has declined in the lead-up to the election, favoring the challenger party.

#### Trump presidency risks nuclear war with Russia and extinction

Zack Beauchamp, 7/21/2016 (staff writer, “Donald Trump’s NATO comments are the scariest thing he’s said,” <http://www.vox.com/2016/7/21/12247074/donald-trump-nato-war>)

Wednesday night, Donald Trump said something that made a nuclear war between the United States and Russia more likely. With a few thoughtless words, he made World War III — the deaths of hundreds of millions of people in nuclear holocaust — plausible. This probably scans like hyperbole, the kind of thing you hear a lot in politics. I assure you, it’s not. Not this time. What Trump said, in an interview published by the New York Times, is that he wouldn’t necessarily defend the United States’ allies in NATO if they were attacked by a foreign power. This extended, Trump said, to the Baltic countries right on Russia’s border — countries Russia might conceivably invade. The NATO alliance is the key deterrent against this: It is founded on a promise that an attack on one NATO country is an attack on all. Trump is directly undermining this promise. The consequences are hard to overstate. He is trashing one of the foundations of the postwar European order, which has helped guaranteed peace on the continent for 70 years. And by equivocating on whether he would defend the Baltics, he creates a dangerous amount of uncertainty among Russians as to how seriously the US takes its NATO treaty commitments — the kind of uncertainty that, yes, could spark an actual conflict between the US and Russia. This is what happens when you let a flamboyant reality star get this close to the highest office in the land: You get someone who doesn’t understand the machinery of state, and plays with literal nuclear fire as a result. What Trump said Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in front of a giant American flag. (Ralph Freso/Getty Images) In the interview, the New York Times’s David Sanger asked Trump if he would defend our allies in NATO and East Asia. Trump said he wasn’t sure, that he would only be certain to defend countries that he thought had paid the United States enough money. “If we are not going to be reasonably reimbursed for the tremendous cost of protecting these massive nations with tremendous wealth … then yes, I would be absolutely prepared to tell those countries, ‘Congratulations, you will be defending yourself,’” Trump told Sanger. This is classic Trumpism. Throughout the campaign, he has repeatedly insisted that American alliances don’t help the United States that much, that America is owed much more from its allies than it receives. As a result, he says, the US needs to back away from its alliance commitments. The problem, however, is that the US is treaty-bound to defend its NATO allies. When NATO was created in 1949, it was built around a promise that an attack on one country would be considered an attack on all countries. You invade Poland, you start a war with the United States. Now, NATO doesn’t have the power to force the United States or any other power to defend anyone else. Article V, the provision in the NATO treaty that provides for collective self-defense, isn’t binding on America in the way the US Constitution is. Instead, Article V works by credible commitment: If the United States signals that it is fundamentally committed to the NATO treaty, then it sends a signal to Russia and other hostile powers that the US will abide by the term of its agreements. This deters them from launching wars or any other kind of military adventurism in an American-aligned state. This is most relevant in the Baltic NATO states: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. These countries were former Soviet republics, and Putin seemingly believes they still ought to be Russian possessions. He has routinely screwed with them: kidnapping an Estonian security officer in 2015, sending Russian warships into Latvian waters 40 times in 2014, and repeatedly buzzing their airspace with Russian jets. These countries’ best hope is their NATO membership: the idea that Putin would never do in these countries what he’s doing to Ukraine, because that would mean war with the United States. But when Sanger asked Trump specifically about his feelings on Baltic allies, he said openly that he wouldn’t defend them. Here’s the critical exchange between Trump, Sanger, and the Times’s Maggie Haberman, which is worth reading in full: SANGER: I was just in the Baltic States. They are very concerned obviously about this new Russian activism, they are seeing submarines off their coasts, they are seeing airplanes they haven’t seen since the Cold War coming, bombers doing test runs. If Russia came over the border into Estonia or Latvia, Lithuania, places that Americans don’t think about all that often, would you come to their immediate military aid? TRUMP: I don’t want to tell you what I’d do because I don’t want Putin to know what I’d do. I have a serious chance of becoming president and I’m not like Obama, that every time they send some troops into Iraq or anyplace else, he has a news conference to announce it. SANGER: They are NATO members, and we are treaty-obligated —— TRUMP: We have many NATO members that aren’t paying their bills. SANGER: That’s true, but we are treaty-obligated under NATO, forget the bills part. TRUMP: You can’t forget the bills. They have an obligation to make payments. Many NATO nations are not making payments, are not making what they’re supposed to make. That’s a big thing. You can’t say forget that. SANGER: My point here is, Can the members of NATO, including the new members in the Baltics, count on the United States to come to their military aid if they were attacked by Russia? And count on us fulfilling our obligations —— TRUMP: Have they fulfilled their obligations to us? If they fulfill their obligations to us, the answer is yes. HABERMAN: And if not? TRUMP: Well, I’m not saying if not. I’m saying, right now there are many countries that have not fulfilled their obligations to us. In other words, Trump is saying that his unequivocal commitment to NATO hinges on whether particular NATO states — including the Baltics — have forked over enough cash. Trump clearly doesn’t think of NATO in terms of an ironclad guarantee to allied states. He thinks of it as transactional, akin to a real estate deal or (less charitably) a protection racket: The United States only protects its weaker allies if they pay up. Nice country you got there. Shame if Russia burns it down. This threatens peace in Europe U.S. Navy Trains In Pacific (Jordon R. Beesley/U.S. Navy/Getty Images) A US Navy ship on an exercise. Normally, Trump’s foreign policy rhetoric is scary but kind of harmless (at least unless he wins). This isn’t. These comments directly undermine the functioning of NATO, and thus the foundations of global peace themselves. The absolutely crucial point about NATO is that it functions on the basis of credible guarantee. The point of NATO is to deter war, by convincing hostile powers like Russia that the US would 100 percent defend its NATO allies. But since there’s no formal legal way to force the United States to defend its allies, this deterrence hinges on the idea that the American leadership is deeply committed to upholding its word and agreements in Europe. This is why, historically, there has been an ironclad, bipartisan commitment to NATO allies. For NATO to work, everyone needs to understand that America’s commitment to its allies is not a partisan football, hinging on who happens to win an election in any given year. It is a fundamental, unchanging part of American grand strategy, one that is and always will be a core American commitment. With a few stray words, Trump has done serious damage to that perception. He has made it seem that US commitment to NATO is much weaker than it is, that it could be overturned with any one election. This