

American Military Posture in East Asia: With a Special Focus on Taiwan

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Abstract

We attempt to understand American military posture in East Asia within the context of a US-Japan-China-South Korea-Taiwan pyramid, where the US plays the role of benign leader at the apex. With the demise of the Soviet Union, China has become the only power to challenge not only regionally but also globally. Equipped with a realist predisposition, the Bush administration appears apt to keep a watchful eye on the emerging competitor China, who has alarmed both the US and her ally Japan during the 1995-96 missile crises against Taiwan. With this strategic understanding in mind, we will seek to allude to some military arrangements contemplated by the US. Efforts will be made to examine five official documents already made to the public since President George W. Bush's inauguration, including his own *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, and the Department of Defense's *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, *Nuclear Posture Review*, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, and *Annual Report on the Military Power of the Peoples' Republic of China*. Before our conclusions, we recapitulate the US policy toward Taiwan within our broad framework.

Keywords: United States, East Asia, Taiwan, military posture, foreign policy

We will build our defenses beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge.

We will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength.

George W. Bush (2001/1/20)

Introduction

In this study, we attempt to understand American military posture in East Asia within the context of a US-Japan-China-South Korea-Taiwan pyramid, where the US plays the role of benign leader at the apex. With the demise of the Soviet Union, China has become the only power to challenge not only regionally but also globally. Equipped with a realist predisposition, the Bush administration appears apt to keep a watchful eye on the emerging competitor China, who has alarmed both the US and her ally Japan during the 1995-96 missile crises against Taiwan. In a recent meeting of the Security Consultative Committee, so-called two-plus-two meeting, the US and Japan formally list “peaceful resolution of the issues concerning the Taiwan Strait” as one of their “common strategic objectives.” (DoS, 2005)

With this strategic understanding in mind, we will seek to allude to some military arrangements contemplated by the US. Efforts will be made to examine five official documents already made to the public since President George W. Bush’s inauguration, including his own *the National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2001), and the Department of Defense’s *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (2001), *Nuclear Posture Review* (2002a), *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (2002b), and *Annual Report on the Military Power of the Peoples’ Republic of China* (2002c). Before our conclusions, we recapitulate the US policy toward Taiwan within our broad framework.

Strategic Predispositions

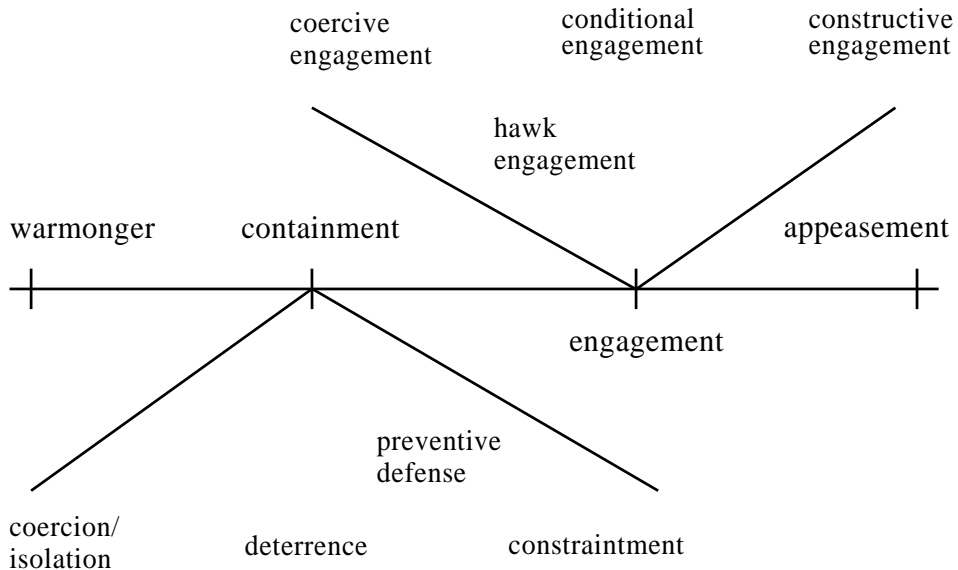


Figure 1: Spectrum of Strategic Predisposition

In the traditional literature of International Relations, two epistemologically rationalistic paradigms have been competing with one another for domination: while Realism/Neo-Realism would emphasize the rationale of national interests, security, and power, and thus stress balance-of-power in international anarchy, Idealism/ Liberalism would focus on the importance of international norms, institutions, and cooperation. It is therefore tempting to grossly interpret American foreign policy behavior under Republican and Democrat presidents into realist and liberal ones respectively. However, in their policy application, these two ideal types are practically inadequate in the sense that there is no straightforward isomorphic division between Republican and Democrat administrations along the spectrum of

strategic predisposition. Particularly, the analytic distinction between containment and engagement may fade into vagueness as the presidents may find themselves inescapably entrapped to adopt a nonpartisan posture (Figure 1).

For instance, while the Democrat Clinton would feel more attuned to all sorts of strategies under the umbrella of engagement, from constructive engagement to coercive engagement, the Republican Bush may entertain a continuum of containment in all clothes, from coercion/isolation to constraintment, to borrow the term from Segal (2000). It is therefore not surprising to discover that general external orientations of both Democrat and Republican would at times converge when the sets of engagement and containment intersect with each other, culminating into the seemingly oxymoron of hawk engagement/preventive defense identified by Cha (2002).

