A FRUITFUL FUTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA: ALTERING THE UNITED STATES-TAIWAN RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This is an investigation of the delicate trilateral relationship between China, Taiwan, and the United States. Currently, the United States employs a policy of strategic ambiguity to deal with the contentious relationship between China and Taiwan. Strategic ambiguity allows the United States some flexibility in working with the government of China, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and the government of Taiwan, the Republic of China (ROC). Two documents signed in the late seventies in the United States solidified our uncertain relationship with both the PRC and the ROC – the joint communiqué with China, which states that the United States recognizes that the People’s Republic of China is the sole and exclusive government of China, and the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which declares that the United States will defend Taiwan in the case of a military attack. These two declarations have fossilized the tensions in the Taiwan Strait. This thesis argues that the United States is breeding mistrust with both China and Taiwan, and at the same time, China and Taiwan have initiated pseudo-unification through economic and social policies. This investigation recommends that the United States alter its relationship with Taiwan in favor of a more enduring relationship with China. The modification of United States policy is necessary because strategic
ambiguity is not a sustainable solution. A change in United States policy regarding Taiwan is also valuable because it is part of an ambitious yet obtainable effort to sustain long-term peace in the Asia-Pacific region.
This thesis paper is intended to bring to light an issue and geographic region of the world that has long-enough been shelved by the United States in favor of issues and other regions since September 11, 2001. This thesis was borne out of a blossoming interest in Asia-Pacific issues after my inaugural journey to Beijing, China in the fall of 2007. True to the nature of a liberal studies scholar, I observed and appreciated various intriguing aspects of Beijing, which led to my subsequent study of Chinese history, art, philosophy, language, and politics. This thesis paper investigates the topic of trilateral relations between the United States, China, and Taiwan. My genuine hope for the people of the United States, China, and Taiwan is that they live equally fulfilling lives in peace.

In this paper, the terms “Taiwan” and “Republic of China (ROC)” refer to Taiwan and the term “China” refers to mainland China. To clarify, the views expressed in this paper are mine and do not represent the opinions of the United States government, United States Department of Defense, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of China, or Georgetown University.

--Kisha C. Kantasingh
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For Ursula, Charlie, and Cardilla—
my first teachers
摸着石头过河

Cross the river by feeling the stones.

--Deng Xiaoping
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ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEAN + 3 – Association of Southeast Asian Nations + China, Japan, and South Korea

ARF – ASEAN Regional Forum

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

DPP – Democratic Progressive Party

EAS – East Asia Summit

ECFA – Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement

IDF – Indigenous Fighter Aircraft

KMT – Kuomintang

NIA – National Immigration Agency

PLA – People’s Liberation Army

PRC – People’s Republic of China

ROC – Republic of China

SEF – Straits Exchange Foundation

TAO – Taiwan Affairs Office

TIFA – Trade and Investment Framework Agreement

TRA – Taiwan Relations Act
INTRODUCTION

This is an investigation of the challenging trilateral relationship between China, Taiwan, and the United States, and a policy recommendation for the current United States administration. The relationship between the United States and Taiwan’s government, the Republic of China (ROC), is worthy of investigation because it currently thwarts trustworthy relations between the United States and the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the government of mainland China. A consistently trustworthy and enduring relationship with the People’s Republic of China is valuable to the United States because of China’s geographic location, large population, economic involvement with other countries, role in international organizations, and interest in pursuing science and innovative technologies. This thesis argues that if the United States desires a more trustworthy relationship with China and its leaders in the future, the United States should alter its current relationship with Taiwan’s government, the Republic of China. This investigation of the trilateral relationship between the United States, China, and Taiwan is most valuable because it could yield an idea for sustained peace in the Asia-Pacific region. This paper will:

- provide an introduction to the current United States policy of strategic ambiguity.
- explain the reasons for why the United States should address strategic ambiguity.
- discuss the history of China and colonial history of Taiwan which began the tensions that exist today.
- make a strong recommendation that the United States alter its relationship with the Republic of China in favor of a more enduring relationship with the People’s
Republic of China, in an effort to sustain long-term peace in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

In its exposition, this thesis will introduce the current U.S. policy that manages the trilateral relationship between China, Taiwan, and the United States and explain why it is necessary to give attention to the current policy and resolve the ambiguous relationship between the United States and Taiwan. The exposition will also provide the background information on the history of China and the colonial history of Taiwan, in order to equally understand and weigh the perspectives of each government. Next, this thesis will identify some of the actions taken by the United States to encourage mistrust in its relationship with China and Taiwan. Following the exposition, this thesis will introduce the varying viewpoints of scholars and experts on whether the United States might alter its current policy of strategic ambiguity to manage trilateral relations. This paper then argues that there are two main reasons for why the United States should alter its relationship with Taiwan in favor of enduring relations with China: 1) The current policy of strategic ambiguity is breeding mistrust with both China and Taiwan. 2) Strategic ambiguity is not sustainable and China and Taiwan are already working on cross strait relations without external diplomatic assistance. This paper suggests that in order to achieve a consistently trustworthy and enduring relationship with China, the current United States administration should alter its relationship with Taiwan by revisiting the Taiwan Relations Act, clarifying that the United States will not engage militarily in the Taiwan Strait, and will cease arms sales to Taiwan. Additionally, the United States should acknowledge a true “one China” policy that explicitly states that the
People’s Republic of China governs China. To conclude, this paper will discuss the potential positive outcomes of changing current U.S. foreign policy toward Taiwan, the morality of changing our alignment against Taiwan, and will offer suggestions for how altering ties with Taiwan can be done as peacefully as possible.
CHAPTER I
THE DANGER OF AMBIGUITY

A contentious initial relationship between the United States and China, a muddied colonial history of Taiwan, and conflicting U.S. declarations throughout history have reinforced substantial confusion and friction into the trilateral relationship between the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC), and the United States. The following sections will explain strategic ambiguity and answer the question: why address the ambiguous relationship between the United States and Taiwan?

Strategic Ambiguity

Currently the United States employs a policy of “strategic ambiguity” in order to manage its relationships with China and Taiwan. Strategic ambiguity is an enforcement of political uncertainty and a lack of clarity around political decisions, particularly in crisis situations. Scholar and historian Nancy Bernkopf Tucker has identified strategic ambiguity as a policy that originated during the Eisenhower administration when the People’s Republic of China began firing on the island of Quemoy in the Taiwan Strait. In Eisenhower’s memoir, The White House Years, he expressed that upon remembering the Quemoy crisis in the Taiwan Strait, he recalls that no one could be certain whether or not the United States would have responded militarily or use nuclear weapons in response to an attack on Quemoy or an invasion of the offshore islands. This uncertainty during a time of high international crisis is when the theory of strategic ambiguity was formed.
The current U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity was borne out of the combination of four documents signed onto by the United States beginning in 1972. These documents include the:

- 1972 Shanghai Communiqué.
- 1978 Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China.
- 1979 Taiwan Relations Act.
- 1982 United States-China Joint Communiqué on the United States Arms Sales to Taiwan.

The four documents that contribute to the policy of strategic ambiguity should be explained in order to more comprehensively understand their conflicting influence. This paper will first discuss The Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China, also known as the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, signed by former United States President Richard Nixon. The document was signed on February 28, 1972, after discussions with Chairman Mao Tse-tung of the Communist Party of China and Premier Chou En-lai. In the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, the Chinese declared that “the Taiwan question is the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States; the Government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is a province of China which has long been returned to the motherland; the liberation of Taiwan is China’s internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere; and all U.S. forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan” (2012). In the document, the United States expressed
acknowledgment that: “all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes” (2012). The Shanghai Communiqué benefited both the United States and China because it opened up a dialogue that was previously opened, in 1949 when the People’s Republic of China was formed, though not pursued. The 1972 Shanghai Communiqué did not exclusively contribute to the fossilization of the ambiguous relationship but it did initiate the current static trilateral situation. It allowed for a follow-up conversation and the signing of a subsequent document on diplomatic relations.

**The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations**

**Between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China** was signed several years after the United States and China opened a dialogue about the United States’ relationship to Taiwan. This Communiqué, announced at the end of 1978 and signed onto officially in 1979, reaffirmed the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué and its principles and announced a formal transition from diplomatic relations with Taiwan to relations with China. Following the 1978 Joint Communiqué was the **Taiwan Relations Act** (TRA) signed by former President Jimmy Carter, which is a thorough document detailing the United States’ diplomatic relations with Taiwan and allows for the
establishment of the American Institute in Taiwan. Additionally, one specific part of the Taiwan Relations Act, section 3302, states that “the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.” While the TRA does not negate the pledges of the Shanghai Communiqué and Joint Communiqué made with China, it outlines a pledge to the government of Taiwan that it will provide sufficient defense capabilities, a plan not well received by the Chinese. Following the Taiwan Relations Act was a third communiqué, the 1982 United States-China Joint Communiqué on the United States Arms Sales to Taiwan, in which the United States announced, once again, its interest in connecting with China on mutual interests. It announced that the United States: recognizes the PRC as the sole government of China and pledged to respect the sovereignty of China. The issue of arms sales to Taiwan was not resolved after the discussions surrounding the third communiqué. These three communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act combined create dueling policies, with regard to both China and Taiwan, which allows for the United States to operate in an ambiguous manner when addressing issues with both China and Taiwan.
Dual Deterrence

At this time, a policy of strategic ambiguity and dual deterrence, together, make up the United States’ stance on Taiwan and China. Dual deterrence accomplishes two things:

- It deters Taiwan from antagonizing China into a conflict because Taiwan is uncertain as to whether the United States will defend it in a military conflict.
- It also deters China from initiating any aggression in the direction of Taiwan because China is uncertain about whether the United States will use military force to defend Taiwan.

The governments of both China and Taiwan believe, equally, that disturbing the other would have severe effects. If the combination of strategic ambiguity and dual deterrence work effectively, why should the United States address the ambiguous tri-lateral relationship?

Why Address Ambiguity

There are two reasons for why it is important to address and resolve the ambiguity of the relationship between the United States and Taiwan right now: 1) The ambiguous relationship, known as strategic ambiguity, is souring relations with both Taiwan and China. 2) Without direct statements, the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China are working on cross-strait relations with no external diplomatic interventions.

It is urgent that the United States turn its attention to China and security in the Asia-Pacific region now, rather than later, and alter its relationship with Taiwan because strategic ambiguity is souring relations with both Taiwan and China. Continued
murkiness will have a negative effect on long-term relations between the United States and China, and in the worst possible situation, lead to a military conflict against China.

The second reason for why the United States ought to resolve the intentionally ambiguous tri-lateral relationship is that without having made a formal international announcement, the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China are working on cross-strait relations and issues of mutual interest without external diplomatic interventions. The United States stands to lose good will with China by not initiating the conversation. The benefits of initiating a trilateral conversation now far outweigh the potential negative outcomes of initiating a trilateral conversation now. By initiating a conversation in which the United States alters its relationship with Taiwan, the United States stands to cultivate good will with China and potentially reduce the possibility of forcible reunification of China and Taiwan. If the United States continues on with unclear obligations to the Republic of China, this will have negative long-term implications as the People’s Republic of China’s economic, nuclear, and population influences increase globally. A consistently trustworthy and enduring relationship with the People’s Republic of China is valuable to the United States because of China’s size and large population; China’s influence with Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea regarding nuclear weapons; China’s economic involvement with numerous countries in Africa; China’s role as part of several international organizations; and China’s interest in pursuing science and innovative technologies. According to the 2011 World Bank’s World Development Indicators, China is the world’s most populous country, boasting a population of
1,331,460,000, approximately a fifth of the world’s people. One out of five people on the planet is Chinese. As China’s influence grows globally, the United States will want to have cultivated China as a strong, unwavering ally.

Now that it is clear why the United States should address its ambiguous relationship with Taiwan, it is important to understand the origins of the complex trilateral relationship between the United States, China, and Taiwan. The following two chapters will discuss the history of the United States’ interactions with China and the colonial history of Taiwan before making a case for why the United States should alter its relationship with Taiwan.
CHAPTER II

CHINA FROM 1784

To understand the complicated and interesting modern relationship that the United States has with China today, it is valuable to revisit the beginning of the relationship and the history of early China and Americans.