was always true in a literal sense: Any president could simply choose not to abide by Article V. But abrogating NATO agreements was always deemed unthinkable by both parties, which has played an important part in maintaining credible deterrence vis-à-vis Russia. Trump just put the idea of the US not defending NATO into question. This threatens the very integrity of NATO itself. If NATO allies start to think that the United States can’t be trusted to defend them, that NATO is just on paper, then they’ll start to wonder why they bother to adhere to this alliance in the first place. If Trump wins the election, this could cause them to exit the security agreement altogether. According to the best available research, this would make war on the European continent far more likely. One study, from professors Jesse C. Johnson and Brett Ashley Leeds, surveyed about 200 years of data on conflicts and concluded that "defensive alliances lower the probability of international conflict and are thus a good policy option for states seeking to maintain peace in the world." Another study looked specifically at the period from 1950 to 2000 and found that "formal alliances with nuclear states appear to carry significant deterrence benefits." The US's formal agreements, then, deter aggression against its non-nuclear partners (like Germany and the Baltics). In their new book on American grand strategy, Dartmouth scholars Steven Brooks and William Wohlforth also surveyed research from regional experts and found a similar consensus. In Europe, they write, "most assessments nonetheless sum up to the conclusion that NATO is a net security plus." Trump, then, is weakening one of America’s most important security agreements — seemingly without very much thought. The nightmare scenario: actual nuclear war (Romolo Tavani/Shutterstock) Trump’s comments are worse than just undermining NATO: By refusing to commit to the Baltics categorically, he encourages Russia to test American resolve in dangerous ways. According to some Russia experts, Vladimir Putin’s ultimate wish in Europe is to break NATO. The way to do that, according to these scholars, is to expose the Article V guarantee as hollow: to show that when push comes to shove, the United States or other large NATO powers wouldn’t actually defend the weaker states. The Baltic states would be the most likely scenario for this to happen. They are very small, they’re right on Russia’s borders, and they aren't really all that important to Western countries' own security. By threatening these states, Russia would force a question: Are the United States, Britain, and France really willing to sacrifice their own soldiers in defense of a tiny state? In 2014, the Danish intelligence agency — note that Denmark is a NATO ally — publicly warned that this was a serious possibility: Russia may attempt to test NATO’s cohesion by engaging in military intimidation of the Baltic countries, for instance with a threatening military build-up close to the borders of these countries and simultaneous attempts of political pressure, destabilization and possibly infiltration. Russia could launch such an intimidation campaign in connection with a serious crisis in the post-Soviet space or another international crisis in which Russia confronts the United States and NATO. The critical issue in preventing this scenario, again, is the perception of NATO commitment. So long as Putin believes that the US and other major powers are firmly committed to the defense of their treaty allies, he’s unlikely to risk starting a war that he would almost certainly lose. This is why Trump’s comments are so damaging: They send a direct signal to the Kremlin that the United States is less than serious about the defense of NATO allies. This suggests that a ploy to break NATO might have a bigger risk of succeeding than previously thought. But note that Trump also refused to say unequivocally that he wouldn’t abide by the NATO treaty. “I don’t want to tell you what I’d do because I don’t want Putin to know what I’d do,” he said. But the entire point of NATO is that Putin needs to know what America will do. If he knows the US will defend the Baltics, then he will likely back off. If he knows the US won’t defend the Baltics, then we could have the breakup of NATO — which would be quite bad but wouldn’t immediately risk World War III. The nightmare scenario, though, is that Putin’s confidence in NATO is undermined even though the United States, under either Trump or Hillary Clinton, remains committed to defending its treaty allies. That’s the scenario under which misperceptions potentially escalate into an actual war between the world’s two largest nuclear powers. Max Fisher wrote an extended piece on how this uncertainty could plausibly escalate to war for Vox last year; I encourage you to read it. But the point, according the experts Fisher spoke to, is that a firm perception that the US will defend its NATO allies is crucial. "That kind of misperception situation is definitely possible, and that’s how wars start," Steve Saideman, a professor who studies NATO at Carleton University, told Fisher. He then scarily compared modern Europe with pre–World War I Europe: "The thing that makes war most thinkable is when other people don’t think it’s thinkable." But here’s the scariest thing from Fisher’s piece. Russia’s conventional military is so much weaker than it used to be that it has been becoming more and more comfortable with the idea of nuclear use in a war with the West. Communications between Washington and the Kremlin are so bad, according to Fisher, that nuclear war is disturbingly plausible in the event of a conflict: Russia has been gradually lowering its bar for when it would use nuclear weapons, and in the process upending the decades-old logic of mutually assured destruction, adding tremendous nuclear danger to any conflict in Europe. The possibility that a limited or unintended skirmish could spiral into nuclear war is higher than ever. One reason things have gotten so scary: Russia’s formal nuclear doctrine says the country is willing to use nuclear weapons first in the event of a sufficiently serious conventional conflict. This is why Trump’s comments are so unbelievably terrifying. He is creating exactly the kind of ambiguity that makes a nuclear war — a potentially civilization-ending event — most plausible. Even if he doesn’t end up winning the election, he has already helped send a signal to Putin that US resolve may actually be weaker than everyone thought. I’m not saying we’re all going to die now. We most likely aren’t. The risks of nuclear war with Russia are still quite low, and remain low after Trump’s comments. The US hasn’t withdrawn from NATO, and Russia is still relatively unlikely to gamble on a lack of American resolve, given that it would assuredly lose any conventional war with NATO powers. But Russia’s calculus shifted just a bit after Trump’s comments, making the risk of a catastrophic war a bit higher today than it was yesterday. That’s horrifying. Even if Russia isn’t emboldened to full-on test NATO, the consequences could be severe. Russia messing with Baltic countries could make many people’s lives far less secure, and risk more serious incidents in the process. This isn’t a game or a reality show: This is the lives of hundreds of millions of people, and potentially the human race, hanging in the balance. Anything that raises the risk of nuclear war, however remote, should be terrifying. This is not the kind of thing you leave to amateurs — yet that is exactly what the Republican Party has chosen to do this week in Cleveland. Even if you think that everything Trump has done to date — the authoritarianism, the racism, the ignorance, the petty childishness — isn’t disqualifying, this should be. If this man could make a nuclear war somewhat more likely even before he takes office, imagine what he could do with his finger on America’s nuclear trigger.