In practice, it was the Democrat Clinton who had sent two carriers to the Taiwan Straits during the 1995-96 missile crises, which would be considered disharmonious, if not antithetical, to his own operational code or belief system. Similarly, we would not be surprised if the Republican Bush should venture out of the deterrence/defense baseline and thus choose to adopt a constraintment gesture, let us say, in order to fortify homeland security, especially in the aftermath of the September 11 at home.

Facing this analytic flux and related theoretic/paradigmatic deficiency that favors parsimonious explanations, Katzenstein and Okawara (2001) recommend an “eclectic” Realist-Liberal perspective that would explain seemingly disparate, if not contradictory, US strategies on different issues toward Japan, that is military alliance and economic competition.¹ Nonetheless, their perspective

¹ Similarly, Katzenstein and Okawara (2001: 178-79) declare that this “double-barreled,” rather than “synthesis,” approach may successfully explain how Japan has so far attempted to constraint China through engagement while remain ambiguous on Taiwan.

fails to specify the conditions when a state actor like the US would take a unified or eclectic approach. Instead, we would argue that a more fruitful complement to the Realist/Liberal dichotomy is to go beyond the positivist epistemology and embrace an emerging reflective Constructive lens underscoring that ideas and values decide national identities and interest, which in turn determine state behavior (Copeland, 2000).

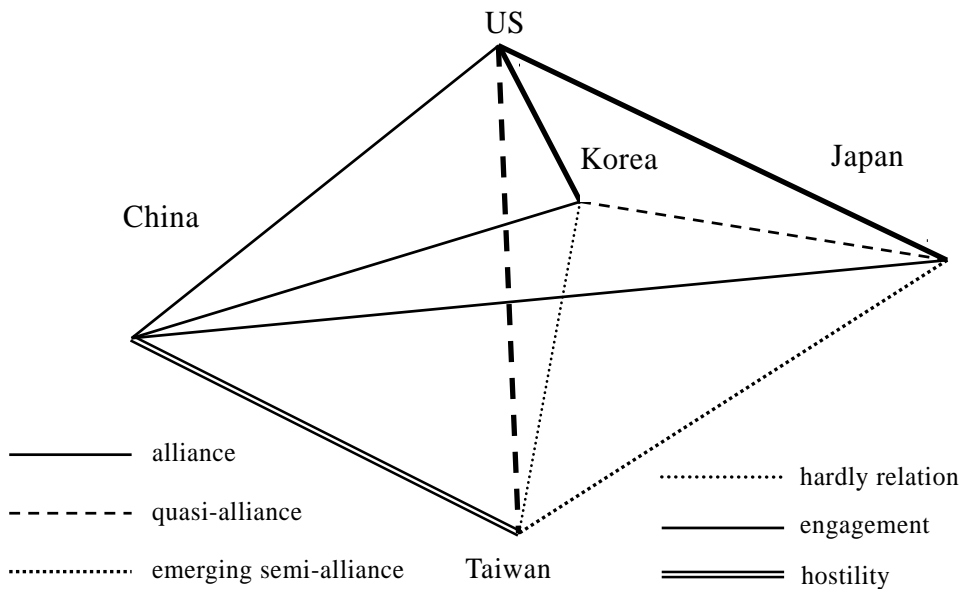


Figure 2: Pyramid Relationships in East Asia

In this study, we perceive the US as a lone superpower resolute to uphold a capitalistic and democratic world order in the Post-Cold War era. Facing potential challenge from China both globally and regionally, the US seems steadfastly determined to retain its hegemonic status, especially in East Asia, rather than to share the condominium with China and Japan, or to retreat from the Asian-Pacific region and become merely a balancer.² With this self-

² For these alternative strategies, see Khalizad et al. (2001: 45-46).

identity in mind, US foreign policy and strategic considerations would be juxtaposed against a pyramid (Figure 2) in East Asia, where Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are enlisted to form, in a minimum, a defense shield, or/and, to the maximum, an offensive bow against China although both engagement and containment disguises may be alternatively employed.

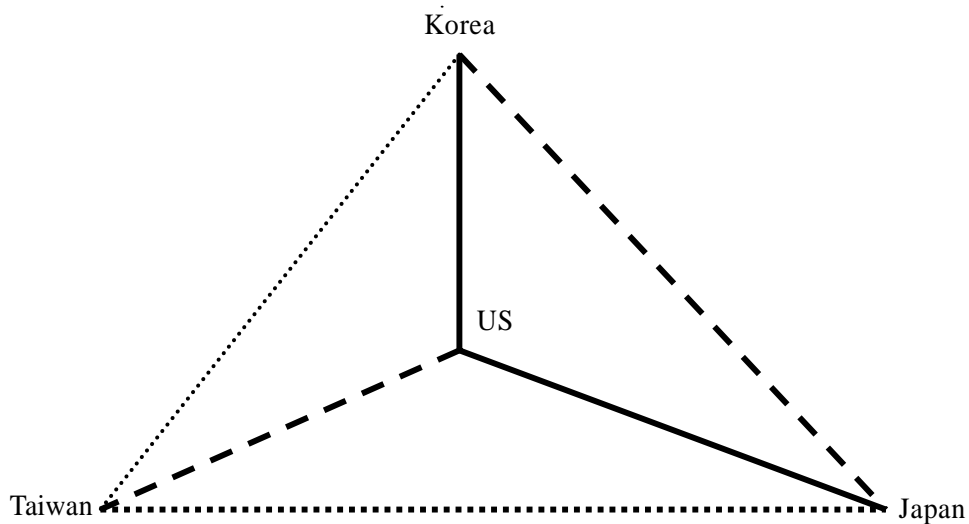


Figure 3 : Three East Asian Triangles

Embedded in this US-Japan-Korea-Taiwan strategic landscape are three interlocked triangular relationships composed of bilateral alliances, quasi-alliances, and some emerging semi-alliance,³ which mount to a US-centered quasi-multilateral security community in East Asia (Figure 3). So far, the US, Japan, Korea, and even Taiwan⁴ have disseminated symbolical and substantive

³ It is noted that there has been hardly any relation beyond economic ones observed between Korea and Taiwan so far.