Early China and the United States

The United States’ history with China began in 1784 when the Empress of China left New York overflowing with goods for sale in Canton. At the time, Americans sailed the vast distance to China to purchase goods unique to the east, including silks, porcelain, and tea. (Hunt 1983, 5). Americans traded opium, the source of which was in Turkey, for fine Chinese goods. By 1804, American ships were sailing from Baltimore and Philadelphia with opium intended for sale on Chinese shores (Hunt 1983, 7). While Europe was occupied with war between 1793 and 1815, European traders were not sailing to Canton, leaving the seas open to American ships and the Chinese trade market open to Americans. In Canton in the early 1800s, there was a group of Chinese merchants selected by the Chinese government to manage dealings with all foreign traders. According to Hunt’s *The Making of a Special Relationship*, these merchants based business with Americans on their potential for profit and not on sentiment. While the initial seafaring journey to China was profitable for all of the financiers of the Empress of China in 1784, this trip and subsequent journeys revealed differences between
Americans, who emphasized autonomy, and the Chinese, who subscribed to consistent, strict moral and social attitudes.

The Chinese became interested in learning more about Americans in the middle of the nineteenth century. Immediately after the Empress of China left America for Canton ports, Americans and British sold goods side-by-side and so the “Chinese tendency…was to lump Westerners… together as a single undifferentiated tribe” (Hunt 1983, 42). Though the earliest British traders, Hunt explains, demonstrated a violent side, a disposition very different than American traders, disdain and disparagement for all foreigners comprised the feelings of most Chinese who dealt with both American and British traders. Michael H. Hunt writes that “foreign names, both national and personal, were transliterated or translated well into the nineteenth century in ways intended to demean and give unsavory connotations” (Hunt 1983, 42). Finally, in 1787, Chinese records appear to distinguish between Americans and the British (Hunt 1983, 43). In 1844, a text written by Chinese scholar Wei Yüan, *Treatise on Maritime Kingdoms*, explained more about American traders and mariners to the Chinese (Hunt 1983, 42). Wei’s book explained to Chinese readers how the Chinese might deal with the “unprecedented barbarian threat confronting China” (Hunt 1983, 45), by showing “generosity and solicitude for those respectful and obedient outsiders who came to China to make their livelihood” (Hunt 1983, 46). A later text, written by Chinese scholar Hsü Chi-yu, titled *A Brief Survey of the Maritime Circuit*, printed after Wei’s book, encouraged Chinese to accept foreigners. Specifically, Hunt writes that “Hsü in effect
invited his countrymen to think of foreigners in a less stereotyped, more open-minded way by avoiding the more blatant forms of condescension…suggesting that the world was diverse and that the Chinese could learn from it” (Hunt 1983, 47). Specifically, Hsü had a special reverence for U.S. president George Washington, who Hsü thought operated “in accordance with Chinese political ideals in which the educated and virtuous ruled while remaining attuned to the needs of the people” (Hunt 1983, 49). Hsü’s early and fascinating foreign policy suggestion was that the Chinese and the United States collaborate together, “to offset the Europeans” (Hunt 1983, 51). Though the Americans and the Chinese had early moments of mutual respect and admiration, and a potential for profound global collaboration, cultural clashes spawned as far back as the eighteenth century have sustained the tensions of the modern-day relationship between the United States and China.

**China’s Rise to Power Under Mao**

Despite the beginning tensions that arose out of the earliest meetings between the United States and the Chinese, the United States has come to regard China as a modern nation, equipped with bright minds, entrepreneurs, and the ability to efficiently produce goods and provide services worldwide. Today, many products available to Americans are designed, assembled, and shipped from factories and distributors in China. In 1949, Chairman Mao of China announced that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was formed. Similar to the Soviet Union, Mao designed China as a communist country with deep agrarian roots. Like in the Soviet Union, Mao’s government depended largely on the
work and sacrifices of rural peasants living and working in the countryside. Only later would China depend on factory workers for its economic survival. It is notable that in 1955 Chairman Mao collectivized farming. He made it so that farmers were no longer allowed to own land or to sell, buy, or work on private plots of land. Like in the Soviet Union, the land belonged to the government. Farming was collectivized and as a result production decreased significantly. Even before the land was collectivized, it was a very difficult and arduous task to produce enough food on the land. To be predicted, food shortages increased after collectivization took root and Mao’s Great Leap Forward program worsened the famine situation. The Great Leap Forward program combined collective farms into communes comprising approximately ten thousand people each. Chairman Mao and Communist Party leaders dictated which crops to grow and in return for their crops the communes were promised extra food and medical care. Peasants had to minimally produce a certain amount of grain each year to be paid as a tax to the government, which was used to feed people living in the cities, much like in the Soviet Union. After the food tax had been paid, the remaining crops were available for feeding the families and workers on the rural farm. In too many instances, there was not enough food to feed everyone. Country officials, whose job it was to report the amount of grain production for a designated region, at times, inflated the numbers to reflect a higher yield of grain than was actually produced. As a result, these country officials had to collect a higher food tax in the form of more grain, which frequently left many communes without enough food to survive. As the competition grew among country officials to preside over
the most productive commune, the food taxes in each commune grew higher, leaving farmers with nearly nothing. In one instance, the country official was dealing with an actual drought that destroyed much of the harvest. This country official reported a double in the yield of the crop despite the drought. Though he received a lot of praise for his leadership, this meant that the commune had to turn in all of its grain production, leaving the families without food. The amount of grain collected by each farmer demonstrated to Mao that his program was a success, which led to much individual suffering of countryside families. In instances when families would hide bits of grain to eat, Communist Party officials used their authority to punish these individuals severely.

At the same time, Chairman Mao was pleased with the success of his program and had ambitions to turn the country into a power that could rival the Soviet Union. As a result of his vision, all peasant families turned over their private homes and property, including personal possessions, for redistribution. This included both richer villages and poorer villages. Additionally, furnaces were installed in the backyards of farmers so that they could also produce steel. Steel production was intended to surpass that of the United Kingdom’s steel production. However, instead of farming, farmers focused on working on steel which led to unattended crops. Many families began to starve and turned to rural communal kitchens for extra food. The communal kitchens were overrun with hungry families and in desperation many people were forced to hunt to find food. In the worst situations, families stripped trees of their bark and leaves for food. Many of the bodies that starved to death remained for weeks in the location where the individual died, in
fields, along paths, and in the streets. During the famine, approximately 30 to 40 million people died of starvation between 1959 and 1962 (Meredith 2007, 19). The irony of the situation is that while these families starved and suffered a cruel, tortured death, many of China’s granaries were full. China was exporting grain because Mao thought the countryside yields were extensive. Chairman Mao sincerely believed that his vision of a successful communist utopia had come to fruition. Meredith writes that “state-owned enterprises made up 77.6 percent of the economy, and collectives owned everything else” (Meredith 2007, 19).

After the success of the Great Leap Forward program and the collectivization of the farms and the grain taxes, Chairman Mao insisted on eradicating all naysayers in the government. All those had opposing viewpoints were removed from the government in 1966. In addition to that, Chairman Mao’s vision of a most equal and fair society excluded books that contended other political viewpoints, art that depicted contradictory messages, and temples or monasteries for individual worship. His vision of communism followed suit with that of the Soviet Union. Chairman Mao’s vision allowed for the closing of China’s universities and made it so that the only education available to students was the study of Communist Party literature Mao’s Little Red Book. Though Mao had achieved a goal of egalitarianism, people were starving and not living quality, fulfilling lives.
China’s Development Under Deng Xiaoping

When Chairman Mao died in 1976, he felt he had achieved his goals for the People’s Republic of China. After he died, Deng Xiaoping became the leader of the People’s Republic of China and continued to implement policies envisioned and previously enacted by Mao. At the time Deng began to lead the People’s Republic of China, 80 percent of the People’s Republic of China was still made up of poor, starving peasants (Meredith 2007, 21). Approximately one billion people were peasants living and working on collective farms in the countryside and the typical family lived on dirt floors, in mud structures, with straw roofs (Meredith 2007, 20). Some families were raising animals, including chickens and pigs and growing vegetables or grain privately. Families that were unable to do so begged for money or moved to the cities where they begged for money. This led to a movement by rural farmers to change the agrarian policies.

China’s movement into modernization began with rural farmers who were contending with an enduring famine and a desire to change the system and live a life where their basic needs were being met. In 1978, famine was pervasive in the Chinese countryside. Many peasant families were suffering from malnutrition and starvation. Some of the reforms that were meant to support them were not always efficient. In a collective farming village called Xiaogang in Anhui Province’s Fengyang County, the annual income was lower than three dollars per person per year (Meredith 2007, 16). During the famine, families ate their own livestock, including oxen, pigs, chickens, and dogs to prevent starvation. To demonstrate the dire situation some people faced, reports
from the time state that some families resorted to cannibalism. Some families were able to survive the hard times by eating their own animals and resorting to desperate measures. Those who survived were driven to change the situation for the better. Robyn Meredith writes in *The Elephant and The Dragon* that in the winter of 1978, eighteen families in Xiaogang created a pact to break China’s collective farming laws and Mao’s communism. These families agreed to divide their collective land and charged each family with meeting a production of goods quota. Each family then worked diligently on their plots to ensuring that their “harvest reaped 153,000 pounds of grain, nearly four times the preceding year’s 40,000 pounds” (Meredith 2007, 17).

Deng followed Mao’s example and aimed to reform the policies governing the countryside in order to better the situation. He redistributed the land once more to each household and farmers were each paid at the end of the year based on how much grain they grew. Farmers still had to pay a food tax but they were allowed to keep the remaining grain to feed their families. Different than before, farmers were allowed to choose their own crops to tend. Deng rid the government of mandates dictating how much farmers could sell their crops for and as a result, farmers were able to set their own prices for any extra grain they wished to sell. Between 1978, farmers and rural Chinese had an increase in come by about 15 percent (Meredith 2007, 21). Today, in China, Xiaogang is celebrated as the birthplace of China’s rural reforms and as the place where revised agrarian policies were incarnated, bringing to life a new nation of modernism, ambitiousness, and brilliance beyond compare.
After the reforms inspired by the peasants, they began to prosper and China’s economy began to flourish. Peasants who had more money had more choices over their livelihoods and their lives. Some chose to continue farming and others chose a different path. These various alternative paths included roadside food stands and factories that now make auto parts. Additionally, many families made improvements to their mud-wall and straw roof homes. Many families built homes made of brick and obtained electricity for the first time.

Deng Xiaoping led China into the age of modernization after inspiring trips to cities like Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore. When Deng visited Singapore in 1978, he saw firsthand the parts that comprised a modern, technologically advanced nation. After Deng’s visit to Singapore, the Chinese newspaper, *People’s Daily*, began to report on the achievements of Singapore and its leaders (Meredith 2007, 23). Lee Kuan Yew, the prime minister of Singapore visited Beijing to see Deng three times during the 1980s in an effort to help the People’s Republic of China restart reforms. Deng himself sent various delegations of mayors and other party officials to Singapore every year to witness and understand the kinds of changes he wanted to implement and to bring on board officials who were keen on helping him modernize the nation. Deng did not want to follow in the path of Soviet Union anymore and turned away from making changes abruptly. Deng decided to create special economic zones where capitalism could be explored. In these zones, there were lowered taxes and businesses were allowed to open to produce goods to be sold overseas. Foreign companies were also allowed to build
factories in these special economic zones. They were also allowed to hire as many
Chinese workers to work in the factories. Special economic zones were built in Fujian
Province (which is across the Strait from Taiwan) and in Guangdong Province, which is
near Hong Kong.
The following map depicts Fujian Province and its location in relation to the main island of Taiwan:

Figure 1. Map of Fujian Province Source: (http://gochina.about.com/od/maps/ig/Province-Maps/Fujian-Province-Map.htm, March 1, 2012)
The following map depicts the Guangdong Province:

Figure 2. Map of Guangdong Province. Source:
(http://acelebrationofwomen.org/?p=24849, February 1, 2012)
Deng’s experiment with capitalism proved successful and he subsequently installed fourteen more provinces on the coast that were designated as special economic zones. Many foreign factories were built in China in these zones. However, the wages paid to the workers were remarkably low. Once factory owners learned that they could build factories and charge intolerably low prices, many other foreign countries became interested. At first, other Asian companies opened, with investors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and of course, Singapore. Next, Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and Koreans opened factories. Deng was very proud of the gradual change the country was experiencing, despite the low wages paid to workers. On a tour of several economic zones in the south of China, he encouraged mainland Chinese to embrace capitalism. While Deng conveyed this message to mainland Chinese, government officials struggled with conveying a message of obligation and deference to the communist system. Deng decided that since the foreign companies were bringing success to the nation that he paved farmland into zones where industries could be built. He recognized that the foreign investors were supporting Chinese people by gainfully employing them in their factories. The People’s Republic of China made it possible for these factories to come in easily by paving the roads and creating infrastructure by offering tax break, installing phone lines, and offering other incentives. Today, the power of Beijing and Shanghai’s modern workplaces and homes and the grandeur of historic sites like the Summer Palace and the Temple of Heaven are all a reflection of the inspiration of the peasants in rural China and
of factory workers and businessmen who helped China to evolve into a modernized nation.
CHAPTER III

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COLONIAL HISTORY OF TAIWAN

To understand why it is necessary for the United States to revise its relationship with Taiwan and to understand what is at stake for Taiwan when the United States initiates a new trilateral dialogue, it is important to know Taiwan’s beginnings and its sordid history with colonization.