## CP

#### Text: The United States federal government should openly clarify that it would defend Taiwan against unprovoked Chinese aggression and reinforce its military capability to defend Taiwan.

#### The counterplan deters China from acting aggressively toward Taiwan — U.S. strategic ambiguity is the only reason they might miscalculate and invade.

Colby and Slocombe 16 — Elbridge Colby, Robert M. Gates Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute of Strategic Studies, formerly served as a Policy Advisor to the Secretary of Defense’s Representative for the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, as an Expert Advisor to the Congressional Strategic Posture Commission, as a staff member on the President’s Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the U.S. Regarding WMD, with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, and with the State Department, recipient of the Exceptional Public Service Award from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and of the Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards from the Department of State, holds a J.D. from Yale Law School, and Walter Slocombe, Senior Counsel at Caplin & Drysdale—a law firm, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, former Senior Advisor for National Defense in the Coalition Provisional Authority for Iraq, former Member of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School, 2016 (“U.S. ‘Ambiguity’ on Taiwan Is Dangerous,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 23rd, Available Online at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-ambiguity-on-taiwan-is-dangerous-1464022837>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

If China were to attack Taiwan, would American forces come to the island’s defense? It is hard to know because the U.S. maintains a policy of “strategic ambiguity” concerning how it would respond. It’s time for that to change. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 states only that the U.S. would regard such an attack as of “grave concern,” and only commits the U.S. to maintaining the ability to defend the island. This is a much less firm commitment than the U.S. offers in NATO and to allies Japan and South Korea. But the U.S. stakes in defending a democratic Taiwan and maintaining the credibility of the overall U.S. alliance structure are no less significant. The benefits of this approach long outweighed its risks. It preserved flexibility, was less offensive to Beijing and signaled to Taipei the need to tread gingerly on sovereignty issues. Beijing meanwhile appeared content to try honey rather than vinegar in coaxing Taiwan toward unification. Moreover, China lacked the military capabilities to subjugate Taiwan. The U.S. was so dominant militarily that Beijing’s only plausible course was to tolerate the status quo. But this calculus no longer obtains. The military balance is shifting in Beijing’s favor. Sources as diverse as Taiwan’s government and the RAND Corporation have publicly judged that within a few short years any U.S. defense of the island will be extremely demanding. Blocking a Chinese assault will still be possible for the U.S., but it will be harder, riskier and more costly than before. This means that the situation is changing from one in which Beijing would have been foolhardy to attack Taiwan to one in which it may seem an increasingly viable option. Beijing may even deem it necessary to keep alive its ambition of uniting the island with the mainland. Polls show that Taiwan’s residents overwhelmingly prefer the status quo or independence, and fewer identify as Chinese as time goes on. Given that there are already substantial economic links with the mainland, why should Beijing expect support for unification to grow suddenly, particularly in light of China’s turn away from liberalization under Xi Jinping and the discouraging example of Hong Kong? Thus, sooner or later, China may decide that Taiwan is very unlikely to simply fall into its lap—and will be increasingly tempted to turn to coercion. This emerging situation is particularly dangerous because ambiguity can heighten the likelihood of war when military strength becomes more evenly balanced. History is replete with examples of countries starting wars, even against much stronger powers, based on the belief that their strength or resolve over some issue was greater than that of their foes, and that their opponents wouldn’t fight at all or hard enough. Thus Kim Il Sung invaded South Korea in 1950, with Soviet and Chinese support, believing the U.S. wouldn’t come to the South’s defense. Beijing could make a similar miscalculation about U.S. resolve over Taiwan. It might well assess U.S. ambiguity as indicating that, confronted with a tough and costly fight over Taiwan, the U.S. would decide not to go to war or not to fight hard enough to prevent Beijing from achieving its core goals. This perilous situation will only grow worse as China gets stronger. For the sake of deterrence and stability, it is essential that Beijing understand that using force would mean a stout U.S. intervention. To contribute to this deterrent, the U.S. should pursue two paths. First, it should reinforce its military capability to defend Taiwan, impose costs on China and lessen the costs and risks to itself of doing so. Second, Washington should bolster the credibility of its “no use of force” policy by making clearer the conditions under which it would fight. In particular, it should openly and forthrightly specify that the U.S. would defend Taiwan against unprovoked Chinese aggression. Clarifying these circumstances would reduce the risk that Beijing would think it can assault Taiwan without triggering a serious U.S. defense of the island. Washington should also press Taipei to upgrade its own defenses and to avoid actions that could justifiably be seen as unreasonable. The most prominent element of this must be political restraint and coordination with Washington by Taipei. At the same time, it is unreasonable for the people of Taiwan to expect Americans to be more vigorous in their defense than they are. As annual Chinese defense spending has ballooned in recent years, Taiwan’s has merely inched to $11 billion from $10 billion. Taiwan should commit to spending at least 2.5% of its GDP on defense (which is what South Korea spends in the face of a far less capable North Korea), up from about 2% today, and should shift its own defense investments from “shiny objects” like F-16s toward capabilities more closely tied to repelling a Chinese attack, such as anti-ship and anti-air systems, mines and special forces. Clarifying U.S. commitments to Taiwan would be uncomfortable, but continued ambiguity risks China thinking that the gains from starting a war are worth the candle, and America either balking at the moment of crisis or fighting a war it might very well have deterred. Clarity would be controversial but safer.