⁴ In his inauguration speech on May 20th, 2000, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party president-elected Chen Shui-bian appealed to China for the so-called *Five No's* principle, that is, no declaring independence, no change of state title, no constitutional revision to

elements of engagement to placate China. Nonetheless, if China is determined to transform itself from a land power to a maritime power,⁵ efforts will be made to penetrate these strategic protective arrangements.

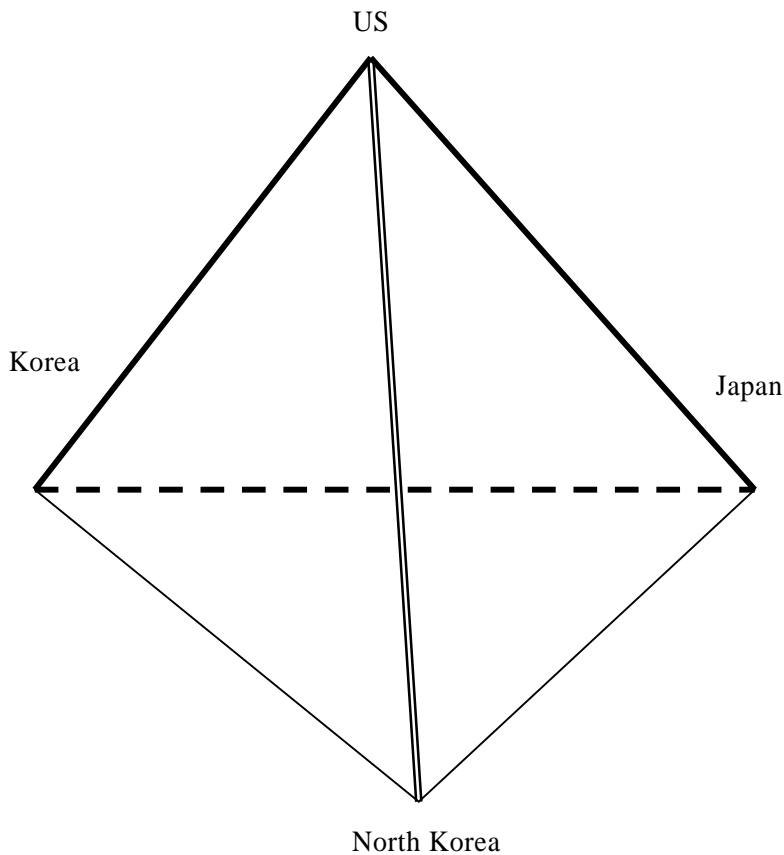


Figure 4: US-Japan-Korea Triangle vs. North Korea

institutionalize the *Two States Discourse* of former President Lee Teng-hui, no plebiscite for Taiwan's future, and no abolishing the *Guidelines for National Unification*. Furthermore, in his millennium speech on the New Year's Eve last year, President Chen pledged to embark on economic and cultural integrations with China, and to seek for a framework for perpetual peace and eventual political integration across the strait of Taiwan. For the text, see <http://www.president.gov.tw/php-bin/prez/showspeak.php4>.

⁵ See Ross (2000) for the distinction.

Among the three triangles, the US-Japan-Korea one is most robust (Figure 4). While the US has forged military alliance with Japan and South Korea (Korea, or Republic of Korea) in 1951 and 1953 respectively, the relationship between Japan and Korea have been reinforced not only by their common threats from North Korea, but also from their dependence on US military commitment. In what Cha's (2000) characterization as a "quasi-alliance," Japan and Korea would eschew their historical animosity and thus to enhance their relationship if their mutual perception of US determination is declining. This triangle would not be so solid in case when the two Koreas are unified and decide to collaborate with China to deter Japan's ascendance.