Taiwan’s Colonizers

The United States’ earliest interactions with Taiwan complicated the already delicate relationship the United States had with China. Today, the Republic of China is the government of the main island of Taiwan, the Pescadores island group in the Strait, the Jinmen and Matsu islands near the coast of China’s mainland, and the Pratas Island in the South China Sea (Denny Roy, Taiwan: A Political History, [Cornell University Press: Ithaca], 2). The Taiwan Strait separates the main island of Taiwan and mainland China – and varies in width from 100 to 150 miles (Roy 2003, 2). The main island of Taiwan is approximately the size of the U.S. state of Ohio. The main island of Taiwan is beautiful, covered by mountains and hills, mostly, where more than 22 million people live.

According to historian Denny Roy, many religions comprise Taiwan, including Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Christianity. The largest religion in Taiwan is a combination of both Buddhism and Taoism. The assorted religions practiced on the main island of Taiwan exist as a result of hundreds of years of influence and colonization by various powers, including the Portuguese, Dutch, Chinese, and Japanese.
The following map depicts the location of the main island of Taiwan and its proximity to mainland China:

![Map of Taiwan](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/taiwan.html)

Figure 3. Map of Taiwan. Source: (Map of Taiwan, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/taiwan.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/taiwan.html), March 9, 2012.)
The conquering of the main island of Taiwan was possible because upper echelon Chinese mainlanders believed that the aboriginal peoples living on the main island of Taiwan were primitive and uncivilized. Roy, in *Taiwan: A Political History*, writes that to the Chinese mainlanders, the aborigines “possessed nothing of interest to China” and that they “were unwilling to pay tribute or learn Chinese ways” (Roy 2003, 11). These early feelings of resentment and scorn were borne out of a Chinese expedition in 1430 to the main island of Taiwan. At the time of the expedition, China did not claim the main island of Taiwan or make any claims on other territories, including the smaller islands in the archipelago. In fact, Chinese officials detested the island and its inhabitants so much that “the Chinese central government forbade emigration on pain of execution by beheading” because it was considered by imperial courts to be “barbarian territory” (Roy 2003, 11). Roy explains that outside settlements of Chinese people were feared to turn into “havens for pirates and rebels” and that the earliest “conception of state and regime security called for distancing China from Taiwan” (Roy 2003, 11).

In 1598, the Japanese government made an attempt to conquer the main island of Taiwan but encountered aborigines who intimidated them away from the island. Japanese pirates eventually claimed a small part of the island but their intolerable isolation from other people finally forced them to leave. In the late 1500s, a prohibition against fishing in the Taiwan Strait was lifted by China and fisherman began to camp on the main island of Taiwan. By the seventeenth century, Taiwan had already begun to take shape as a place for unsatisfied Chinese mainlanders. For those Chinese who sought a better life
than the one they had on the mainland, Taiwan was a place where they might own a plot of land, work for themselves, and leave behind the limitations of the life on mainland China. By the eighteenth century, Taiwan was a place to which anti-government mainland Chinese citizens could emigrate. On the island, the Chinese lived alongside aboriginal peoples in a mostly cooperative fashion, until the Dutch arrived in 1624 (Roy 2003, 12-15).

**Dutch Rule Over Taiwan**

The Dutch ruled over Taiwan from 1624-1663. The Dutch East India Company sought out Taiwan because they were in search of a base for trade with China and Japan. They originally landed on the island of Penghu. They were confronted by Ming forces on the island of Penghu, which was Chinese territory. The Chinese ordered the Dutch settlers to leave Penghu, suggesting Taiwan as an alternative. The Dutch established a settlement in the area of Tainan. While the Dutch were settling, the Spanish attempted to conquer them on the main island of Taiwan. At the time, Spain was ruling the Philippines which was to the south and attempted to take Tainan from the Dutch in 1626 and again in 1629. In 1938, the Spanish soldiers on the main island of Taiwan began to succumb to illness by diseases, the cures for which were unknown. The Spanish finally relinquished their small hold on Tainan and the Dutch were free to rule as they saw fit.

The Dutch were the first begin to develop Taiwan by organizing labor, creating mines, initiating plantations, and introducing new crops and tools (Roy 2003, 2). The Dutch also managed to successfully trade by exporting dried fish and deer meat to China.
and sugar and deerskins to Japan (Roy 2003, 15-16). Notable about Dutch rule over Taiwan were the heavy taxes they imposed and the bullying and extortion carried out by Dutch soldiers (Roy 2003, 16). Though the Dutch were not well liked by the aboriginal peoples, the Dutch also conducted missionary programs and provided education for aboriginal children. In some areas where the Dutch ruled, aborigines converted to Christianity, though their original belief system continued to imbue them. The Dutch helped the aborigines to learn Romanized writing for aboriginal languages. At the time, the Dutch were able to cultivate a more cooperative relationship with the aborigines on the main island of Taiwan than they were able to cultivate with the Chinese. After the Dutch left Taiwan, the Chinese and aborigines were alone on the island again.

The Dutch were ousted as Taiwan’s colonial power by Cheng Ch’eng-kung, who is seen today as one of the forefathers of Taiwan. Cheng Ch’eng-kung was the son of a wealthy trader, Chih-lung, who had fought against the Manchu regime in China because he supported the Ming Dynasty in China instead. After Chih-lung died, his son, Cheng Ch’eng-kung, employed twenty-five thousand troops that forced the Dutch to flee Taiwan. (Roy 2003, 17). Under the rule of Cheng, many more Chinese left mainland China for Taiwan. Cheng tried to maintain good relations with the Qing Dynasty of mainland China. Roy writes that Cheng was “willing to accept the status of an autonomous tributary state” but that “the late imperial political tradition gave no support to any idea of one empire, two systems” because Taiwan was seen as a place for Chinese
to go to cultivate ideas for military attacks against the mainland (Roy 2003, 18). These feelings led to a Qing takeover of Taiwan in 1683.

**Qing Rule Over Taiwan**

The Qing Dynasty did not have a clear plan for how to manage the people living in Taiwan. Initially, the Chinese approached the Dutch to buy Taiwan once again but the Dutch were uninterested. It occurred to the Chinese that they might send all of the Chinese living on Taiwan to return to the mainland. This was refuted by the notion that the Chinese government had to deal with Taiwan eventually and the government did not want the main island to remain empty. If the island were empty, it would still seem like a security threat to the mainland. In 1684, these ideas led the Chinese government to incorporating Taiwan under its governance. The Chinese took on the main island of Taiwan as a part of the Fujian province.

The Qing Dynasty had three concerns regarding Taiwan. 1) It should be closely watched so that foreigners do not take over the main island again. 2) It should be monitored in an effort to prevent dissenters from organizing attacks against the mainland. 3) It should not become an economic burden to the mainland (Roy 2003, 19). Other than these goals, the Qing Dynasty did not have a clear plan for how to manage Taiwan. This resulted in the brief but notable occupation of the main island of Taiwan by a small French force in the northern areas from 1884-1885. The Qing Dynasty was not bothered by the presence of the French and it chose to take responsibility for only a small part of the island. Even though the Qing Dynasty ruled a small part of the island, it protected
their share with ten thousand troops from an army in Fujian. Even with a force as significant as ten thousand, the Chinese did not rule over the majority of the island and the Chinese people were not the majority on the island. The Qing’s weak control over the island resulted in conflicts between villagers, outlaws, different Chinese clans, and between the Chinese and the aborigines. The lack of Qing control over the island also led to more than one hundred rebellions, large and small.

During the time of Qing rule, various factors made it difficult for the island to be governed efficiently. First, the mindset of the people living on Taiwan was already more individualistic than that of the typical Chinese mainlander’s disposition. Many families living in Taiwan earned their living by hunting, fishing, and trading, which was very different than the ways of the mainland Chinese. Second, making Qing governance even more challenging were the conflicts created between various ethnic groups. The Fujianese and the Hakka ethnic groups had a contentious relationship even before the arrival of Qing forces but the presence of Qing forces made the situation more challenging. The Qing forces sometimes enlisted men from the Hakka ethnic group to assist in quelling rebellions by the Fujianese. This increased the tensions between the two groups. Worse than fighting other ethnic groups, the Fujianese fought within their group at times also. Fujianese from rival cities engaged in violence on several occasions (Roy 2003, 21).

The Qing Dynasty’s control over the island led to vacillating policies on emigration from mainland China to Taiwan. Because of the emigration from the
mainland, there was not enough land on which to grow crops for all of the settlers. This led to a superfluous labor pool of only single, unemployed, unmarried Chinese men from the mainland. At the time, these were the only people allowed to go to Taiwan from the mainland. This resulted in various outbreaks of violence because of the abundance of young men without work.

Since Taiwan was not a post that held much recognition for Chinese administrators from the mainland, public officials did not take care to create fair policies or enact policies and laws fairly. The officials lacked foresight when making bigger decisions, which led to a low quality of governance. The low quality of governance was susceptible to frequent rebellions. Denny Roy’s *Taiwan: A Political History* explains that there were “a total of 159 sizable rebellions during the period of Qing rule, including three particularly large Great Rebellions in 1714, 1787, and 1833” (Roy 2003, 21). One of the uprisings that occurred in 1721 was the Chu Yi-kuei uprising. Chu was a duck farmer who led interested and enthusiastic rebels to two military zones where they obtained weapons. This force began as a small group of merely hundreds and grew to a sizable several thousand people. At first the Hakka were included as part of this rebellion but after some time, the group disintegrated. Corrupt but true, officials offered rewards to aboriginal peoples and to anyone for the literal heads of rebels. This led to killing with abandon on the island. Despite this, Chu’s group of rebels was able to defeat the government and obtained control of the island for two weeks. Ethnic tensions
between the Hakkas and the Fujianese led to strife within the group and as a result, the group officially fractioned into two (Roy 2003, 23).

While the rebels were fighting each other, the Qing Dynasty on mainland China amassed a force of nearly twelve thousand troops to return to the main island of Taiwan and retaliate. Once again, Qing forces solicited the assistance of the Hakkas in their retaliation efforts against rebels on the island. With their help, Qing forces were able to defeat the rebels and regain control. Other uprisings would soon follow (Roy 2003, 24).

In 1832, another rebellion occurred when a drought on the main island of Taiwan reduced a rice crop. Residents preferred to retain their crop yields for food but local officials organized to trade the crops without permission. When the farmers learned that their rice was no longer available, the Fujianese spearheaded a riot. As the Fujianese rebelled, their efforts evolved into a fight against the Hakkas. Local officials did not make an effort to quell the violence leading to the deaths of many Hakka and Fujianese people (Roy 2003, 25).

A third instance of rebellion on the island occurred in 1786 led by Lin Shuang-wen. Lin was initially interested in overthrowing the Qing forces but as the rebellion grew, it, too, evolved into a destructive force aimed at other ethnic groups. Eventually, a combination of Hakka, Fujianese, and aboriginal forces overthrew those who were a part of Lin’s rebellion (Roy 2003, 25).

Noting the overwhelming number of rebellions, the Qing Dynasty attempted to address this situation by reducing the number of people on the island. In 1730, Chinese
emperor Yongzheng changed the immigration policies. Single, unmarried, unemployed men without families were forced to return to mainland China. Additionally, many of the residents living in the Guangdong province of China were assumed to be dissenting in nature and were forbidden from applying for emigration to Taiwan. Since many of the Guangdong residents were of the Hakka ethnic group, this was an especially important policy because it was thought to reduce the ethnic fighting between the Hakka and Fujianese groups.

