

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### ***Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis***

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**CHEN-SHEN J. YEN**  
*Editor, Issues & Studies*

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**DAFYDD FELL**  
*London School of Asian and African Studies*

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**GANG LIN**  
*School of International and Public Affairs  
Shanghai Jiao Tong University*

# The Strait Can Still Be Dangerous, Despite the Easing of Tension

CHEN-SHEN J. YEN



Relations across the Taiwan Strait seem to have a life of their own. Outside forces can define what cross-Strait relations should be and the authorities on either side of the Strait may have their own version, but still a dynamism exists that cannot be easily reined in or tamed.

When President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) decided, for electoral reasons, to hold a referendum on arms procurement along with the presidential election of 2004, the move caused alarm to both Beijing and Washington. Even though the United States made clear its reservations about such a dangerous move that might be seen as a unilateral change of the status quo, Chen was determined to call attention to the missile threat from China. He hoped that by so doing he would encourage the electorate to vote for him rather than the opposition which would be seen as more likely to take a conciliatory stance toward Beijing. This calculation and the failed attempt on the president's life the day before the poll won him a razor-thin victory in March 2004.

Chen's pan-Green (泛綠) coalition was emboldened by this victory and Chen subsequently called for the country's name to be changed and for the adoption of a new constitution. Taiwan's electorate, however, refused to give the pan-Green camp the legislative majority it needed to set the agenda. Even though the opposition pan-Blue (泛藍) coalition did not gain any seats in the parliamentary election of December 2004, the slim major-

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CHEN-SHEN J. YEN (嚴震生) is a Research Fellow of the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, and Editor of *Issues & Studies*. Dr. Yen Can be reached at <ysyan@nccu.edu.tw>.

ity it enjoyed was evidence enough that the pendulum was swinging in its direction. Officials in Washington and those who do not want to see any further change in the status quo across the Taiwan Strait breathed a sigh of relief.

It was thought that Beijing's enactment of the "Anti-Secession Law" in March 2005 would create new tensions across the Taiwan Strait and give the pan-Green camp a new issue around which to rally support for permanent separation from China. These hopes were dashed when a senior presidential advisor who was also a prominent businessman and famous for his pro-independence stance reacted positively to the new law, motivated by a desire to protect his investments in China.

Once this gesture by a staunchly pro-independence elder statesman had been accepted by the pan-Green camp, they could hardly object to the subsequent visits to China by the pan-Blue leaders. The visits by the three party chairmen (Lien Chan [連戰] of the Kuomintang [國民黨], James Soong [宋楚瑜] of the People First Party [親民黨], and Yu Mu-ming [郁慕明] of the New Party [新黨]) not only produced some concrete concessions from Beijing (the abolition of tariffs on some Taiwan fruit, more Chinese tourists allowed to visit Taiwan, local tuition rates for Taiwan students studying on the mainland, etc.), but also substantially eased the hostility between the two sides.

During the local election campaign at the end of 2005, when the ruling party was beset by corruption scandals, President Chen again raised the issue of independence, hoping it would get the pendulum swinging back toward his pan-Green camp. Unfortunately, this strategy failed to rally his supporters and the pan-Blue coalition won an overwhelming victory, claiming fourteen of the twenty-one contested county magistrate and municipal seats, leaving pan-Green with only six (down from ten).

As Chen attempted to recover from the most embarrassing electoral loss for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨) in more than a decade, the special budget for military procurement continued to be stalled in the Legislative Yuan (立法院) and the Mainland Affairs Council (大陸事務委員會) was facing a tough decision whether to allow the local zoo to accept a gift of giant pandas from China. The two episodes are

actually connected in a way that tends to be overlooked.

In essence, the atmosphere across the Taiwan Strait has been relatively stable, if not relaxed, since the spring of 2005. The highly publicized case of the pandas, cute and cuddly-looking as they are, could not but generate friendly feelings across the Strait. With such an unhostile atmosphere prevailing, how could legislators justify the passage of a special budget for arms procurement from the United States?