## T

#### Interpretation - Engagement must be unconditional—it’s *distinct* from conditional policies.

Smith 5 — Karen E. Smith, Professor of International Relations and Director of the European Foreign Policy Unit at the London School of Economics, 2005 (“Engagement and conditionality: incompatible or mutually reinforcing?,” *Global Europe: New Terms of Engagement*, May, Available Online at http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/24863/ichaptersection\_singledocument/273de787-0ede-4c7e-a001-94d09f793f1b/en/03\_Conditionality.pdf, Accessed 07-25-2013, p. 23)

First, a few definitions. ‘Engagement’ is a foreign policy strategy of building close ties with the government and/or civil society and/or business community of another state. The intention of this strategy is to undermine illiberal political and economic practices, and socialise government and other domestic actors into more liberal ways. Most cases of engagement entail primarily building economic links, and encouraging trade and investment in particular. Some observers have variously labelled this strategy one of interdependence, or of ‘oxygen’: economic activity leads to positive political consequences.19

‘Conditionality’, in contrast, is the linking, by a state or international organisation, of perceived benefits to another state (such as aid or trade concessions) to the fulfilment of economic and/or political conditions. ‘Positive conditionality’ entails promising benefits to a state if it fulfils the conditions; ‘negative conditionality’ involves reducing, suspending, or terminating those benefits if the state violates the conditions (in other words, applying sanctions, or a strategy of ‘asphyxiation’).20 To put it simply, engagement implies ties, but with no strings attached; conditionality attaches the strings. In another way of looking at it, engagement is more of a bottom-up strategy to induce change in another country, conditionality more of a top-down strategy

#### Violation- Their affirmative is conditional

#### Vote negative- conditional affirmatives kill negative ground because they can claim to get advantages by China rejecting the offer and spike out of disad links by saying they don’t actually increase engagement- kills clash and makes for disproportionate aff wins

## Solvency

#### China Says *No* to the grand bargain:

#### Their solvency advocate concedes

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)

The probability that China would accept the grand bargain might be low, but neither the history that Kim reviews nor current Chinese thinking make this a certainty. As I [End Page 188] note in my article, there are reasons for doubting that China would make the required concessions: China’s positions on its long-standing disputes in the South China and East China Seas appear to have hardened over the past decade. Meanwhile, Chinese nationalism continues to grow, and President Xi Jinping appears committed to increasing China’s global prestige, which could rule out geopolitical compromises.

#### Bad Offer — China thinks they *already own* Taiwan.

Lingwall 15 — Noah Lingwall, Student at the Schreyer Honors College and Paterno Fellow majoring in History and Global & International Studies at the Pennsylvania State University, Intern at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, 2015 (“The Taiwan Problem: If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It,” *The Diplomat*, August 8th, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/the-taiwan-problem-if-it-aint-broke-dont-fix-it/>, Accessed 06-30-2016)

Myth #2: Taiwan Can Serve as a Bargaining Chip

The effectiveness of a bargaining chip is predicated on whether or not the other party fears losing control of that bargaining chip. From China’s point of view, its claim over Taiwan is indisputable. So why would China make concessions over a bargaining chip it believes it already owns? China already has a powerful economic hold over Taiwan. In addition to economic interdependence, the past several years have also witnessed an increase in direct flights and sea transportation between the two nations. Businesspeople commonly make one-day trips across the Taiwan Strait. An effective unification is already well underway in the economic realm.

In addition, the Taiwanese prefer the status quo of de facto, but not de jure independence. Repeated opinion polls indicate that while more Taiwanese favor independence over unification, a majority of Taiwan’s people prefer to maintain the status quo.