Even though many Chinese officials agreed that reducing the population and implementing restrictive immigration laws would help the government control the island, there were some government officials who disagreed. Those who disagreed believed that more people and more development on the island would be better for China. They argued to open the immigration policies and to allow families to go to Taiwan. These officials strongly felt that the presence of families might bring a sense of order and stability to the island (Roy 2003, 23). They also argued that more land should be cleared for use by the people on the island and that this would also bring more aborigines under control. These dissenting government officials thought a larger population on Taiwan would lead to greater economic strength for China. The Qing Dynasty decided to develop the island by gradually implementing these policies.

Taiwan developed under Qing governance. It grew rice and tea and became a major exporter of tea. It also became the world’s number one supplier of camphor rose. Taiwan also exported opium because of its high monetary value in other markets.
Taiwan’s early successes under the Qing rule led to its past colonizers and other interested foreign countries to reconsider purchasing or seizing the island, including the United States, the British, the French, and the Japanese (Roy 2003, 29).

As Taiwan developed under evolved Qing rule, Chinese officials neglected to “make the island more defensible in the likely event of war with Japan” (Roy 2003, 28). Instead, ruling official focused on clearing more land for cultivation, building more roads, and assimilating aboriginal communities (Roy 2003, 23). Mainland Chinese administrators began to fear that Taiwan’s appeal was growing internationally and that it was ill-equipped to defend itself against an attack from external forces. In 1884, the French attempted to seize Taiwan as repayment after the Franco-Chinese War. The French were not successful in their attempt. Acknowledging Taiwan’s status as a coveted island, the Chinese government elevated Taiwan’s status from being merely a portion of the Fujian Province to its own province. The Qing Dynasty would continue to govern, develop, and defend Taiwan as a province until the Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

**Japanese Rule Over Taiwan**

The Qing Dynasty of mainland China ruled Taiwan until after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. Though the war’s main concern was Korea, the Japanese sought Taiwan as part of their winnings after the war. The Japanese saw Taiwan as an ideal base for defending the islands it already possessed. The prime minister’s advisor, Inoue Tsuyoshi, wrote to the prime minister announcing that Taiwan was an ideal location to defend against other islands in the south. In his letter, Inoue Tsuyoshi declared, “Taiwan can
control maritime rights in the Yellow Sea, the North China Sea, and the Sea of Japan” (Roy 2003, 32). Tsuyoshi also advised the prime minister that as Japan grew into a combination of overcrowded cities and fewer resources, Taiwan was a viable source of food and natural materials. Some Chinese opposed this handover, arguing that malaria pervaded the main island of Taiwan and that the people living there were mostly opium addicted. The Japanese understood that many challenges and obstacles might come with taking over Taiwan but guided by their ambitions for the island, insisted that they take charge.

In May 1895, the Treaty of Shimonoseki made it official that Taiwan belonged to Japan. In a message sent via telegraph, officials in Beijing informed officials in Taiwan that the Treaty of Shimonoseki had been signed, ceding the territory to the Japanese. The Taiwanese were surprised and urged the governor, T’ang Ching-sung to reply to the mainland officials explaining that “the literati and people of Formosa are determined to resist subjection by Japan” and “they have declared themselves an independent Island Republic, at the same time recognizing the suzerainty of the sacred Tsing (Qing) Dynasty” (Roy 2003, 33). The Taiwanese were insistent that the Japanese not take over and even encouraged the British to take over the island to resist the Japanese take over. When the appeal to the British failed, the Taiwanese then declared independence in May 1895 (Roy 2003, 33). Those who were opposed to a Japanese takeover were mostly Chinese intellectuals in Taiwan who feared a rift in cultural connections to the mainland Chinese. This declaration did not prevent the Japanese from colonizing the island. While
many people were opposed to the Chinese relinquishing Taiwan to the Japanese, some believed that the Japanese could provide a kind of governance that the Chinese were unable to provide. Since Japan was a modern country, some believed that they would be able to develop the island, facilitate trade, and govern the Taiwanese successfully. Roy writes that the Japanese colonial period on Taiwan made Taiwan a truly modern place. The Japanese were able to successfully defend against external attacks, built lighthouses on the coast, and made ports more efficient for trading (Roy 2003, 33).

During the first two years the Japanese ruled Taiwan, they granted all those who no longer wished to stay on the island permission to leave for mainland China. A staggering quarter of Taiwan’s population chose to relocate to the mainland. Those who chose to stay in Taiwan were of the belief that their options under the Japanese were more plentiful than those on the main island of Taiwan. During this time, the coastal areas of China were especially poor. Though there were many who made the choice to stay on the island, there were still quite a few rebellions against the Japanese between 1892 and 1902 (Roy 2003, 35). The rebellions led the Japanese to indiscriminately treating all people on the island as rebels. Japanese colonizers were often cruel to the people of Taiwan during their possession of the island. Particularly, the Japanese were insistent upon eradicating the Taoist religion, which had Chinese roots, and replacing it with its Shinto religion. The Japanese ordered that every home maintain a household Shinto shrine and Chinese holidays were not observed. Some Taiwanese were resentful toward the Qing Dynasty for giving Taiwan to Japan and considered supporting Japanese
colonizers because Japan was an advanced, modern nation (Roy 2003, 45). In Taiwan, Japanese citizens were favored for high ranking jobs and education and lived a lifestyle different than most Taiwanese citizens. Japan would rule Taiwan like this for five decades all while politics on mainland China were shifting.

The Beginning of the Republic of China

In 1911, the Qing Dynasty on mainland China was taken over by a revolution begun by nationalist leader, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who reinitiated the Kuomintang Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Republic of China (Republic of China). After Sun died in 1925, his deputy, Chiang Kai-shek led the KMT. Though the revolution in China was borne out of ideology brought to China from Bolshevik advisors, Chiang Kai-shek rid the KMT of all Communists. The KMT also assumed power over Taiwan. At the time, the KMT and Chinese mainlanders saw Taiwan as backwards. Mainlanders arrived in Taiwan, like all other colonizers in the past, with a sense of supremacy. Mainlanders assumed that five decades of rule by the Japanese had poisoned the Taiwanese against nationalism for China. The Taiwanese, too, held a sense of supremacy because the Japanese provided education and infrastructure and created a middle class. Mainlanders typically moved into the areas where Japanese leaders once lived (Roy 2003, 55-62). A contentious relationship between the mainlanders and the Taiwanese began to brew on the island. Many KMT leaders abused their power over the Taiwanese, which led to several small uprisings. The leader appointed by Chiang Kai-shek to manage the island, Chen Yi, used force to squash political movements and rebellion among the Taiwanese. Chiang Kai-
Shek, disturbed by the uprisings in Taiwan, ordered the execution of Chen Yi in mainland China. It was announced to the Taiwanese people that his execution was the result of the abuses carried out by Chen Yi against the people of Taiwan (Roy 2003, 68-74). Chen-Yi was replaced by governor-general Wei Tao-ming, once China’s ambassador to the United States during World War II.
CHAPTER IV

ACTIONS THAT PROLIFERATED MISTRUST WITH CHINA

This paper argues that there are two reasons for why the United States should alter its relationship with Taiwan in favor of more enduring relations with China: 1) The ambiguous relationship, known as strategic ambiguity, is souring relations with both Taiwan and China. 2) Without direct statements, the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China are working on cross-strait relations with no external diplomatic interventions. This section of the paper will pursue reason one, explaining the ways in which simultaneously conflicting relations with China and Taiwan has bred significant mistrust and has begun to sour relations with both China and Taiwan. This chapter will specifically discuss some of the actions taken by the United States that have proliferated mistrust with China.

Some of the actions taken by the United States to breed mistrust with China include the presence of U.S. advisor George C. Marshall on mainland China during the Chinese Civil War; the signing of the Taiwan Relations Act by Jimmy Carter after the two communiqués with China had been established; the deference George H. W. Bush showed to Taiwan during his presidency; Bill Clinton’s military intervention in the Taiwan Strait in 1996; the United States’ continuous sale of weapons to the Republic of China; and the current U.S. administration’s most recent visits to several countries in Asia and its emerging strategy on Asia-Pacific affairs to begin an open dialogue and
connect on mutual interests with other countries in Asia, to the seeming exclusion of China.

1945 –

One of the actions taken by the United States to breed mistrust with China includes the presence of U.S. political advisor, George C. Marshall, during the Chinese Civil War. Both the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang disliked U.S. involvement in the Chinese Civil War. In 1945, U.S. President Harry Truman sent political advisor General George C. Marshall to engage the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang into conciliatory negotiations during the Chinese Civil War, all the while hoping that the KMT would prevail. Within the United States, there was a lot of public support for the KMT because of its anti-communist ideals. Denny Roy writes that U.S. involvement in China’s Civil War “made it impossible for the CCP to believe that the United States was a neutral arbiter” (Roy 2003, 107). At the time, in the United States, the People’s Republic of China was earning a terrible reputation because a deep resentment of communism had spread throughout the country. The impression that most Americans held was that of a China in cahoots with communist Soviets. Roy writes that “many influential individuals and lobbying groups such as the Committee of One Million urged continued support for ‘free China’ and opposed normal relations with Beijing” (Roy 2003, 108). Other U.S. strategic advisors like General Douglas MacArthur wanted the United States to support the Republic of China openly. He thought that “under a pro-U.S. government Taiwan would be an important asset to…a containment strategy, as part
of an island chain fencing in the Communist camp” (Roy 2003, 108). The public and
government support for anti-communism began the breeding of mistrust between the U.S.
and China.

1978 -

Trust with the People’s Republic of China was breeched once again when U.S.
President Jimmy Carter (who served from 1977-1981) signed the Taiwan Relations Act
(TRA) on the main island of Taiwan in 1979. The idea for the TRA was borne out of a
desire to maintain “commercial, cultural and other relations with the people on Taiwan on
an unofficial basis” (Taiwan: Hearings 1979, 3–10). Even though President Carter had
decided that Taiwan’s place in United States’ anti-communism strategy in Asia was
finished, the TRA was signed, thus approving the continued sale of weapons to Taiwan to
ensure its protection in the East. The exact text of the Taiwan Relations Act states that it
is “an act to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to
promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of
commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the
people on Taiwan, and for other purposes” (American Institute in Taiwan 2012). Section
two states that “it is the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a
defensive character” (American Institute in Taiwan 2012). Under the Taiwan Relations
Act, the United States “is willing to provide Taiwan with advanced weapons and other
military equipment” (Vogel 2005). According to an article published in Jane’s Defence
Industry on May 1, 2007, it was written that “the Chinese ambassador to the U.S. has
urged Washington to stop selling military equipment to Taiwan, according to China’s state-controlled news agency” and Zhou Wenzhong has said “stop selling weapons to Taiwan and stop sending any wrong signals to Taiwan’s independence forces” because “the civil war status between Beijing and Taiwan is not yet over” (Grevatt 2007). Based on these clear statements, it is obvious that the Taiwan Relations Act has contributed to breeding mistrust between the United States and the People’s Republic of China.

1982 —

Ronald Reagan began his presidency with a staunch stance against communism. Initially, Reagan solicited international support from countries that pledged to fight communism. Regan was, at the time, very focused on a campaign against the Soviet Union and Mikhail Gorbachev. Before Regan’s 1984 visit to China, he made six assurances to Taiwan that have remained in place.

Ronald Reagan made six assurances to the Republic of China in July 1982 that encouraged the PRC’s sustained doubt and suspicion about the United States. The origin of the assurances is unknown but they were borne out of a desire to protect Taiwan. The specific points are identified as: 1) The United States had not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan. 2) The United States had not agreed to hold prior consultations with the Chinese on arms sales to Taiwan. 3) The United States would not play any mediation role between Taiwan and Beijing. 4) The United States had not agreed to revise the Taiwan Relations Act. 5) The United States has not altered its
position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan. 6) The United States would not exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the Chinese (Tucker 2009, 148).

Though Reagan subsequently abandoned his stance that the PRC was proliferating communism and initiated a friendship with the Chinese, long after his presidency the six assurances have remained intact as part of the United States’ approach to relations with Taiwan.