If, instead, there had been a heightening of tension across the Taiwan Strait, it would have been much easier for the government to argue the case for increasing defense capability. Passing the arms procurement budget would not only act to a certain degree as a military deterrent to the Chinese, but would also send Washington the message that Taiwan was determined to shoulder responsibility for its own defense rather than relying solely on the United States.

In fact, even President Chen himself seemed to heed U.S. advice not to provoke Beijing by unilaterally changing the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. Beijing has also learned not to rise to Chen's bait but rather simply to ignore him.

If a year can make such a difference in cross-Strait relations at a time when the "dangerous Strait" does not seem so very dangerous, one might be tempted to ask whether the arguments and analyses contained in Tucker's volume (published at the beginning of 2005) are still applicable now. The answer is a definite yes.

The easing of tension has not fundamentally altered the fact that Taiwan is still pursuing sovereignty. This is what the pan-Green has been pursuing all along, and it would continue to be pursued even if the pan-Blue coalition were to come to power. The indigenization process of the past decade has given the people of Taiwan a separate identity that makes them prefer the status quo over independence and to favor unification least of all. Even with increasing economic integration between Taiwan and the mainland and possible direct air links in the future, this separate identity is here to stay.

The three chapters on the domestic sources of tension (by Rigger, Bush, and Phillips) provide useful reminders of why, despite the apparent

easing of tension across the Taiwan Strait in the second half of 2005, we should never allow ourselves to be caught off guard. Cheng's argument in his chapter that economic linkage does not lead to political ties has also proved valid so far. Whether it will be refuted in the future, only time can tell.

Should the pan-Green camp remain in power beyond 2008, the issues of changing the country's name and enacting a new constitution will remain as genii in the bottle, ready to be released whenever the need arises. The only problem is that once released, they may not easily be captured again.

Finally, the chapters by Swaine, Chase, and Tucker are important sources for students of this field and policymakers in Taiwan, the mainland, and the United States. They will help them answer such persistent questions as whether, if Taiwan did opt for independence, it would have the necessary defense capability to fend off an attack from China; what kinds of arms procurements would be needed to convince the United States that the island is serious about its own defense; and whether Washington would come to Taiwan's aid should an attack take place.

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## A Welcome Antidote to "National Identity and Cross-Strait Fatigue"

DAFYDD FELL



To produce a volume that adds new perspectives on the complex triangular relationship between Taiwan, the United States, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a daunting challenge. Over the last two decades a huge body of literature has been accumulated addressing the role of Taiwan in U.S.-PRC relations, the impact of democratization and the economic rise of China on cross-Strait relations, and the implications of growing Taiwanese and Chinese nationalism on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. It is not surprising that students of Taiwan politics sometimes have complained to the reviewer of "national identity and cross-Strait fatigue." Therefore, I highly commend the volume editor, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, for assembling a fine collection of essays that offers a unique and fresh contribution to the study of Taiwan's external relations.

This review is limited to the first three empirical chapters: Shelley Rigger, "The Unfinished Business of Taiwan's Democratization"; Steven Phillips, "Building a Taiwanese Republic: The Independence Movement, 1945—Present"; and Richard Bush, "Lee Teng-hui [李登輝] and 'Separatism'." Taiwan's democratization, the Taiwan independence movement (TIM), and the controversial figure Lee Teng-hui have all been the source of countless academic and journalistic articles. Nevertheless, each of these chapters represents an important contribution to the field of Taiwan studies. First, the writers have all attempted to clear up some common

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DAFYDD FELL is the Taiwan Studies Research Fellow at the Center for Financial and Management Studies, London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He runs the SOAS Taiwan Studies Program and has helped establish the European Association of Taiwan Studies. He can be reached at <df2@soas.ac.uk>.

myths or misunderstandings regarding their subject matters. Second, they all use rich historical evidence to explain contemporary political developments of the Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) era. Third, they add to our understanding of elite-mass linkage in Taiwanese politics, showing how politicians, though they are attempting to guide public opinion, are often constrained or even led by public opinion. Lastly, though these chapters are addressing questions that have been debated for decades, each has offered new perspectives, new data, and new thinking on critical issues for Taiwan's future.