Meanwhile, the threat of Chinese military force acts to dissuade Taiwan from attempting to break away from the mainland. As the Taiwanese gaze across the strait, they are greeted by a massive arsenal of 1,600 ground-to-ground missiles. Chinese anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) capabilities act as a potential deterrent to U.S. involvement in the event of an armed conflict between China and Taiwan. This military mismatch between the two sides serves as a potent deterrence to Taiwan attempting a hasty move for independence or even using the threat as a bargaining chip with the Chinese. China is also an increasing presence in Taiwan’s political system by mobilizing support for China-friendly politicians and making extensive donations to pro-China political actors. All in all, the notion of Taiwan as a “bargaining chip” fails to take into account China’s existing influence over Taiwan and complicates the possibility of a grand bargain.

#### Bad Deal — China won’t agree to the “*accept U.S. presence*” condition.

Lingwall 15 — Noah Lingwall, Student at the Schreyer Honors College and Paterno Fellow majoring in History and Global & International Studies at the Pennsylvania State University, Intern at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, 2015 (“The Taiwan Problem: If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It,” *The Diplomat*, August 8th, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/the-taiwan-problem-if-it-aint-broke-dont-fix-it/>, Accessed 06-30-2016)

Myth #3: A “Grand Bargain” Equals “Grand Concessions”

While a U.S.-China grand bargain is heralded as an ideal tactic to secure crucial U.S. interests, one must evaluate the feasibility of the United States’ demands. First, a grand bargain requires China to accept U.S. military bases and alliances in the Asia-Pacific. China’s recent move toward a more “assertive diplomacy” contrasts sharply with the United States’ ambitions to retain its regional power. Chinese President Xi Jinping’s call for a “new type of great power relations” presaged China’s turn toward greater assertiveness on the world stage. The proposal, presented to U.S. President Barack Obama in June 2013, represents China’s first major attempt to set the agenda in U.S.-China relations, reversing China’s historical trend of bowing to U.S. interests and marking a key shift in U.S.-China relations.

Tensions between the United States and China over China’s artificial island construction in the South China Sea indicate that China is loath to accept U.S. interference in the region. Throughout the past several months, U.S. surveillance planes and warships have patrolled the hotly contested South China Sea in an effort to protect freedom of navigation. Verbal exchanges between the two nations have stoked the conflict’s flames. U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter responded to China’s territorial claims by calling for an “immediate and lasting halt to land reclamation by any claimant.” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying responded by reasserting her nation’s rightful claim to disputed territories and condemning U.S. actions as “provocations and instigations.” Hua’s sharp rebuke of U.S. interference in the Asia-Pacific supports China’s commitment to more aggressive diplomacy. These types of interactions suggest that a U.S.-China “grand bargain” could falter on the basis of China’s distaste for U.S. hegemony.

#### Won’t accept international arbitration- ignored the June ruling

#### More Info Not Needed — tensions are the result of disagreements, not misunderstandings.

Wang 12 — Yaping Wang, Program Manager of the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ph.D. Candidate in International Relations at the University of Virginia, holds an M.A. in International Studies from George Washington University, 2012 (“Is U.S-China Distrust Inevitable?,” *The Diplomat*, May 1st, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2012/05/is-u-s-china-distrust-inevitable/>, Accessed 07-24-2016)

The tone of U.S.-China relations over the past couple of years is arguably encapsulated in two sets of views: those of American commentators and opinion leaders, who claim that China is becoming more assertive or even aggressive, and their Chinese counterparts, who argue that by “pivoting” back to Asia the United States is seeking to constrain China’s rise.

Both sides frequently dispute the others’ analysis. However, a recent Brookings report by Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi underscores how entrenched these views are, and just how prickly things are ahead of this week’s Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Beijing.

The logic behind the report is that “each side can better manage the issue of strategic distrust if its leaders have confidence that they have an accurate picture of the way the other leadership thinks on the issues that produce this distrust.” Based on this logic, the core of the report tries to understand each side’s point of view, with the aim of increasing mutual understanding. However, if one looks closely into the issues discussed in the report, it’s not clear whether it’s actually a lack of understanding so much as specific disagreements that are at the root of the distrust.

U.S. arms sales to Taiwan provide a good example. The report listed this issue as a source of Chinese suspicion of U.S. intentions, and tries to reduce mistrust by clarifying positions on both sides:

“U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan are viewed in Washington and Taipei as a necessary ingredient for sustaining the confidence of U.S. support in Taipei necessary for Taipei to continue to develop wide ranging cross-Strait relations. Those same sales in Beijing are viewed as confirming American arrogance and determination to interfere in China’s domestic affairs and to prevent peaceful unification from occurring, thereby harming a clearly-articulated Chinese core interest.”

Be that as it may, these positions aren’t unknown to the leaders of both sides. In fact, after regular wrangling over this issue, each side knows very well the other’s thinking. With this in mind, it’s clear mistrust arises not from a lack of understanding, but more from fundamental disagreements intrinsic to the differences between the two countries’ political institutions, value systems and geostrategic interests.