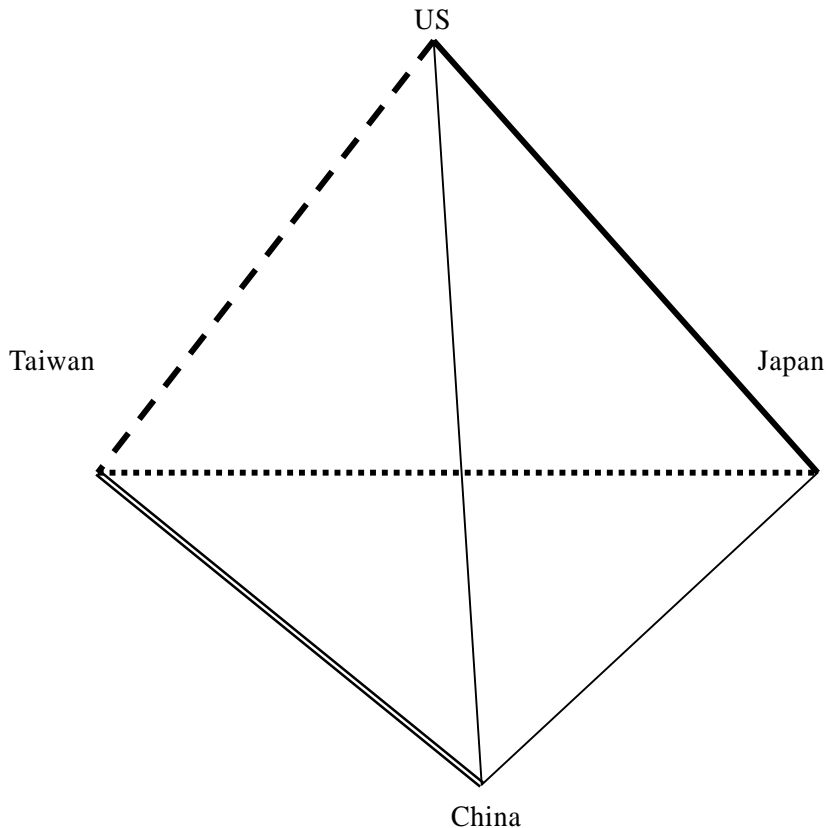


Figure 5: US-Japan-Taiwan Triangle vs. China

At first glance, the emerging US-Japan-Taiwan triad (Figure 5) may not be as firm as the above one since neither the US nor Japan maintains any formal relations with Taiwan for the past two decades. So far, while Taiwan has enjoyed a form of free association with the US under the *Taiwan Relations Act* (1979), military cooperation between them has progressively demonstrated an upgraded trend even though US official pronouncements may have appeared to wax and wane.

On the other hand, Japan has consistently stood aloof to Taiwan even though they shared colonial relations, though asymmetric, for half a century before the end of the war. The Native Taiwanese, some of whom still wholeheartedly harbor their romantic reminiscence of the good old days before the war,⁶ must have been distressed, if not humiliated, by Japanese selective amnesia and blindness. Moreover, some Mainlander Taiwanese, who themselves or whose immediate forebears were forced to take refuge in Taiwan after the Chinese Nationalists (Kuomintang, KMT) were defeated by the Communist Chinese (CCP) in 1949, would not shy away from their anti-Japanese sentiments lingering from the war memory.⁷ Any substantive improvement between Japan and Taiwan must rest on how they would reconcile their past. On the part of Taiwan, particularly, domestic politics in the form of ethnic competition needs to be de-linked with foreign policy making.

Nonetheless, after the 1995-96 missile crises in Taiwan Straits, both the US and Japan seemed to have finally realized that they no longer could afford tolerating a loophole in their defensive network against Chinese expansion

⁶ During the war, some Taiwanese who migrated to China, Manchuria, or South East Asia, would proud themselves as subjects of the Japanese Emperor and thus superior to the Chinese.

⁷ Until lately, Japan is still considered as Taiwan's second enemy next to China.

eastwards. The revised *Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation*⁸ promulgated in 1997 was perceived for military consolidation in order to maintain acceptable balance-of-power in East Asia, if not to contain China. Within this new configuration, Taiwan may probe the possibility to make great strides in forging some linkage with Japan in the form of quasi-alliance based on hitherto solid military alliance between the US and Japan. Of course, an emerging Japan-Taiwan collective defense bond, thus, may also help to upgrade current U.S. security commitment to Taiwan. However, affirmative US warrant is predicated on the condition that Taiwan is averse to political integration with China in any format, which has been jeopardized by Taiwan's recent single-minded overtures to court, if not to hedge, China.

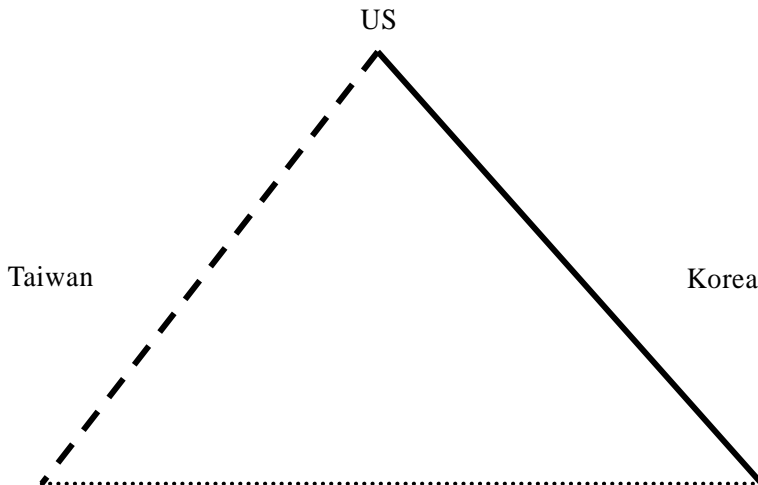


Figure 6: Embryo US-Korea-Taiwan Triangle

⁸ For the texts, see <http://www.mofa.gov.jp/region/n-america/us/security/guideline2.html>, particularly the portion on “**situation in areas surrounding Japan.**” For a general treatment of the security cooperation between Japan and the US, see Christensen (1999, 2001).

The weakest component in the US strategic contemplation in led East Asia is the missing US-Korea-Taiwan triangle (Figure 6). So far, there is hardly any diplomatic relation between South Korea and Taiwan, not to mention military one.⁹ Animosity between them is evidenced in lack of flag-carrying airlines between the two capitals since they broke off their formal relations in 1992. Sporadic competitions even between their own civilians would cause displeasure, at least on the Taiwanese part. Historical memory, if not racist chauvinism, must have played a crucial role in this thorny relation.¹⁰ Still, if Taiwan is ready to stage *rapprochement* with China, it would be absurd to reject Korea. After all, Korea was one of the last “powers” that yielded to China’s Hallstein Doctrine, persistent demands for Korea’s apology would render Taiwan’s security and national interests secondary to other considerations.