Rigger's chapter on Taiwan's unfinished democratization continues where she left off in her highly influential volume, *Politics in Taiwan*.<sup>1</sup> In *Politics in Taiwan*, Rigger listed the continuing challenges for Taiwan's democracy as being: (1) transforming political attitudes and behavior, (2) balancing presidential and legislative power, (3) streamlining Taiwan's administration, (4) reducing clientelism and corruption, (5) strengthening political parties, and (6) the challenge of cross-Strait relations. Now, Rigger shows how five years later, most of these challenges continue to trouble Taiwan's political system. Comparing the tone of these two works, it appears that the author has become more pessimistic over the prospects for Taiwanese democracy.

Rigger employs a framework for testing the state of democratic consolidation suggested by Larry Diamond, examining the degree of democratic deepening, political institutionalization, and regime performance. Democratic deepening refers to "the efforts of a new democracy to become more liberal: more respectful of citizens' rights, more accountable and more representative of public preferences and interests" (p. 22). Political institutionalization is taken as "routinized, recurrent, and predictable patterns of political behavior" (p. 22). Regime performance is "the young democracy's ability to provide public policy outcomes, both economic and political, that citizens desire" (p. 23). This is a useful overarching way of judging the strengths and weaknesses of Taiwan's democracy.

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<sup>1</sup>Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1999).

Rigger argues that "Taiwan's democracy has performed best on the first of Diamond's three tasks, democratic deepening" (p. 23). In contrast, she is highly critical of the state of political institutionalization and regime performance. We see regular reference to the continuing challenges in the section on Taiwan's weak political institutionalization. Much attention is thus given to the consequences of the poorly thought-out constitutional reform of the 1990s and the problems of Taiwan's party system. The author is correct in her analysis of the highly adversarial state of inter-party politics in the post-2000 period, particularly, when we compare this to the trend toward political consensus for much of the 1990s. The lack of a clear division of powers between the presidency, executive, and legislature has also been at the heart of numerous political disputes, such as over the Fourth Nuclear Power Station. Similarly, the willingness of leaders of both political camps to resort to extralegal measures has also been damaging for public confidence in democratic institutions and contributed to a rise in political cynicism.

Nevertheless, in some areas, the author takes an overly negative view on Taiwan's political institutionalization. For example, Rigger doubted the chances of constitutional reform of the election system; however, this legislation was passed in 2004 and approved by the National Assembly (國民大會) in 2005. Thus in Taiwan's 2007 legislative elections there will be a halving of the number of legislators and a new single-member two-vote electoral system. It looks probable that these reforms will contribute to strengthening political parties. Another area of political institutionalization in which I take issue with the author regards the party system in Taiwan. Compared to the other established democracies in East Asia, such as Japan and South Korea, Taiwan's party system shows much greater stability. The major political parties in the island's first multiparty election in 1986 were the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨) and Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨), and almost twenty years later, these two parties continue to dominate electoral competition. Moreover, in the post-2000 period, parties appear to be stronger than ever. For instance, despite the independent nature of many Taiwanese legislators, the degree of party discipline is higher in the post-2000 period than in the Lee era. It is true that Taiwanese



politicians do have a propensity for putting on a show (作秀, *zuoxiu*) to gain media attention. However, the flamboyant nature of Taiwan's party politicians does have certain advantages. Compared to the grey and dull nature of electioneering in many mature democracies, the political theater of Taiwanese politicians has made politics more fun and accessible to voters, contributing to both high levels of political knowledge and interest.