1989 –

Former United States President George H. W. Bush specialized in foreign policy with China after he served an ambassadorial post in Beijing in 1974. Later, he would begin his presidency, from 1989-1993, knowing more than any other president about the People’s Republic of China (Tucker 2009, 172). Before George H.W. Bush was inaugurated as president, two versions of biographical information about him were published, one on mainland China that did not include a pledge to sustain the Taiwan Relations Act, and another published in Taiwan, which announced his pledge to uphold the Taiwan Relations Act. This was disturbing to both the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China (Tucker 2009, 174). In June of 1989, protests in Tiananmen Square were portrayed in the American media with images that did not encourage favorable feelings for the People’s Republic of China, leading to a destabilization of trust between the United States and China. Almost simultaneously, the Soviet Union was disintegrating and foreign policy experts felt less of a desperation around maintaining relations with the People’s Republic of China. Senator Jesse Helms, known for his racist
remarks against the first female black senator, Carol Moseley Braun, “sought to end contacts with ‘Red China’ and treat Taiwan as the real China” (Tucker 2003, 178). In 1991, George Bush appealed to the chairman of the Subcommittee on International Trade of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Max Baucus., in a letter stating that “he promised to promote Taiwan’s membership in the GATT as a ‘customs territory’ and…said that if Taiwan qualified first it should enter GATT first and not have to wait for China” (Tucker 2003, 178). These actions, and the tough stance on an F-16 sale to Taiwan, are some examples of ways in which the United States promulgated mistrust with China during the Bush Administration. This was especially disappointing to China because George H.W. Bush was considered an ally president after his ambassadorship post in Beijing. One of the ways in which the People’s Republic of China demonstrated its disapproval of these actions included new trade barriers and missile exports to Syria and Pakistan, even against the wishes of the United States.

1993 --

Bill Clinton’s presidency (1993-2001) allowed for more blunders that incensed the People’s Republic of China and continued a long line of actions to fuel Chinese mistrust. Marking the start of Chinese-American relations under the Clinton administration, in May 1993, several U.S. intelligence mistakes contributed to the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. This, combined with Clinton’s foreign affairs specialist Anthony Lake’s interest in humanitarian efforts, led the Clinton administration to “lump China with authoritarian…states like North Korea” (Tucker
Appointed Secretary of State in 1993, Warren Christopher had hoped to “facilitate a peaceful evolution of China from communism to democracy by encouraging the forces of economic and political liberalization” (Tucker 2003, 196), an idea not too pleasing to the People’s Republic of China. During a trip to Beijing, Secretary of State Warren Christopher claims to have experienced tough meetings that turned his enthusiasm away from China. In 1994, other influential politicians made it clear that they supported the Republic of China in official public statements, including Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.), and Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). This group especially favored Taiwan’s admission to the United Nations. During Clinton’s presidency, the president of the Republic of China, Lee Teng-hui (who served as ROC president from 1988-2000) visited the United States. In a memorable speech, he “referred to the Republic of China fifteen times, repeatedly talked about nation and country, and urged China to follow Taiwan’s model of political development” (Tucker 2003, 214). China’s response to Lee’s trip to the United States was a reflection of the People’s Republic of China’s profound sense of betrayal. They postponed negotiations with the United States on arms control, forbade their defense minister to visit Washington, and withdrew its ambassador (Tucker 2003, 216). After these demonstrations of expressing their displeasure, the People’s Republic of China engaged in military drills in the Taiwan Strait. Specifically, this was the first time that their military activity in the Strait contradicted their other previously consistent activities of movements away from the Strait. The People’s Republic of China commanded “Republic of China force…to fire
four nuclear-capable M-9 missiles into the waters of Taiwan” (Tucker 2003, 218). In response to the People’s Republic of China’s military exercises, the Clinton administration rushed to aid Taiwan by sending two aircraft carrier battle groups into the Taiwan Strait. The actions of the United States in response to the People’s Republic of China’s military power were interpreted as a determined commitment to protect, defend, and shield Taiwan and its interests against any forces from mainland China. The lasting impact of U.S. intervention in this case is that China has never been able to fully trust the United States. China has now seen the extent to which the United States is willing to go in order to protect Taiwan, which the People’s Republic of China views as an intrusion into Asia-Pacific relations.

2011 –

After a visit by China’s President, Hu Jintao, in January 2011, the United States has taken actions that have potentially been perceived as trust-breaching with China. In November 2011, the current U.S. administration declared a negotiation to create the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade investment platform to include the largest economies in Asia. According to Kenneth Lieberthal’s December 2011 Foreign Policy article, The American Pivot to Asia, the qualifications stipulated by the United States for participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership include “transparency, protection of intellectual property, labor rights, environmental protection” though “TPP principles differ greatly from those that guide most Chinese actions in the economic and trade arena.” Also in November 2011, President Barack Obama journeyed to Asia clarifying
that “on this trip America will lead in Asia in promoting democracy and human rights” (Lieberthal 2011). Following the president’s trip, Hilary Clinton was the first secretary of state in fifty years to visit Myanmar in December 2011. While the trips enhanced the administration’s overall connection to the Asia-Pacific region, they were a disservice to the trust that the U.S. has with China. In Kenneth Lieberthal’s December 2011 article in Foreign Policy, The American Pivot to Asia, he explains that “China, not surprisingly, is worried about these new developments” and that these trips “reinforce China’s abiding suspicions about the United States,” and that “the United States has always been concerned primarily with protecting its own global dominance…doing everything it can to retard or disrupt China’s rise” (Lieberthal 2011). In addition to the trips to Asia that excluded dialogues with China, Lieberthal’s article discusses other ways in which the current administration is diminishing solid relations with China. He writes that: “Beijing…sees basically hostile American efforts in the following spheres: promoting dissent in China in order to create instability that America can then fan via cyber activities into upheaval that will bring down the Chinese Communist Party’s rule; pressing China to revalue its currency so as to increase destabilizing unemployment in China and direct Americans’ attention away from the United States’ own failures; creating problems for China by fanning fears about Beijing’s intentions among its neighbors and encouraging those, such as Vietnam, that have traditionally harbored deep suspicions of Chinese ambitions; forging cooperation among countries – especially the major democracies – in Asia to create obstacles to China’s achieving its rightful role as
the major power in the region; challenging China’s model of development as an alternative to the tarnished Western democratic model; and using measures such as the formation of the TPP” (Lieberthal 2011). These perceptions of U.S. actions in the Asia-Pacific region hack away at the trust and relationship building established during President Hu Jintao’s visit to the United States. In addition to the Asia-Pacific tour for U.S. officials, recently Taiwan officially qualified for visa waiver status in the United States, which will allow visitors and tourists who hold a passport from Taiwan to enter the United States without a visa. This waiver was certainly noticed by the Chinese as a move to strengthen the United States’ relationship with China, thereby souring relations further with China.

**Arms Sales to Taiwan**

The most egregious action in which the United States engages to breed mistrust with China is the continuous selling of arms to Taiwan. The United States is the only country that currently sells military equipment to Taiwan. In a New York Times article called “China Rebuffs United States over Taiwan Arms Deal,” it was reported that China “canceled a series of military and diplomatic contacts with the United States to protest a planned multi-billion dollar U.S. arms sale to Taiwan” (2008). The deal was for $6.5 billion worth of advanced weaponry and military equipment, including missiles and attack helicopters. Chinese officials from Beijing, ultimately, did not continue their planned visit with senior-level administrators about military-to-military plans. Additionally, a senior-level Chinese general also canceled his trip to the United States.
Fortunately, at the time, this did not disrupt China’s participation in the Six-Party talks to convince North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Even though the People’s Republic of China agreed to participate, still, in the Six-Party talks, this decision has had a detrimental effect on encouraging the People’s Republic of China to want to work closely with the United States on thwarting Iran’s nuclear weapons ambitions, evidence that the United States is only diminishing its relationship with China as it continues to support Taiwan.

As recently as January 30, 2010, it was reported in the Washington Post that the current administration authorized the sale of six billion dollars’ worth of Patriot anti-missile systems, helicopters, mine-sweeping ships, and communications equipment to Taiwan. The sale was announced by the U.S. Defense Secretary Cooperation Agency. Even though Chinese leaders have consistently warned the United States that more arms sales to Taiwan will have a negative effect on U.S.-China relations, the United States still approved the exorbitant exchange. This sale also occurred just before the president of China, Hu Jintao, was supposed to have made a trip to the United States in April 2010. The sale was particularly insensitive on the part of the United States considering that it included a $3.1 billion package of 60 Blackhawk helicopters. In the 1980s, the United States sold 24 Blackhawks to the People’s Republic of China. After the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, the People’s Republic of China appealed to the United States to purchase spare parts to repair some helicopters in order to save the injured. This request was flatly
denied by the United States, thus perpetuating the People’s Republic of China’s aversion to United States policy toward Taiwan.

In an article published in Jane’s Defence Industry in January 7, 2010, called “China Raises Spectre of Embargo in Light of Missile Sale to Taiwan,” it was stated that a “Chinese official has suggested sanctions should be imposed on U.S. firms selling weapons to Taipei” (Grevatt 2010). This was in response to a statement published by the United States Department of Defense announcing that Lockheed Martin will provide 253 PAC-3 tactical missiles, five test missiles, 20 launcher modification kits, 15 motor control units, 13 fire control solutions computers and associated equipment and spares. Soon after, Vice Admiral Yang Yi of China was quoted by a Chinese state news service announcing that the companies that sold weapons to Taiwan were also interested in selling weapons to China. His suggestion was that “Beijing should impose sanctions on these companies.” He asked, “why don’t we take defensive countermeasures against the U.S. companies?” and continued further, “in addition to lodging protests to the U.S. government about arms sales, why don’t we impose sanctions on the perpetrators?” The article goes on describe some related comments by China’s foreign ministry spokesperson, Jiang Yu, who said on January 5, 2010 that “Beijing resolutely opposes U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and have made solemn representations to the U.S. over that” (Grevatt 2010). On behalf of China, Jiang Yu said “we urge the U.S. to recognize the gravity of arms sales to Taiwan…[and to] drop its plan to sell arms to Taiwan and stop its current arms sales so as not to undermine the overall cooperation between China and the
U.S.” (Grevatt 2010). In another article published by Jane’s Defence Industry, it was written that “according to a recent Congressional Research Service report, Taiwan ranked eighth among developing nations in terms of arms-transfer agreements in 2004, receiving equipment worth USD 600 million” (Vogel 2005). Jane’s also published that “the principal value and clients of U.S. arms and military service agreements signed during 2004” amounted to “USD 590 million” (Murphy 2006). The following chart demonstrates some of the arms transfers between the United States and Taiwan that have been viewed as most egregious by the People’s Republic of China.
The chart was compiled using information gathered in Jane’s Defence Industry’s online database:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weapon/Service</th>
<th>Estimated Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>• 63 Bell AH-1Z Cobra helicopters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>• 63 Bell AH-1Z Cobra helicopters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>• MK-46 Mod 5A and torpedoes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>• 3 new CH-47SD “Super D” Chinook aircraft</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>• Missile hardware (10 AIM-9M Sidewinder and five AIM-7M Sparrow missiles)</td>
<td>280 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• F-16 pilot training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>• Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>• 66 F-16C/D multirole aircraft</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>• Patriot Advanced Capability missiles</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• AH-64D Block III Apache helicopters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Javelin guided missiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• spare parts for F-5E/F, C-130H, F-16A/B and Indigenous Defense (IDF) aircraft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• submarine launched Harpoon Block II missiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• upgrade of four E-2T aircraft to the Hawkeye 2000 configuration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>• Refurbish 12 P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft</td>
<td>665 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>• 60 Sikorsky UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters</td>
<td>11 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the second phase of Po Sheng c4ISR/Link 16 program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• two Osprey-class minesweepers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) air defense systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Harpoon missiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>• Radar export licenses on board Taiwan’s Indigenous Defense Fighter (IDF)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>• Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles</td>
<td>421 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maverick missiles</td>
<td>5.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 66 Lockheed Martin F-16 C/D fighter aircraft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Arms transfers between the U.S. and Taiwan. *Source:* Data compiled by author from Jane’s Defence Industry database
CHAPTER V

ACTIONS THAT BRED MISTRUST WITH TAIWAN

The previous section of this paper demonstrated that the United States’ policy of strategic ambiguity toward Taiwan has led to a rift in U.S. relations with the People’s Republic of China. This section will demonstrate that the United States’ policy of strategic ambiguity is also significantly sabotages the United States’ relationship with the Republic of China. The following chart depicts the U.S. presidents that corresponded to the presidents of Taiwan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President of Taiwan</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>U.S. President</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>1981-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>1993-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Ying-jeou</td>
<td>2008-</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>2009-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Taiwanese and U.S. leadership since 1949. Source: Data collected by author.

Since the United States signed the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, which states that the U.S. will provide Taiwan with weapons, the U.S. has consistently delayed, thwarted, or stalled on arms sales to Taiwan in a timely manner. The following examples demonstrate the United States’ insistence on maintain strategic ambiguity, which leads to the reluctance to respond the weapon sale requests:
1) An arms deal submitted by the President of Taiwan, Chen Shui-ban, in 2001 was submitted for approval to the United States in 2003 and “has been continually blocked…due to concerns over necessity, price, and timing” (Grevatt 2007).