New American Military Posture

Hierarchically, military strategy is based on the guideline laid down in defense strategy, which in turn are derived from national security strategy. Although it is perhaps premature to generalize how personal idiosyncratic characteristics have determine President Bush’s foreign policy orientations,¹¹ he did reveal some Realist propensity by declaring that the US “will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength” in his inaugural address (Bush, 2001). He also exhibits similar Realist mind-set in his *National*

⁹ Taiwan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Eugene Chien was refused to attend the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies held in Seoul on the ground that Taiwan is not a UN member. See *Taipei Times*, 2002/11/10.

¹⁰ Located in the periphery of the Chinese sphere of influence, Korea, along with Vietnam and, to less a degree, Japan, in the past had to be subservient to China.

¹¹ For a preliminary from one of his critics, see Landy (2002).

Security Strategy of the United States of America by calling attention to “unparalleled” US military strength and economic influence, and reiterating US intention to create a “balance of power” that favors human freedom (Bush, 2002; 2001). While directing three grandiose goals of freedom, peace, and human dignity, he unfolds eight international strategies: to champion aspirations for human dignity, strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism, defuse regional conflicts, prevent enemies with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to threaten the US, ignite global economic growth, expand development, develop cooperation, and transform US national security institutions. It appears that he does not disguise his intention to defeat enemies (p. 30) while judging deterrence ineffective against enemies (p. 15).

Although Bush refers to terrorism as enemy and rogue states and terrorists as challenges (2002: 5, 13), China is particularly identified as one that is threatening its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region. He accordingly contends to seek a “constructive relationship” with China (p. 27). He goes on to remind China that the US is committed to the defense of Taiwan, which he attributes as “friend” (p. 3), under the *Taiwan Relations Act*.

The *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* submitted by the Department of Defense (2001) puts forward four defense policy goals under new security environment¹²: to assure allies and friends, dissuade adversaries, deter aggression and coercion, and defeat any adversary if deterrence fails (pp. iii-iv, 11-13). More concretely, seven strategic tenets are identified: to manage risks, adopt a “capabilities-based” approach to defense,¹³ defend the US and project military power, strengthen alliances and partnerships, maintain favorable

¹² See *QDR* (pp. 3-7).

¹³ This model is intended to replace a “threat-based” one in defense planning with the understanding that **how** an adversary might fight is more important than **who** it might be and **where** a war might take place (pp. iv, 13-14).

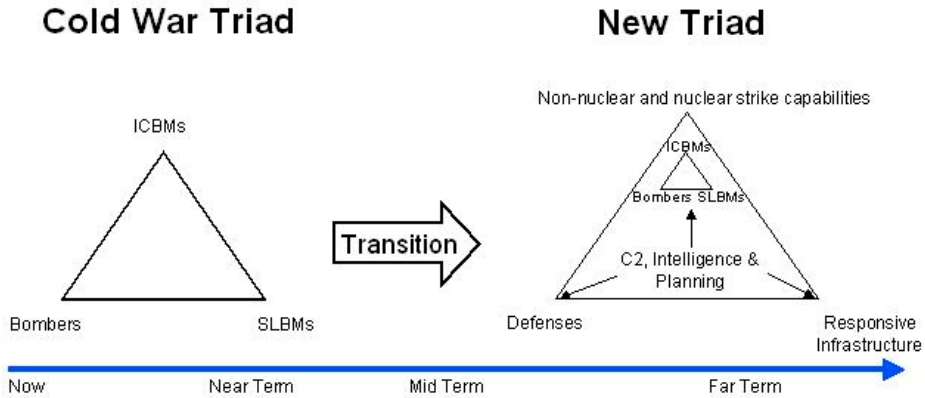
regional balances, develop broad military capabilities, and transform defense (pp. 13-16). Accordingly, force planning will be drawn to defend the US, deter aggression and coercion, defeat aggression, and conduct small-scale contingency operations (pp. 17-21).

The *QDR* further identifies three broad categories of US national interest: to ensure US security and freedom of action, honor international commitments, and contribute to economic well-being (p. 2). While Northeast Asia, and East Asian littoral are identified among other areas as critical one that the US would preclude “hostile domination” (p. 2), the East Asian littoral is perceived as a “particularly challenging area” (p. 4). Although not explicitly identified, Taiwan is unmistakably located in this Asian theater stretching from the Bay of Bengal to the Sea of Japan.

A more detailed strategic posture designed for the 21st century is partially unveiled in excerpts of the heatedly debated *Nuclear Posture Review* submitted to the Congress by the Department of Defense (2002a).¹⁴ Under the new strategic triad (Figure 7), while traditional ICBMs, Bombers, and SLBMs are reserved under one pillar, new impetus is given to active and passive defenses, and revitalized defense infrastructure, with enhanced command, control, and intelligence bidding the three pillars. While non-nuclear offensive forces, meaning conventional strike and information operation, are enlisted to complement nuclear ones, missile defense capabilities are formally employed to assured security partners, dissuade adversaries, deter aggression, and defeat small-scaled missile attacks as dictated in the *QDR*.¹⁵

¹⁴ The *NPR* was leaked to *Los Angeles Times* on March 10, 2002. See <http://www.cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/020401.htm> (endnote 2).

¹⁵ See also Crouch (2002) for a briefing.



Source: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2002/g020109-D-6570C.html>

Figure 7: New Strategic Triad

Interesting enough, the Department of Defense chose not to conceal the part on China along with six other states to use nuclear weapons¹⁶ in the *NPR* excerpts, including Russia, Libya, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea:

Due to the combination of China's still developing strategic objectives and its ongoing modernization of its nuclear and non-nuclear forces, China is a country that could be involved in an immediate or potential contingency.