Likewise, China’s concerned response to U.S. reconnaissance activities near China’s coast, and U.S. suspicion of a Chinese anti-access and area denial strategy, is listed in the report as another source of mistrust. Despite claims of freedom of navigation, U.S. surveillance activities along China’s coast are largely driven by its suspicion of China’s military intentions and capabilities. Chinese leaders understand U.S. thinking on this, while U.S. leaders also know that China is sensitive to the security of its coastal areas. These “mutual understandings” can be attested by official and unofficial pronouncements and publications on both sides. Nevertheless, both sides still carry on their potentially provocative activities. This is clearly not because they are unaware of each other’s thinking on the matter, but because they just don’t agree with each other, and both want to change the other’s behavior. In essence, their fundamental interests are at odds.

To be sure, misunderstandings, misconceptions or miscalculations between the two countries do exist and are something that can be worked on. But mistrust between the United States and China, especially when stemming from military and security issues, is inextricably intertwined with history, differences in political systems and values, and sometimes irreconcilable conflicts of interests. Such differences defy resolution unless mindsets or circumstances change. When the report asked the central question of “what array of military deployments and normal operations will permit China to defend its core security interests and at the same time allow America to continue to meet fully its obligations to its allies and friends in the region,” the answer essentially suggests that no middle ground has yet been found.

#### 6. Intentions Impossible To Know — states can’t discern other states’ intentions.

Rosato 15 — Sebastian Rosato, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, former Fellow at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago, 2014/2015 (“The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 3, Winter, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

In this article, I evaluate the major optimistic arguments that great powers can discern the intentions of their peers with confidence.20 One set of arguments holds that states can deduce others’ current intentions from certain domestic characteristics such as their foreign policy goals, ideology, or regime type. Another focuses on behavior and maintains that states can infer current intentions by examining their counterparts’ arms policies, membership in international institutions, or past actions in the security realm.21 A final set of arguments explains why intentions are unlikely to change and thus why current designs are good predictors of future plans.

I conclude that these optimistic claims are unpersuasive. Great powers cannot confidently assess the current intentions of others based on their domestic characteristics or behavior, and they are even less sure when it comes to estimating their peers’ future intentions. This is not to say that states’ features and actions provide no insight into their designs. At best, however, they allow for marginal reductions in uncertainty.

#### 7. Things change- plan only reveals Xi in this particular political climate- not China’s overall strategy

#### 8. You can’t tell a state’s intentions purely by evaluating its actions.

Rosato 15 — Sebastian Rosato, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, former Fellow at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago, 2014/2015 (“The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 3, Winter, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

Past actions and intentions

Observers cannot reliably deduce a great power’s intentions from its past actions. For starters, a state’s past actions may not be an accurate reflection of its [End Page 83] plans at the time. A great power may have had aggressive designs toward its neighbor, but acted peacefully because it did not see an opportunity to threaten or use force. On the other hand, a great power may have planned to remain at peace with its neighbor, but ended up going to war because it became involved in a crisis it could not control. To the extent that past and present designs are related, this means that past actions are a poor guide to current intentions as well.

#### 9. No political will- contentious china policies rarely pass through congress

#### 10. China is a revisionist power — Glaser is wrong.

Easley 16 — Leif-Eric Easley, Assistant Professor in the Division of International Studies at Ewha University, Research Fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, former Northeast Asian History Fellow at the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University, holds a Ph.D. 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)

Points of friction in U.S.-China relations abound—from cyber espionage and human rights to trade disputes and financial governance. Abandoning Taiwan will not stop Chinese military modernization, antiaccess/area denial development, or the targeting of U.S. bases in Japan and South Korea with Chinese missiles.11 The United States has numerous reasons for conducting surveillance and freedom of navigation operations, so those activities Glaser identifies as irritants to China would not end, even if Taiwan were no longer a subject of disagreement. Foreign policy ambition in Beijing has outgrown the 1950s and 1990s cross-strait crises; Chinese internal debates tend to paint the United States as a global competitor, benchmark U.S. global capabilities, and derive legitimacy from contrasting Chinese political values with “Western” or “universal” values.12 Glaser does not mention Chinese efforts at building up alternative institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, Boao Forum for Asia, and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, or China using issues of historical animosity to drive a wedge between Japan and South Korea. He thus underestimates the apparent Chinese strategy of not directly confronting the United States globally, while attempting to dilute U.S. alliances in Asia, pursuing a Chinese-centered regional architecture, and changing the status quo in maritime areas without going so far as to trigger conflict or a coherent balancing coalition.13

## Taiwan

#### US won’t get drawn into a fight over Taiwan

Mearsheimer 14 — John J. Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Program on International Security Policy at the University of Chicago, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University, 2014 (“Say Goodbye to Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, March/April, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931?page=show>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

While the United States has good reasons to want Taiwan as part of the balancing coalition it will build against China, there are also reasons to think this relationship is not sustainable over the long term. For starters, at some point in the next decade or so it will become impossible for the United States to help Taiwan defend itself against a Chinese attack. Remember that we are talking about a China with much more military capability than it has today.

In addition, geography works in China’s favor in a major way, simply because Taiwan is so close to the Chinese mainland and so far away from the United States. When it comes to a competition between China and the United States over projecting military power into Taiwan, China wins hands down. Furthermore, in a fight over Taiwan, American policy makers would surely be reluctant to launch major attacks against Chinese forces on the mainland, for fear they might precipitate nuclear escalation. This reticence would also work to China’s advantage.