2) In 2007, Taiwan bid to purchase sixty-six F-16/D multirole aircraft, which will cost the Republic of China approximately 5.5 billion (USD). In an article published in Jane’s Defence Industry, on November 1, 2007, it was written that the “George Bush administration has not been responsive to Taiwan’s clear expression of interest in receiving price and availability data for the F-16 C/D fighters” (Grevatt 2007).

3) According to Georgetown University history professor, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, a few weeks after Beijing began to plan for war across the Taiwan Strait, the United States expected the Taiwan to acquiesce to the People’s Republic of China. At the time, the United States “administration directed American diplomatic missions worldwide to explain to host governments that the island possessed no strategic significance and that Washington had no responsibility for it” (Tucker 2009, 13). Moreover, President Truman “followed this with public announcements that the U.S. would not again intervene in the Chinese civil war, signaling that they saw Taiwan as expendable” (Tucker 2009, 13). This vacillation in policy against Taiwan is recorded in the history books and is immortalized forever in the memories of Taiwanese diplomats as a reason to not completely trust the United States’ promise of defense as an indefinite pledge.
4) Richard Nixon’s campaign for Senate in 1950 “benefitted from the help of Allied Syndicates, a public relations firm with a large Republic of China account dedicated to blocking Beijing’s admission to the UN and protecting sizable KMT assets in the U.S.” (Tucker 2009, 35). Nixon also “pledged to veto any attempt to replace Taipei with Beijing in the UN” (Tucker 2009, 35). On a 1965 trip to Asia, Nixon made remarks that reflected a contradictory allegiance: He “told the American diplomat Arthur W. Hummel Jr. that the Nationalists would never go back to the mainland and that Washington would have to improve relations with the People’s Republic of China” (Tucker 2009, 35).

5) In Henry Kissinger’s earliest meetings with Beijing, he, too, “would consistently minimize the significance of Taiwan as an issue for Beijing and as an impediment to progress” (Tucker 2009, 36). Simultaneously, President Nixon was advising that “Kissinger keep in contact with China lobby leaders and meet with the Republic of China ambassador to assure them that only modest steps were being taken to better relations with China.” Bernkopf Tucker writes that “concealment...hampered smooth relations with Taiwan” (Tucker 2009, 37). As the United States made headway with its plan to open friendly relations with the People’s Republic of China, the administration withheld more information from Taiwan’s government. Ralph Clough was a foreign service officer at the time and he said of the situation that “we kept Chiang Kai-shek generally informed, but, of course, he wasn’t confident that we were telling him everything” (Tucker 2009, 38).
6) In March 2009, the Obama administration approved the sale of twelve refurbished P3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft valued at USD 665 million. This was only after a freeze placed by George Bush was lifted. In an interview with *Jane’s Defence Industry* in January 2009, Rupert Hammond-Chambers, president of the Virginia-based U.S.-Taiwan Business Council, said that “President Bush and his advisors had soured irreversibly on Taiwan, resulting in a government unable and/or unwilling to follow through with its earlier commitments…coupled with the flawed notion that China must be appeased” (Grevatt 2009).

The United States has vacillated on its stance with regard to Taiwan based on political predications of various Asia-Pacific experts, which has aggravated U.S.-Taiwan relations and promulgated mistrust.
The following chart highlights some U.S. policy vacillations toward Taiwan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Person/Document</th>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Richard Nixon</td>
<td>In discussions with Premier Zhou Enlai, President Richard Nixon stated that Taiwan was a part of China during his 1972 visit to China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Henry Kissinger</td>
<td>Kissinger his belief that Taiwan would be absorbed by the People’s Republic of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Taiwan Relations Act</td>
<td>Section 2 of the TRA states that the U.S. would consider any hostile actions directed against Taiwan as “a threat to the peace and security of the West Pacific area and of grave concern to the U.S.” Section 3 of the TRA states that “the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Jimmy Carter</td>
<td>After signing the TRA, noted that it provides a president with the option of protecting Taiwan. This is now described as strategic ambiguity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>U.S.-China Joint Communiqué</td>
<td>The United States promised to reduce its arms sales to Taiwan gradually and to keep sales from exceeding either the quality or the quantity of arms sold to Taiwan after the U.S. established relations with the People’s Republic of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>Reagan approved an increase in arms sales to Taiwan even after the 1982 U.S.-China Joint Communiqué.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>Reagan made six assurances in 1982 to support Taiwan’s security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>Strategic ambiguity is conceptualized and implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
<td>During his presidential campaign, he firmly announced to the Chinese that the U.S. would defend Taiwan in a war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Colin Powell</td>
<td>Powell stated that Taiwan “does not enjoy sovereignty as a nation.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. U.S. vacillations on stance with Taiwan. Source: Data compiled by author.
Two additional instances perpetuated mistrust between the Republic of China and United States, one occurring before George H.W. Bush was inaugurated and the other, after he was settled into office. Before the Bush Administration took office, the president met with “Ambassador Han Xu before the inauguration and, when the death of Japan’s Emperor Hirohito provided the opportunity for a February trip to Asia, Bush decided to stop in China” to the dismay of the Republic of China (Tucker 2009, 175). One of the most notable instances of when the United States betrayed the Republic of China was during the Bush Administration. The Republic of China “announced a Six-Year National Development Plan on which it proposed to spend some $300 billion” (Tucker 2009, 175). At first excited at the prospect of the sale, the United States declined the negotiation, based on a reaction from Beijing (Tucker 2009, 178).
CHAPTER VI
STRAIT RELATIONS

China and Taiwan

The exposition of this paper explained that it is important to address and resolve the uncertainty of the relationship between the United States and Taiwan right now because the relationship, known as strategic ambiguity, is souring relations with both China and Taiwan. This section will give another reason for why it is important to address the ambiguity of the relationship between the United States and Taiwan: Without having made direct statements, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China are working on cross-strait relations without external diplomatic interventions. At an undetermined time in the future, the ambiguous relationship that the United States has with Taiwan will not exist because the People’s Republic of China will engage Taiwan, either diplomatically or militarily. If the situation solidifies as one in which China is engaging Taiwan diplomatically, without external initiation, this would lead to a peaceful, and interesting, outcome. While peace between the mainland and the people on Taiwan are one of the prioritized interests of the United States, not initiating the conversation about the trilateral relationship first would mean that the United States stands to lose a ripe opportunity to gain some good will with China’s leaders, and positive visibility, as an influential international mediator. This chapter argues that because China and Taiwan seem to be working on a relationship already, United States leaders ought to consider acting now on initiating a revision of its relationship with
Taiwan. The following is an explanation of the ways in which China and Taiwan are already working on positive relations.

The People’s Republic of China is currently working on and enacting policies to encourage positive thinking about mainland China among the people of Taiwan. In an article written by Phillip C. Saunders, he writes that “Chinese leaders appear to recognize the need to make unification more attractive to people on Taiwan.” The People’s Republic of China is doing so by making economic policies that are more compatible with the mindset of Taiwanese business leaders and individuals. In an article in the Security Studies Journal titled “Public Opinion, Foreign Policy, and the Security Balance in the Taiwan Strait,” scholars Brett V. Benson and Emerson M.S. Niou write that “China continues to open its markets to Taiwanese businessmen and promote other cross-strait exchanges” (Benson and Niou 2000, 281). Benson and Niou explain that some of the other positive exchanges between China and Taiwan include an increase in bilateral trade reaching $70 billion (USD) and an increase in Taiwanese investment to $100 billion (USD) into mainland China in the last twenty years (Benson and Niou 2000, 281).

Though the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China exist in a political limbo, their economies have become inextricably linked in recent years due to trade of goods, trade in services, direct investment, increased cross-strait tourism on both sides, and various other cooperative measures. In May 2009, the Chinese government allowed Taiwan to participate as an observer at the World Health Assembly under the name Chinese Taipei. This was notable because it was the first time that Taiwan was
allowed to participate in the United Nations since 1971 when the People’s Republic of China was recognized as the official government of China. Since then, many Chinese government leaders have spoken openly about their unwavering desire for cross-strait peace. In particular, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has a penchant for cross-strait cooperation. In 2013, he will have served China for ten years. During his decade of service, he has been known for “citing historical and modern sages and literary figures in the annual meeting to express his hope for unification of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait” (The China Post 2012). In a speech addressing his impending retirement date, Wen Jiabao lamented over a poem by Lin Chao-sung, a Taiwanese poet, whose work conveys the hope of unification for China and Taiwan. In a statement expressing his deep desire to unify China and Taiwan, Wen Jiabao informed the public that upon his retirement, it is his preference to go to Taiwan’s Sun Moon Lake. He imbued listeners with warmth when he remarked that “if I’m too old to walk, I would like to go even if I have to crawl” (The China Post 2012).

In early 2012, senior Chinese official, Jia Qinglin, made overtures that reflected a disposition of unofficial unification. Jia Qinglin permeated the youth of Taiwan with a message of togetherness, to get them to identify with Chinese youth. Jia said that “China will pursue cultural exchanges, with the goal of …getting the people of Taiwan, especially young people, to identify more closely with the Chinese nation and culture” (The China Post 2012). Some of Jia Qinglin’s ideas for bringing youth together, culturally, include exchanges in art, opera, and religious education. Jia stated that by
engaging in the cultural exchanges, “China has enhanced the sense of identification of people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits” (The China Post 2012). Statements from Chinese leaders like these reflect the ever-evolving dispositions of Chinese mainlanders who seek to unify China and Taiwan peacefully, without external diplomatic assistance from the international community.

**Republic of China Invests in Cross-strait Peace**

In addition to the evolving social and economic policies of the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of China is making an effort to change policies in Taiwan that favor cross-strait peace. While many Taiwanese nationalists affirm that there is a distinct Taiwanese identity; school curricula in Taiwan emphasizes Taiwan’s history, language, and culture, sometimes without acknowledgment to Chinese history, language, and culture; and a mere 13 percent of Taiwan’s population say that they would prefer unification with mainland China, Taiwan’s political leaders have certainly increased the frequency with which Taiwan and China interact. The current president of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou, is currently working on compatible social systems to benefit both Chinese mainlanders and the Taiwanese. He declared a “diplomatic truce” after recent elections (Roberge and Lee 2009). After Ma was elected, the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits ensured the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement was signed on June 29, 2010 by both the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China. The objectives of the ECFA are three: “1) To
strengthen and advance the economic, trade and investment cooperation between the two 
Parties. 2) To promote further liberalization of trade in goods and services between the 
two Parties and gradually establish fair, transparent and facilitative investment and 
investment protection mechanisms. 3) To expand areas of economic cooperation and 
establish a cooperation mechanism” (Cross-straits Economic Cooperation Framework 
Agreement 2010). At a meeting on cross-strait relations at the Taiwan Affairs Office 
(TAO), there were more than one hundred scholars and experts, including forty from 
Taiwan, prepared to discuss cross-strait economic relations. At the meeting, Wang Yi, the 
Director of the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO), “hailed the Economic Cooperation 
Framework Agreement signed in June 2010” (The China Post 2012). His sentiments were 
shared by many.

Since the election of Ma Ying-jeou as Taiwan’s president, other Republic of 
China policies demonstrate that China and Taiwan are collaborating on unofficial forms 
of unification without external international intervention. For example, Ma has requested 
an overhaul of Taiwan’s policies for admitting Chinese students to Taiwan’s universities. 
In an article published February 2012, The China Post stated that “the policy is aimed at 
encouraging more exchanges between university students on both sides of the Taiwan 
Strait” (The China Post 2012). Some of the policies that will receive stringent reviews 
include policies that prevent Chinese students from obtaining scholarships, part-time 
jobs, professional licenses, and health insurance. The desires to change these policies
reflect the Republic of China’s diligent response to the People’s Republic of China’s request for mending the rift between youth on the mainland and in Taiwan.