Indirectly associated is the recognition that Taiwan is on one of the "immediate contingencies"¹⁷ when a military confrontation may take place over its legal status contested by China, and for which the US pledges to prepare its nuclear forces for preemptive strikes.¹⁸

Even though the *QDR* was released after the September 11, the US security

¹⁶ The list can be found in <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/03/09/nuclear.weapon/index.html>.

¹⁷ The *NPR* classifies contingencies into immediate, potential, and unexpected ones. Other immediate contingencies mentioned are an Iraq attack on Israel or its neighboring states, and a North Korean assault on South Korea.

¹⁸ While Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that the *NPR* is only "prudent military planning," the Department of Defense replied that it "does not provide operational guidance." See <http://asia.cnn.com/2002/US/03/10/nuclear.contingency>.

strategy specified largely stayed the old course as the aged-old “two theaters” of operation remained intact, if not scantily mentioned (p. 21). Full-fledged development of a new defense approach did not appear until the Department of Defense (2002b) submitted its *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, including phasing out two major theater war construct, reorganizing and revitalizing the missile defense research, reorganizing space capabilities, enhancing homeland defense and accelerating transformation, adopting a new approach to strategic deterrence (New Triad), and adopting a new approach to balancing risks.¹⁹ Apparently, this report is more attuned to the *NPR* than the *QDR*.

In this report, the Asian littoral is again listed as one of critical areas that the US is committed to prevent hostile domination. Although having not picked out China, the report discerns that some rising and declining regional powers which are developing or acquiring nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) capabilities to threaten stability in regions critical to US interests. Under the heading of Asia, it relentlessly states:

Maintaining a stable balance in Asia will be both a critical and formidable task. The possibility exists that a military competitor with a substantial resource base will emerge in the region. The Asian littoral represents a particular challenging area for operations. The distances are vast and the density of U.S. basing and en route infrastructure is lower than other critical regions. This place a premium on secure additional access and infrastructure agreements and on developing systems capable of sustained operations at long distances with minimal theater-based support.

In summer 2002, the Department of Defense (2002c) submitted its *Annual Report on the Military Power of the Peoples’ Republic of China* to the Congress, alerting China’s ballistic missile modernization, which would upgrade its

¹⁹ Nonetheless, the defense policy goals and strategic tenets made in the *QDR* are still retained.

nuclear deterrence and operational capabilities for contingencies in East Asia. The report is keenly watchful that:²⁰

Preparing for a potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait is the primary driver for China's military modernization. Beijing is pursuing the ability to force Taiwan to negotiate on Beijing's terms regarding unification with the mainland. It also seeks to deter, deny, or complicate the ability of foreign forces to intervene on Taiwan's behalf. (DoD, 2002c: 11)

In the section on security situation in the Taiwan Strait, it is observed that:²¹

Both Beijing and Taipei have stated that they seek a peaceful resolution to the unification issue. However, the PRC's ambitious military modernization casts a cloud over its declared preference for resolving differences with Taiwan through peaceful means. Beijing has refused to renounce the use of force against Taiwan and has listed several circumstances under which it would take up arms against the island. . . . Beijing's primary political objective in any Taiwan-related crisis, however, likely would be to compel Taiwan authorities to enter into negotiations on Beijing's terms and to undertake operations with enough rapidity to precluded third-party intervention. (DoD, 2002c: 46)

The DoD (2004: 49; 2002c: 2, 25, 50-51) also shows its grave concern in the report that China's 500 modernized conventional SRBMs would pose as an effective conventional strike force against Okinawa when forwardly deployed, or against Taiwan²² when deployed further inland, fretting that "Taiwan's ability

²⁰ The report (DoD, 2002c: 9) also takes note: "A key variable in assessing long-term trends in the PRC's security strategy is Taiwan. One of Beijing's priority security interests is to prevent further steps by Taiwan toward permanent separation from the mainland and to secure the eventual resolution of the Taiwan issue on the PRC's terms. Taiwan's integration under mainland authority is considered to be an essential step toward completion of 'national reunification.' China's leaders will remain determined to secure unification on Beijing's terms." See also DoD (2004: 11).

²¹ See also DoD (2003: 43) for similar expressions.

²² The US-China Security Review Commission's *the National Security Implications of the Economic Relationship between the United States and China* (2002) estimates that there are

to defend against ballistic missiles is negligible.” (Dod, 2002c: 51)²³ Most ominous is the frightful account that:²⁴

The PLA’s offensive capabilities improve as each year passes, providing Beijing with an increasing number of credible options to intimate or actually attack Taiwan. . . . The PLA also could adopt a decapitation strategy, seeking to neutralize Taiwan’s political and military leadership on the assumption that their successors would adopt policies more favorable to Beijing. (2002c: 47)

No less alarming is the prospect that three scenarios of coercive options have been contemplated by China: information operations, air and missile campaigns, and naval blockades. If coercion fails, outright Chinese invasion is expected to follow (Dod, 2002c: 48). The US-China Security Review Commission (2002) even envisages that once missile attacks are launched, China would continue the strike until Taiwan surrenders.

The Department of Defense (2002c) appears worrisome that China’s secure control over Taiwan would eventually “allow the PRC to move its defensive perimeter further seaward.” (p. 10) The DoD plainly realizes that China’s military modernization is not only planned against Taiwan, but also at incurring the US risks in case of Taiwan contingency in the future (Dod, 2002c: 50). To be sure, the DoD is adamant that whether China would succeed in its military campaigns is largely decided by how Taiwan may receive firm support

currently 400 missiles against Taiwan, and expects that the number will grow to 600 by 2005, at the rate of 50 each year.