#### Economic ties and MAD checks

Gelb 13 — Leslie H. Gelb, President Emeritus and Board Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, former Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and columnist for the *New York Times*, served as Assistant Secretary of State in the Carter Administration and was the recipient of the Distinguished Honor Award—the State Department’s highest honor, served as Director of Policy Planning and Arms Control for International Security Affairs at the Department of Defense where he was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award—the Defense Department’s highest honor, holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University, 2013 (“Is a military conflict between China and the United States possible in the future?,” *Ask CFR Experts*—a Council on Foreign Relations blog, Question submitted by Josh Wartel from Lake Braddock Secondary School, September 9th, Available Online at <http://www.cfr.org/china/military-conflict-between-china-united-states-possible-future/p31361?cid=rss-fullfeed-is_a_military_conflict_between-090913>, Accessed 09-12-2013)

Is a military conflict between China and the United States possible in the future?

There is almost never a time when people do not worry about war between major powers. The history here is not a happy one. But there are good reasons to expect a better outcome in the 21st century—as long as both sides are alert and careful.

The stakes are much too high for either Beijing or Washington to expect direct military confrontations. Two-way trade and investment are quite high. China holds almost $1.2 trillion in American debt. By contrast, during the Cold War, the United States had virtually no economic ties with the Soviet Union—and both sides still went out of their way to avoid war because of the dangers of escalation into nuclear war. The nightmare of nuclear war hangs over the Chinese-American relationship today. It is clear neither side wants to come anywhere near this ultimate danger.

None of this is to say that both sides will not continue to build up their military capability. No country is adding to its military punch faster than China. But it is still far behind the United States in usable military capability, that is, force that can be applied effectively and decidedly in various situations. Chinese military strength is limited almost entirely to lands and seas bordering its own territory. The United States is still the only global military power.

And it is difficult to see what Beijing might calculate is worth a war or even the risk of war. It has boundary disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines and others in the South China Sea, and with Japan up north. Troubles should be expected there, and China will certainly be testing Washington's will in both places. Chinese leaders, however, continue to focus on their nation's economic development, and war would certainly set that back.

#### No War — China won’t sacrifice its economy to annex Taiwan.

Cole 15 — J. Michael Cole, Associate Researcher at the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the China Policy Institute at the University of Nottingham, China Correspondent for *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Senior Member and Editor in Chief at the Thinking Taiwan Foundation—a Taiwanese English-language publication founded by current Taiwanese President Dr. Tsai Ing-wen that provides nonpartisan analysis and commentary, former Deputy News Chief and Reporter for the *Taipei Times*, former Analyst with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, holds a Master’s in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada, 2015 (“If the Unthinkable Occurred: America Should Stand Up to China over Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, May 7th, Available Online at http://nationalinterest.org/feature/if-the-unthinkable-occured-america-should-stand-china-over-12825?page=show, Accessed 06-30-2016)

Ironically, White seems almost convinced that China would be willing to engage in nuclear war over Taiwan, an assumption that is both untested and portrays the leadership in Beijing as a bunch of deranged nihilists. For all its faults, and despite the official rhetoric depicting Taiwan as a “core issue,” it is in my view unlikely that the Chinese Communist Party would unleash its nuclear arsenal over the matter of Taiwan; in fact, I would advance that it is probably unwilling to gamble China’s economy over Taiwan by launching major military operations—all the more so if there is a promise that such a course of action would result in a concerted response on the part of the international community. The logic of deterrence is that it diminishes the likelihood that the international community would be faced with the maximalist options given us by White. (The bluster only works if we believe it—and Beijing wants us to believe it just like the good professor seems to do—as winning without a fight is a foundational element of Chinese military strategy.)

#### Turn — the plan causes China-Taiwan war. Taiwan won’t go down without a fight.

Roy 12 — Denny Roy, Senior Fellow and Supervisor of the POSCO Fellowship Program at the East-West Center—a U.S.-based institution for public diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region, former Professor at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, former Faculty Member in the National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School, former Research Fellow with the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University in Canberra, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago, 2012 (“Why the U.S. shouldn't abandon Taiwan,” *Time*, December 6th, Available Online at http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/12/06/why-the-u-s-shouldnt-abandon-taiwan/, Accessed 06-28-2016)

Advocates of abandoning Taiwan may erroneously believe that halting U.S. military and diplomatic support for Taipei would reduce tensions in East Asia. This is certainly what Beijing would have us believe. According to Chinese officials and commentators, U.S. assistance to Taipei is all that stands in the way of peaceful unification, and without it the people of Taiwan would stop resisting and accept Beijing’s terms for unification. This premise, however, ignores an important reality: the main obstacle to unification is not U.S. arms sales, but rather Taiwanese nationalism and the wish of nearly all Taiwan’s people not to be ruled by the Chinese Communist Party. Thus, withdrawal of U.S. support would not necessarily lead to a peaceful resolution of the cross-Strait imbroglio. The opposite outcome is at least as likely. Deterrence against an attack by the People’s Liberation Army would be weakened, while Taiwan’s people may well choose to fight rather than capitulate.