As government policies change to reflect an inclination toward unofficial unification, individual citizens living on mainland China and in Taiwan have become interested in exploring across the strait themselves. In their article “Public Opinion, Foreign Policy, and the Security Balance in the Taiwan Strait,” Benson and Niou write that “more Taiwanese are…interested in integrating with the mainland to take advantage of such opportunities as work, education, and travel” (Benson and Niou 2000, 281). Today, there are many Taiwanese who visit, live, and work on mainland China. Nearly four million people visited China from Taiwan in 2004 and in 2005. At the time Benson and Niou collaborated on their article, the number of Taiwanese living and working in China was at least 300,000 and the number of Taiwanese studying on mainland China was approximately 5,000. In an article published by the China Post on March 8, 2012, it was reported that the number of applications filed daily by mainland Chinese to visit Taiwan has remarkably increased. The National Immigration Agency (NIA) reported that in 2011, it received 56,213 applications from mainland Chinese individuals to visit Taiwan, which equates to a daily average of 318. In 2012, the average number of applications filed was more than 500 (The China Post 2012). The article noted that the Director of the National Immigration Agency, Hsieh Li-kung, explained that the mounting applications are a response to the Taiwanese government’s recently simplified application procedures. The procedures were made easier in an effort to bridge mainland
Chinese and Taiwanese people and thwart the cultural and social gap that exists between the two. As the economic linkage between China and Taiwan continues to blossom, so, too, will desire for unification on both sides. This is an inevitability that the current United States administration should accept when considering U.S. and Asia-Pacific relations.

**Proposal for Unification from the PRC**

The People’s Republic of China has offered the government of Taiwan a proposal, the core of which consists of a “one country, two systems” idea. The appeal to the Taiwanese here is that of uninterrupted autonomy over governing much of the main island of Taiwan and would allow for Taiwan to participate fully in various international organizations, though not as a separate country. While this proposal does not completely satisfy the Taiwanese, it is a step in the direction of peaceful diplomatic engagement. This proposal was conceived and delivered without the assistance of an international mediator, demonstrating the People’s Republic deep interest in reconciliation and the degree to which the PRC is willing to compromise to reach an agreement. For now, many Taiwanese still hold on to the idea of independence for Taiwan but so long as Chinese officials continue to create and implement policies to entice Taiwanese citizens into seeing the benefits of reconciliation, the move toward unification can successfully begin. Since both Taiwan and China are already deeply engaged symbiotically, it is very likely that a gradual and deliberate plan for unification will emerge in the future.
CHAPTER VII

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS ON STRAIT RELATIONS

Conventional Wisdom on Strait Relations

There exist a variety of viewpoints held by scholars, diplomats, journalists, and foreign policy experts on how the United States should conduct itself with regard to Taiwan. Some experts argue that the United States should maintain the current policy of strategic ambiguity. Other experts argue against maintaining the strategic ambiguity policy. In this chapter, I will explore several viewpoints previously announced by policy experts on Asia-Pacific issues. They include Drew Thompson, Brett V. Benson, Will Inboden, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, and Joseph Nye.

Support for Strategic Ambiguity

Drew Thompson, former Director of China Studies and Star Senior Fellow at the Nixon Center, presented at The International Conference on 30 Years of the Taiwan Relations Act on April 12, 2009. In his presentation, he offered his perspective on U.S.-China relations as it relates to Taiwan. He believes that changing the Taiwan Relations Act “would not improve Taiwan’s condition, nor would it necessarily further the unique U.S.-Taiwan relationship (Thompson 2009). In the same presentation, he said that he felt “changing it could potentially embolden China and increase anxiety in Taiwan” (Thompson 2009). Thompson claims that “as China’s military continues to modernize, exchanges will help U.S. put developments in clearer perspective, though we [the United States] must be cautious not to undermine Taiwan’s security by these efforts.
Thompson’s statement further articulates his belief that “the cross-Strait military imbalance has grown and…arms sales are important to preserve the current peaceful status quo and should not be seen as an effort to antagonize China” (Thompson 2009). Thompson specifically believes that “Taiwan should continue to engage in active public diplomacy programs with the U.S., including dialogues and exchanges at various levels, [and] reaching out to a range of stakeholders” (Thompson 2009).

Brett V. Benson, scholar of Chinese politics and East Asian political relations, argues that strategic ambiguity is the best policy to address the Taiwan Strait security crisis. He argues that if the United States clarified its stance regarding Taiwan then it “would lose much of its freedom of action and likely precipitate the very conflict all hope to avoid” (Benson and Pumphrey 2002). He also argues that “one-sided deterrence would increase the likelihood that one or more of the players would consider it cost effective to escalate the conflict and resort to the use of force” (Benson and Pumphrey 2002).

He argues that if the United States does not promise to defend Taiwan against China’s military, “the People’s Republic of China would have little reason to avoid escalating tensions with Taiwan” (Benson and Pumphrey 2002). He also explains that “over-committing to either side would be a mistake” and that if the United States is overly firm about its commitment to defend Taiwan that the Republic of China will have an incentive to seek independence. He strongly believes that “proposed solutions to the complex cross-strait problem are likely to court disaster” (Benson and Pumphrey 2002). In his article, “Comprehending Strategic Ambiguity: U.S. Policy Toward Taiwan Security,”
published in April 2000, Benson writes that “being uncertain about the U.S. commitment has dissuaded either side of the dispute from provoking the other” and that “calls for a more transparent policy toward the Taiwan issue would, contrary to their best intentions, actually compromise the delicate balance that strategic ambiguity can achieve”. He explains that strategic ambiguity, a policy that is “deliberately increasing the level of uncertainty in a stressful crisis situation” is precisely the policy that brings balance, peace, and stability to the region (Benson 2000, 1).

Views that Benefit the Republic of China – Will Inboden

In his April 2011 article of Foreign Policy, Will Inboden argues that the Barack Obama administration should begin to work on strengthening its ties with Taiwan. He gives specific suggestions on how the United States might handle arms sales, involve Taiwan in international organizations, and official diplomatic visits from the United States to Taiwan. He argues that “the Obama administration should agree to Taiwan's requests to buy F-16 C/D fighter jets and diesel submarines,” in reference to a previous arms negotiation. He also argues that “China will protest loudly in the short-term, but in the long-term these defensive weapons systems will improve Taiwan's security and thus its confidence in continuing to improve cross-strait conditions” (Inboden 2011). Inboden also argues that “the Obama administration should send a senior official to visit Taiwan; perhaps someone like U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk to discuss improving regional trade architecture, or Energy Secretary Steven Chu to consult on nuclear energy safety in light of the ongoing tragedy in Japan” (Inboden 2011). Further, he argues that “the
Obama administration should increase its support for Taiwan's participation in international organizations, particularly in areas where Taiwan's capabilities match global needs, such as the International Atomic Energy Association” (Inboden 2011). Inboden makes the suggestion that “members of [the United States] Congress from both parties and both houses should increase their visits to Taiwan (and staff delegations as well)” because “support for Taiwan has dwindled in Congress, as have the frequency of congressional trips” (Inboden 2011). He goes as far as to say that “American governors should also be visiting Taiwan, the United States' 10th-largest trading partner” (Office of the United States Trade Representative 2012). He recommends that “…especially governors who are considering running for president and want to improve their foreign policy experience” should visit Taiwan (Inboden 2011).

**Views that Benefit the Republic of China – T.Y. Wang**

T.Y. Wang, a professor who works in the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security at the University of Illinois, advocates a clarification of the strategic ambiguity policy because he claims it could still easily lead to a military crisis in the Strait. His objection explains that in regard to the strategic ambiguity during the 1996 missile crisis, before Clinton sent military intervention, “Chinese leaders might have perceived Washington’s belated warning as a sign of unwillingness by the U.S. to use its military might to enforce a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue” (Benson 2000, 6). Wang believes that a strategic ambiguity policy “by nature favors little or no action…which would produce a delayed response to a crisis
situation where a quick, decisive decision would otherwise be implemented” (Benson 2000, 6). He notes that once Clinton sent military intervention into the Strait the People’s Republic of China finally retreated. This observation leads him to believe that the U.S. needs to make a clear policy statement that throws out strategic ambiguity in favor of a policy that explicitly states the United States’ commitment to defending Taiwan.

**Views that Benefit the Republic of China – Nancy Bernkopf Tucker**

In her book, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis With China*, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker argues that the United States, in its ambiguity with Taiwan, has not been fair to Taiwan’s government, leadership, and its people. She believes that “greater mutual confidence between the U.S. and Taiwan would facilitate Washington’s key contribution to resolving the Strait impasse: stabilization of the confrontation until answers are found” (Tucker, 2009, 277). She contends that a direct dialogue between Taipei and Beijing is the only way an agreement acceptable to both sides will be reached.

**Views that Benefit the People’s Republic of China**

Joseph Nye, former Assistant Secretary of Defense under the Clinton administration, is in favor of letting go of strategic ambiguity in favor of preventing future conflict in the Asia-Pacific region. He argues that Taiwan’s democratization encourages their independence movement and that the United States should take a position on the future of Taiwan. He believes that the United States should do three things: “1) declare a policy that will not “defend” Taiwan in the event that Taiwan
declares independence and will not “accept” the People’s Republic of China’s use of force to keep Taiwan from becoming independent; 2) negotiate more international living space for Taiwan contingent upon their willingness to reject independence as a possibility; and 3) insist that Taiwan express its willingness to avoid any movements toward independence” (Benson 2000, 5). Nye’s position acknowledges that “there is only one China and Taiwan is part of China” (Benson 2000, 5).
CHAPTER VIII

A NEW SUGGESTION FOR STRAIT DIPLOMACY

This paper rejects two ideas – the conventional viewpoint that the United States continue to maintain strategic ambiguity and the viewpoint that the United States ought to clarify its policies in favor of Taiwan. This paper argues that the time is nigh for a fresh United States policy to emerge regarding Taiwan. The current policy of strategic ambiguity is resulting in a lack of trust in the United States’ relationship with both China and Taiwan. The vacillating policies throughout various U.S. presidencies continue to fossilize the mistrust on both sides. While the strategic ambiguity policy has worked to maintain a situation resembling peace so far, it is not enough to effectively maintain peace in the Asia-Pacific region indefinitely. The 1996 missile crisis reveals that China is eager to engage Taiwan and is willing to do so militarily. The PRC may choose to engage Taiwan in this way once again. The United States would then have to turn its war efforts to the Asia-Pacific region, which would be a decision detested by most American citizens many of whom have been affected by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan following September 11, 2001. Also, China is currently choosing to engage Taiwan positively. Research reveals that China and Taiwan are engaged in a symbiotic relationship, one that favors economic and social policies that benefit both countries. These policies promote trade, investment, tourism, a cultural connection, and education between those on mainland China and those in Taiwan. In essence, China and Taiwan have established a pseudo-unified relationship without the assistance of external international supports.
A clarification of the United States’ strategic ambiguity policy will accomplish several goals for the United States: good will and renewed political capital with China, the start of a more trustworthy relationship with Chinese leadership, certainty that the United States will not have to use defense resources in the Asia-Pacific region, and a reduction in the varied ways that the United States engages the Asia-Pacific in a mediator role.

If the United States initiates a conversation about revised trilateral relations, the United States will stand to gain political good will with China, which is a long-term investment that the United States should make. Initiating the conversation will indicate to China that the United States is ripe to begin repairing its degrading relationship with China in favor of a more trustworthy, enduring relationship and ultimately peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. A clarification of the United States’ strategic ambiguity policy will mean that China and Taiwan will no longer have to consider the United States when making cross-strait decisions. A revision of the strategic ambiguity policy will also allow for changes within the United States. A clarification of ambiguous policies will reduce the significant diplomatic and mediatory role that United States frequently holds in the internal affairs within the Asia-Pacific region. A revision of the ambiguity policy will allow the United States to retreat from defending Taiwan and to relieve a large portion of its military resources, which are currently stationed and at-the-ready to defend Taiwan. As these military sources become available, the United States will be free to focus military efforts elsewhere, or not at all.
The political good will that the United States earns when it initiates a conversation about revising the trilateral pseudo-peace situation could be used for other, more positive changes in the region and in the world. In exchange for negotiations about revising the United States’ policies toward Taiwan, the United States might attempt to bring other concerns to the forefront of its conversation with Chinese leadership. In return for a retreat away from defending Taiwan, the United States might request to have other pressing global concerns addressed. For example, the United States might negotiate global environmental protection with the People’s Republic of China. As allies in a rigorous effort to restore the planet’s health, China and the United States would have an opportunity to accomplish a lot together: to reduce greenhouse gases, produce fewer cars or more hybrid cars, rethink the production of petrochemicals for plastics. If this negotiation presents challenges for policymakers within the United States, officials might request negotiations on other pressing concerns.

This paper suggests a new and sensitive way to more effectively begin a trustworthy relationship with Beijing and bring enduring stability to the region, which includes the following deliberate steps:

1) The United States and its leadership ought to revisit the Taiwan Relations Act to make it clear that the United States is no longer upholding a position of strategic ambiguity.