²³ The US-China Security Review Commission (2002) shows similar concern that “Taiwan is virtually defenseless against a ballistic attack.” (Chapter 8) However, the Pacific Commander in Chief Admiral Dennis C. Blair seems to be more optimistic: “China is capable of causing damage to Taiwan. It is not capable of taking and holding Taiwan.” See http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2001/n03292001_200103291.htm. See also O’Hanlon (2000).

²⁴ See also DoD (2003: 45).

from the US.

Reflecting the basic tenet of the *Taiwan Relations Act*, the Department of Defense (2000) has already pledged that:

It is the policy of the United States to consider any effort to determinate the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western pacific area and of great concern to the United States; to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people of Taiwan.

The Department of Defense (2000) has affirmed:

The United States takes its obligation to assist Taiwan in maintaining a self-defense capacity very seriously. This is not only because it is mandated by U.S. law in the TRA, but also because it is our own national interest.

Therefore, the US military commitment to Taiwan is determined by how the former would conceive of itself in terms of the existence of the latter.

Evolving American Policy toward Taiwan

Since the conclusion of World War II in 1945, the US has witnessed eleven administrations, from Truman to Bush, and its relationship with Taiwan/Republic of China (ROC) has undergone fluctuating alternation. The honeymoon between the two countries from the wartime alliance plumped to the lowest point in 1949 when the Truman administration adopted its hand-off policy toward the Chinese civil war and waited to see the annexation of Taiwan by the Communist Chinese. The US policy was unexpectedly reversed after the Korean War broke out in 1950, when the Seventh Fleet was dispatched to protect Taiwan. The US-Taiwan relations turned into a military alliance and

thus reached its peak when a *Mutual Defense Treaty* was signed in 1954. By and large, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations retained closer relations with Taiwan, especially during the heydays of the Vietnam War. However, once the Nixon and Ford administrations were resolved to court China in faithful pursuit of Kissinger's grand strategy of fighting an one-and-half war against the Soviet Union, Taiwan was gradually abandoned. The amiable relationship came to another slump in 1979 when the Carter administration decided to derecognize the ROC and established foreign relation with the PRC.

Regardless, a *Taiwan Relations Act* was promulgated in the same year, which stands as the watershed of American policy toward Taiwan. Before the *TRA*, Taiwan had long been treated as but one component of the US global strategic thinking to counter China. Thereafter, the US has been more inclined to look at its separate relations with Taiwan detached from China although the US considerations in these days have to be constrained by Chinese claim of Taiwan's territory in their mutual pursuit of accommodation.

So far, the most important indicator of the evolution of the US policy toward Taiwan has been its contemplation of the legal status of Taiwan. Until 1950 the US had persistently taken the position that Taiwan was part of China. To justify its protection of Taiwan after the outbreak of the Korean War, the Truman administration declared that the legal status of Taiwan was uncertain and should be settled internationally. The policy lasted until 1972, when the U.S. formally **acknowledged** in the *Shanghai Communiqué*²⁵ that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain that there is only but China and Taiwan is a part of China." In the 1979 *Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and the*

²⁵ <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/jtcomm.htm>.

People Republic of China,²⁶ the US “**acknowledge** the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.” Similarly in the 1982 *U.S.-China Joint Communiqué* (or *817 Communiqué*),²⁷ it is reiterated that the US “**acknowledged** the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.” (emphases added)

While the so-called “One China Policy” has been embodied in the “Three Communiqués” between the PRC and the US, of which the contents may have varied and been subject to different interpretations over the years with changing contexts, it is categorically different from the “One China Principle” espoused by China. Rationally speaking, one China carries a host of connotations along the spectrum from One China=PRC (Taiwan incorporated), One China=Two Governments (CCP & KMT/DPP), One China=ROC, One China=Historical, Cultural, Geographical China, and One China=One China + One Taiwan. Still, it must be pointed out that the TRA has nothing like “Taiwan is a part of China.” Since not all interpretations are contradictory, the US has long chosen to keep all options open to be decided by Taiwan and China themselves.” Since “One China Policy” does not necessarily negate the possibility of recognizing a Republic of Taiwan, this purposeful ambiguity has left an ample space for proponents of the Taiwan Independence Movement in their pursuit of establishing an independent Republic of Taiwan.

The other manifestation has been American commitment to Taiwan’s defense as stipulated in the *TRA*. Although the administrations since Carter have calculated to be vague over whether the US would send troops to defend Taiwan in case of war, peaceful resolutions between the Taiwan Strait have so far been faithful followed. As the US has designated in the *TRA* that the

²⁶ For the texts, see <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/jtcomm3.htm>.

²⁷ For the texts, see <http://www.china-embassy.org/Cgi-Bin/Press.pl?153>.

security issue of Taiwan is beyond any challenge, it has been unconditionally invoked to demonstrate the US commitment to defend Taiwan, suggesting its primacy over the *817 Communiqué*, which was vividly demonstrated in the 1995-96 Missile Crises, when Clinton sent USS Nimitz and USS Independence to deter China, testifying again that the security of Taiwan as guaranteed in the *TRA* outweighs other policy considerations.