#### No escalation- China is pushing for a KMT victory- that resolves tensions

#### No DPP Tensions — their authors are scaremongering.

Thim and Turton 16 — Michal Thim, Research Fellow at the Association for International Affairs (Prague), Member of CIMSEC—The Center for International Maritime Security, Asia-Pacific Desk Contributing Analyst for Wikistrat, Postgraduate Student in Taiwan Studies at the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Nottingham, previously a Graduate Student in Asia-Pacific Studies and Taiwan Studies at National Chengchi University, holds an M.A. in Political Science from Charles University in Prague, and Michael Turton, writer, blogger, and teacher based in Taichung, Taiwan, author of *The View from Taiwan*—a popular scholarly blog about Taiwanese politics, 2016 (“It's Not Time to Start Worrying About Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, June 23rd, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/its-not-time-start-worrying-about-taiwan-16702?page=show>, Accessed 07-11-2016)

Predictably, the DPP victory in 2016 has led to much scaremongering over the possibility of renewed “tensions.” Frequently cited evidence for “renewed tensions” is the deportation of alleged scammers from Kenya to China, the renewal of ties between Beijing and Gambia, and claims that cross-Strait tourism has been slashed. The first probably had nothing to do with Tsai Ing-wen (Beijing and Nairobi determined how to handle the case a year before she was elected), the second is more likely related to China’s policies in North Africa toward Islamic militancy, and as for the third, the number of Chinese tourists to Taiwan rose in February and again in April. Beijing has threatened to cut negotiations and perhaps not accept visits from DPP officials, purely symbolic moves. Beijing could concretely punish Taiwan, but its available options all harm China and the political and economic relationships Beijing has carefully cultivated in Taipei. It is far more likely that Beijing—like so many other observers—does not know what to do.

#### Empirically disproven- recent missile accident should have precipitated war- proves they default to diplomacy

#### No SCS conflict – China will resort to diplomacy and negotiations – expert consensus

Baculinao 16 – Eric Baculinao, Reporter for NBC News, Jan 24th 2016(“China will not initiate military conflict over Island Disputes: Expert,” NBC News, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/china/china-will-not-initiate-military-conflict-over-island-disputes-expert-n501851>, Accessed 6/29/16, AJ)

BEIJING — China will not start a war over disputed islands in the South China Sea amid recent muscle-flexing, experts with close links to the country's government told NBC News.

"We will not initiate military conflict to recover islands illegally occupied by other countries," said Wu Shicun, the former foreign affairs chief of Hainan province, an island in the South China Sea. "Our stand is to resort to negotiations [with] the countries directly involved, to resolve the territorial and maritime disputes."

Wu is the president of the National Institute of South China Sea Studies and acts as a sort of unofficial spokesman on the issue for the government of President Xi Jinping.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea, including reclaimed coral reefs known as the Spratly Islands that sit in an area thought to be rich in oil and gas reserves. Beijing has built runways, seaports and other facilities on the Spratlys.

The U.S. — as well as Vietnam, the Philippines and Japan, which have overlapping claims with China — condemn Beijing's moves in the region. Washington has vowed to defend freedom of passage through the waters.

"Make no mistake, the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows, as we do around the world, and the South China Sea is not and will not be an exception," Defense Secretary Ash Carter said on October 13.

On Oct. 27, a U.S. destroyer sailed within 12 nautical miles of the Spratlys in an open challenge to Beijing.

Related: China Accuses U.S. of 'Serious Military Provocation'

Shi Yinhong, a senior foreign policy scholar at Renmin University of China and foreign policy adviser to the government, agreed with Wu that Beijing was unlikely to "launch unprovoked war."

"Other countries have also said the same, and this is all helpful for peace and stability in the South China Sea," he said. "There will be measures to slow things down. China will adopt a new diplomacy to try to lower tensions with the U.S. and other relevant countries."

Fiery Cross reef, located in the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, on Sept. 3, 2015. Handout / Reuters

While insisting that China "will not initiate hostilities," Wu stuck by Beijing's line that building on the reclaimed Spratlys was "within China's sovereign rights," denying a Pentagon report that they could extend China's military reach.

"Any military facilities we build on them will be to secure the safety of Chinese personnel and installations involved," Wu said. "Any ordinary person can tell that these tiny outposts cannot play a major role in any military conflict."

Being would be open to sharing oil and gas resources under what he called "joint development" agreements in areas under Chinese control, he said.

According to Wu, a 1999 incident should be seen as a sign that China would not resort to violence over such disputes. That was when Philippines deliberately grounded a warship on the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratlys to claim the atoll. The Philippines keeps a handful of marines on the wrecked and rusting warship to this day.

"China has been exercising great restraint," Hong Lei, the spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry told NBC News when asked about the ongoing dispute on Second Thomas Shoal. "We maintain that relevant disputes should be resolved between parties directly concerned through dialogues and consultation on the basis of historical facts and international laws. China and other countries should work together to maintain peace and stability of the region."

#### No ECS War- the US can descalate

CFR, 16

Council on Foreign Relations, 2016 (“China’s Maritime Disputes,” CFR, February 2016, Accessible Online at: <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/chinas-maritime-disputes/p31345#!/>, Accessed 6/30/16, DSF)

If confrontation were to involve Japan in the East China Sea or the Philippines in the South China Sea, the United States would be obligated to consider military action under defense treaties. Experts note that Washington's defense commitments to Tokyo are stronger than those to Manila. Under its treaty obligations, the United States would have to defend Japan in the case of an armed attack; the U.S.-Philippine treaty holds both nations accountable for mutual support in the event of an “armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties.” Military action would represent a last resort, and would depend on the scale and circumstances of the escalation. In the event of armed conflict breaking out between China and Japan, the United States could also use crisis communication mechanisms outlined in the U.S.-China Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (PDF) to encourage a stand-down of forces and facilitate communication between Tokyo and Beijing. Verbal declarations that communicate the seriousness of the dispute and convey support for an ally, as well as offers of military assistance, can also serve as essential “coercive de-escalation” measures during a crisis.