2) Craft a statement in which the United States makes clear that it will not engage militarily in the Taiwan Strait.
3) In the same statement, the United States ought to make it clear that it will cease selling arms to Taiwan in exchange for other long-term global interests. This puts into practice an action that reflects a desire for friendship with Beijing.

4) The United States ought to also acknowledge a true “one China” policy that explicitly states that the People’s Republic of China governs China and that Taiwan is a part of China.

5) The United States ought to acquiesce to Beijing by acknowledging its disinterest in engaging the Republic of China.

6) The United States ought to indicate that it would prefer to collaborate with Beijing on other issues, including environmental and economic concerns.

7) The United States ought to obtain, in writing, from Beijing a statement guaranteeing the safety of the individuals living in Taiwan and the safety of other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, South Korea, and other Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries.

In an article, Establishing Credibility and Trust, written in April 2012, for the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC, Kenneth Lieberthal and Jonathan Pollack, state that “whoever is president during 2013-17 also must work to establish initiatives with the new Chinese leadership that hold out the possibility of building greater trust based on deeper consultations and concrete actions” and that “a key part of achieving this goal is to conduct in-depth, sustained discussions of U.S. and Chinese military doctrines in Asia” (Lieberthal and Pollack 2012). This thesis’ suggested plan is in accordance with
Lieberthal’s and Pollock’s suggestion that past doctrines need to be revisited. It is also proposed that the plan for revised strait relations explained in this chapter should not be executed abruptly. Instead, it might be introduced during political dialogues gradually, over a multi-year period, to allow for the Chinese to absorb the changing shifts in thinking within the United States.
CHAPTER IX
LONG TERM GLOBAL PEACE

Benefits of Initiating the Trilateral Relationship Conversation

Since the 1970s, China, Taiwan, and the United States have been balancing a bizarre international relationship of pseudo peace because of the three communiqués, which acknowledge the position that there is only one China, and the Taiwan Relations Act, which explains that the United States will defend Taiwan with weapons, if necessary. While many security policy experts agree that the ambiguous relationship is the best one for all three parties, as it currently exists, the situation between China, Taiwan, and the United States is ripe for destabilization. It is, at best, a precarious, temporary compromise, not intended to last forever. This paper discussed two reasons for why it is important to address and resolve the ambiguity of the relationship between the United States and Taiwan right now: 1) The ambiguous relationship, known as strategic ambiguity, is souring relations with both Taiwan and China and 2) Without having made explicit statements, the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China are thinking about and working on cross-strait relations with no external diplomatic interventions. Moreover, the situation does not ideally satisfy the interests of China, Taiwan, or the United States. The United States has too-long avoided addressing the unreasonable trilateral compromise because of other internal political and economic issues and multiple other global crises in the Middle East and as of 2011, North Africa. As long as there are challenges, however, within the trilateral relationship between China,
Taiwan, and the United States, the potential for a large-scale, resource draining, devastating war exists.

The current policy of strategic ambiguity to deal with the contentious relationship is currently creating a pseudo peaceful situation by thwarting attacks from the PRC and preventing Taiwan’s movement toward independence away from the PRC. The strategic ambiguity policy also simultaneously lends itself to creating uncertainty in allegiances with either the PRC or the ROC. The agreements that solidify the ambiguous relationship – the joint communiqué of 1979 and the Taiwan Relations Act – make contradictory pledges to the PRC and the ROC respectively. These policies lend themselves to confusion in a crisis situation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Despite the contending viewpoints on how to manage the trilateral relationship between the United States, China, and Taiwan, there is one point that all interested scholars, politicians, and foreign policy experts can agree on: there is a deep sense of mistrust between the United States and China and the United States and Taiwan. As time goes by, any semblance of trust that China and Taiwan have for the United States has the potential to dissipate and the seemingly secure ambiguous relationship has the potential to erode. Bernkopf Tucker believes that “mistrust flows from misperceptions, inflated expectations, unintended consequences, misinterpreted behavior, deceit, deception, and political manipulation” (Tucker 2009, 278). Drew Thompson agrees that “the U.S. and Chinese sides continue to talk past one another and potentially miss opportunities as we wait for ‘the atmosphere’ to improve” (Thompson, 2009).
This paper proposes a solution to the problem of mistrust between the United States and China and the United States and Taiwan. This paper recommends that the United States alter its relationship with the Republic of China in favor of a more enduring relationship with the People’s Republic of China. Its current relationship status of strategic ambiguity is spoiling relations with both China and Taiwan. While the United States’ One-China policy is acknowledges the People’s Republic of China as the exclusive government of China, this policy is contradicted because the United States acknowledges two entities – that of the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China. Strategic ambiguity essentially honors that there are two Chinas, not one.

In addition to solving the problem of mistrust, the United States would reap substantial benefits from allying itself with China. At this time in history when China’s influence is greater than ever, the United States would stand to benefit from a firm allegiance to the People’s Republic. According to Kenneth Lieberthal and Jonathan Pollack, who co-wrote the article Establishing Credibility and Trust for the Brookings Institution in April 2012, Asia-Pacific and China scholars agree that “China’s economic weight, strategic intentions, and military capabilities will increasingly impact on U.S. policy choices” in the future (Lieberthal and Pollack, 2012). A consistently trustworthy and enduring relationship with the People’s Republic of China will be valuable to the United States because of China’s geographic location, sizable population, and economic engagement with other countries. China also plays a significant role in international organizations and has an ever-growing interest in pursuing science and innovative
technologies. Also, of great concern to the United States is China’s continued cooperation and participation in managing the problems posed by a North Korean state with nuclear weapons capabilities. Lieberthal and Pollock cite that there are shared interests between Chinese leadership and the United States, which stand to benefit from a more trustworthy relationship, including “reform of global financial arrangements and institutions; heightened attention to mitigating the effects of climate change; and accelerated efforts to curb nuclear proliferation” (Lieberthal and Pollack, 2012).

The United States would not stand to reap the benefits from a firm alliance with China if it waits until after an official unification of Taiwan and China. Currently, the PRC and the ROC are working collaboratively to employ policies that support trade, tourism, and social and cultural exchanges. Currently, China and Taiwan have cultivated a pseudo-unified relationship. This is encouraging the people on the main island of Taiwan and on mainland China to view unification favorably. Also, despite its sordid, complicated, and multi-layered colonial experience, Taiwan’s view of the colonization of the island is mostly favorable today, in part because the colonizers chose to develop the country, educate its people, and grow its economy.

**A Unified Powerhouse**

Some Asia-Pacific scholars have argued against the United States letting go of Taiwan because unification of China and Taiwan could result in the creation of a nearly all-powerful, dominating entity in the Asia-Pacific region. Some argue that even a deliberate, gradual, and thoughtful reconciliation of Taiwan and the Republic of China
would not be in the best interest of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. Together, economically, China and Taiwan might dominate in trade, production of goods and services, building factories for manufacturing, investing in other countries, and ultimately will have increased influence over much of the world. Additionally, a united China and Taiwan would have a stronger military. Presumably, China would no longer need to focus its land, air, and amphibious weaponry in Taiwan’s direction and could possibly choose another target for its focus. To contribute to the strength of both militaries, Taiwan has already established a phalanx of weapons that it obtained from the United States. To argue with against this point, this paper reiterates that a declaration in solid favor of the PRC first and now could allow the United States the opportunity to ally itself firmly with China. Additionally, a declaration in alliance with China would mean that Taiwan would no longer receive defenses from the United States or benefit from arms sales. The longer the United States waits to make this declaration the longer the Taiwanese army is able to build its cache of equipment and training for its military personnel.

**A True Democratic Taiwan**

Some scholars and policy experts argue that a good reason to continue to support Taiwan is that the United States ought to defend countries that are democracies and countries that have the desire to cultivate a democratic system of governance. While this is a powerful ideal that the United States upholds by supporting Taiwan militarily, it does not in reality make Taiwan a democracy. The idea that the United States should let
Taiwan go is one that should reverberate in the minds of policymakers who ought to be concerned with the influence the United States is having on Taiwan. The United States supports Taiwan because it is a democracy but policymakers in the United States ought to consider that Taiwan exists only because of the defenses provided by the United States. Without a conciliatory relationship with China, Taiwan’s goals for a democratic province or nation will not thrive. In an article titled “Subaltern straits: ‘exit’, ‘voice’, and ‘loyalty’ in the United States-China-Taiwan relations,” its authors suggest that the United States has set up a contradiction in terms of supporting Taiwan. The United States supports Taiwan because of its democratic government yet Taiwan, a democracy, could not support itself without the help of the United States. For example, they write, the Bush Administration “hailed Taiwan as a model of democracy for other countries…but discouraged it from writing a new constitution because it would suggest a move toward formal independence.” The United States might also consider that in addition to the dividends it would receive regarding its fresh relationship with Beijing, it could finally have a connection to the Asia-Pacific region that is less about U.S. interests and ownership and more about global peace and cooperation.

**Continuity**

Some scholars and policy experts on Asia-Pacific matters believe that it is important for the United States to continue to maintain its stance to defend Taiwan because it already has a long history of doing so. In an article written by Andrew Bingham Kennedy, called “China’s Perceptions of U.S. Intentions Toward Taiwan,”
Kennedy explains that “the U.S. protects Taiwan mainly because the long history of the relationship makes it difficult to abandon the island.” He further explains that “analysts stress Washington’s interest in preserving its reputation as a reliable security partner” and to disrupt the United States’ relationship with Taiwan would put the United States “reputation at stake because of long-standing American support for Taiwan” (Kennedy, 2007). This argument does not take into consideration China’s potential perception of the United States’ relationship with Taiwan and the potential actions of China’s leaders in response to a continued, indefinite relationship and military support of Taiwan.

**Long-Term Global Peace**

It is urgent that that United States take seriously the ambiguous relationship between itself, China, and Taiwan. The worst outcome, a war with China, is a possible long-term outcome if this situation is shelved for much longer. The switch away from strategic ambiguity to a policy that chooses China is necessary because strategic ambiguity is not a viable indefinite solution and as long as it is maintained, long-term global peace is threatened. The United States’ policy of strategic ambiguity is enough to maintain peace in the Asia-Pacific region temporarily but it is not enough to sustain peace forever. The 1996 missile crisis is a clear indication that the People’s Republic of China is willing to use force to coerce Taiwan into surrender. A white paper published by Beijing in February 2000 on the Taiwan issue “spelled out China’s position on the ‘one-China’ principle and threatened the use of force if Taiwan became independent or resisted negotiations for unification indefinitely” (2000). The new suggestion for
diplomacy proposed in this paper is in response to the concept that China and Taiwan are currently working on pseudo reconciliation without diplomatic intervention. Since the People’s Republic of China’s move for unification is inevitable, it is critical that the United States initiate a clarification of its policies toward Taiwan and disengage from the Asia-Pacific region in the way it has been involved in the last several decades. Because strategic ambiguity cannot ensure long-term peace, a change in U.S. policy regarding Taiwan is also valuable because it is part of an effort to sustain long-term peace in the Asia-Pacific region.

China has been an ally to the United States in various ways throughout modern history, despite the contradictory nature of the United States’ responses to China. It is possible that the leadership of China perceives that the United States’ relationship with Taiwan is a means to prevent China from obtaining more power militarily. These hypothetical perceptions, if they ever become real or are already a reality, will inform China’s leadership into policy decisions that do not fall in line with long-term global peace. Ultimately, if China’s leaders perceive that the United States intends to hold on to Taiwan and an ambiguous situation indefinitely, China’s leaders are going to choose forcible reunification. It is time now in history for the United States to turn its attention to China and to re-establishing a commendable relationship. This thesis suggests that the United States revisit the Taiwan Relations Act to make it clear that the United States will no longer uphold a position of strategic ambiguity, clarify that the United States will not intervene defensively in the Taiwan Strait, cease selling arms to Taiwan indefinitely, and
a firmly acknowledge a more true one-China policy declaring the People’s Republic of
China as the official government of China. In return, the United States should ask for
agreements on global environmental and economic concerns, and most importantly,
should demand the ensured physical safety and peace of the individuals living on the
main island of Taiwan and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Though the United
States has spent a large amount of its time, efforts, and preoccupations with other regions
in the last decade, policy makers and leaders in the U.S. ought to earnestly consider how
important a strong friendship with China is for stability in the Asia-Pacific region and for
ultimate global peace.
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