In the main, the Clinton administration adopted a strategy of “Comprehensive Engagement” with China in the post-Cold War era. A devastating punch come from the “Three No’s” during Clinton’s visit in China in 1998.²⁸ On the other hand, President George W. Bush no longer considers China as a “constructive strategic partner,”²⁹ but rather a competitor in a global strategic design focused on the Asian-Pacific region. So far, while President Bush has shown his reluctance to mention the three, now out of date, Communiqués, he has also recurrently demonstrated his goodwill toward Taiwan. For instance, he openly pledged to do “whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself” in case China attack Taiwan,³⁰ promised to help Taiwan joining the World Health Organization (WHO), and even referred to Taiwan as “Republic of Taiwan.”³¹ Before he embarked on his trip to East Asia in April 2002, he called attention to Taiwan as “good friend” along with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines.³² While speaking to the Japanese Diet, he reiterated American “commitments to the people on

²⁸ <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/berg0627.htm>.

²⁹ In Taiwan, the term is mistakenly translated as “military alliance.”

³⁰ <http://www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/0424/bush.taiwan.abc>.

³¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020404-4.html>.

³² <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/wwwhse1074.html>. Bush (2002: 3) again mentioned Taiwan as “friend” along with South Korea while noticing their democratic processes at West Point in June 2002.

Taiwan.”³³ At a press conference in Beijing, he brought up the *Taiwan Relations Act* in front of Chinese President Jiang Zemin³⁴; again, he wasted no time reminding the Chinese audience of the US “commitment to Taiwan” and avouching American determination to “help Taiwan defend herself if provoked” by invoking the *Taiwan Relations Act* while delivering a speech in Tsinghua University, Beijing.³⁵ In return for Chinese clamor for “peaceful unification,” he retorted with such expressions as “peaceful settlement” and “peaceful settlement.”

Although Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was forced to answer that the US does “not support independence for Taiwan” while challenged by a compound question uttered by a journalist from Taiwan,³⁶ he was said to have expressed his regret for any inconvenience incurred to the Taiwanese. Regarding the standard responses in the form of “being opposed to” or “not to support” Taiwan independence, we may come with two rational interpretations. For one thing, while the US would not allow China to swallow Taiwan because of American interest, it leaves up to the Taiwanese to decide whether they would get rid of the iron cage under the Republic of China. Furthermore, it is beneficial to the Taiwanese if the US openly unveil her intention not to involve herself on the issue of Taiwan independence as the Chinese would not have any opportunity to accuse the US meddle in Taiwanese exercising their right to self-determination.

³³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/2002/02/20020218-2.html>.

³⁴ <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/press/release/2002/jpabj.html>.

³⁵ <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/press/release/2002/qinghua.html>.

³⁶ http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2002/t05312002_t0529dsd.html.

Conclusions

In retrospection, the relationships between the US and Taiwan in the past two decades had been amount to a quasi-alliance in short of the status of free association. What has been left out is the determination of the Taiwanese to seek an independent Republic of Taiwan. As a setter's state, the US share with Taiwan's passion to breakaway from the chains imposed it by the former land of origin since the norm of self-determination is the highest form of human rights. The Taiwanese have the same right to decide their destiny as the Americans did according to the principle of people's sovereignty. As the nation-state is still the standard bearer of people even in the post-Cold War ear, Taiwan, in its legitimate quest for a *de jure* independent statehood, deserve its fair share in the international arena and ought not to be deemed as a reckless troublemaker.

Nevertheless, the people of Taiwan need to reach a consensus on Taiwan's future even though they may retain dissimilar, but not necessarily contradictory, outlook of national identity. The ruling elite, not the US, is to be blamed for Taiwan's isolation because of their partisan manipulations of this issue. Eventually, the bottom line is whether the Taiwanese do request a nation-state of their own choice, not any state imposed. The real issue we are facing is Chinese irredentism to incorporate Taiwan, not Taiwanese secession from China. After all, the current Chinese government has never reigned on Taiwan. Nonetheless, as long as the Taiwanese consider themselves as ethnic Chinese in primordial conceptions, racially or/and culturally, they are mentally destined to imprison themselves in Chinese political penitentiary and economic abyss. The ultimate trial for the Taiwanese would be the following: if China becomes politically democratic and economically developed, how many Taiwanese would choose to get unified with China? How many people would reply definitively negative?

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美國在東亞的軍事態勢 ——以台灣為考察重心

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摘 要

在這篇論文裡，我們將嘗試要去了解當前美國在東亞的軍事態勢；在這裡，我們的基本分析架構是一個以美國為中心的金字塔關係，除了美國、中國外，還要加上日本、韓國（南韓）、以及台灣。在蘇聯解體以來，美國成為國際體系中的超強，不過，崛起中的中國不只想要在區域中嶄露頭角，更想要與美國在國際上一爭長短。美國布希總統基本是採取現實主義的立場，中國在 1995-96 年以飛彈威脅台灣仍然給世人深刻的印象，對於躍躍欲試的中國自然是聽其言、觀其行。在這樣的大戰略態勢下，我們試圖去勾勒布希政府的軍事思維。我們將根據布希上台以來所公佈的五份官方文件作分析的文本，包括他自己的『美國國家安全戰略』報告書 (2002)、美國國防部先後提出的『四年國防檢討』報告書 (2001)、『核武態勢檢討』報告書 (2002)、『送交總統暨國會年度報告』(2002)、以及『中華人民共和國軍力年度報告』(2002)。我們檢視的方式是先由國家安全的大戰略著手、再來國防戰略／政策的探究、最後才是軍事上的安排；當然，台灣的國家安全將貫穿整個論文，因此，我們會在討論完戰略面向的議題之後，特別再回頭探求美國對台政策的發展，尤其是布希團隊迄今的作為。

關鍵詞：美國、東亞、台灣、軍事態勢、對台政策