Rigger is also quite critical of regime performance in the post-2000 period. The impression of political gridlock produced by divided government is prevalent in the contemporary Taiwanese media. However, when historians come to assess the legislative record of the Chen Shui-bian era, it will be seen that partisan consensus has actually been reached on a surprising number of formerly controversial and divisive issues. Much important legislation has been passed to address the problems of political corruption, such as the Political Donations Bill (政治獻金法) of 2004.<sup>2</sup> The march toward gender equality has also continued; after a decade-long struggle, feminist groups finally saw the Equal Employment Law (公平就業法) passed in 2002.<sup>3</sup> After a decade of debate on pensions, universal pensions were introduced in 2002. In 2001, all the parties were able to reach a consensus at the Economic Development Conference (經發會) on removing the "go slow, be patient" (戒急用忍) restrictions on cross-Strait trade and investment. Also, significant legislation has been passed to enhance workers' rights, such as recognizing the national-level federation of independent unions and establishing unemployment insurance.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps most surprising of all were changes to the election system, including the 2003 Referendum Bill (公民投票法). Finally, we must come to the actual

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<sup>2</sup>See Christian Goebel, "Beheading the Hydra: Combating Political Corruption and Organised Crime in the KMT and DPP Eras," in *Taiwan's KMT and DPP Eras in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Chang Bi-yu, Dafydd Fell, and Henning Klöter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>Dafydd Fell and Weng Hui-chen, "The Rootless Movement: Taiwan's Women's Movement in the KMT and DPP Eras," in Chang, Fell, and Klöter, *Taiwan's KMT and DPP Eras in Comparative Perspective*.

<sup>4</sup>See Ho Ming-sho, "Neocentrist Labour Policy in Practice: The DPP and the Taiwanese Working Class," in Chang, Fell, and Klöter, *Taiwan's KMT and DPP Eras in Comparative Perspective*.

phenomenon of divided government itself. Divided government tends to get a very bad press in Taiwan. However, based on Taiwan's divisions in party support, divided government serves as a critical check and balance to both political camps. For when neither party can unilaterally impose their policy will on the other, the parties are forced to seek consensus. We should be more concerned over the future scenario where one camp controls all three branches of government, as if the wishes of one camp are ignored, political alienation of a large proportion of the electorate is highly likely.

Despite the above reservations, Rigger's chapter is a very timely contribution to the debate over the state of Taiwan's democracy in the post-2000 era. Her incisive analysis of the weaknesses in the institutional structure of Taiwanese governance deserves the attention not only of fellow academics but also of the party leaders on the island. Rigger is right in arguing that Taiwan's democracy will not become truly consolidated as a result of different presidents or ruling parties coming to power; the crux lies in creating a consensus over the correct adjustments to Taiwan's political institutions. The constitutional reforms of 2005 show that real reform is possible; however, there appear to be few signs that agreement can be reached over the next stage of reforms.

Steven Phillips' chapter on the historical and contemporary development of the TIM differs from most previous work on this subject. Publications have tended to focus either on the exiled TIM during the martial law era or on the Taiwan independence advocacy of the DPP. In contrast, Phillips is able to bridge the gap between the two by not only showing how the TIM in exile developed its organizations, repertoire of actions, and ideology, but also how the movement adjusted to returning to Taiwan and the newly liberalized political environment of the Lee Teng-hui era. Despite their grandiose titles, such as the Provisional Government for the Republic of Taiwan (台灣共和國臨時政府) and the World United Formosans for Independence (台灣獨立建國聯盟), the exiled TIM had very little direct impact on political developments in Taiwan in the authoritarian era. Phillips shows how the movement became more influential after the island's political liberalization allowed the exiled leaders and their organizations to operate freely in Taiwan.

The reception the TIM received on its return to Taiwan was not as welcoming as many exiles had imagined. The TIM has made only very slow progress in convincing the Taiwanese electorate of the virtues of *de jure* Taiwan independence. The TIM leaders were not treated as returning heroes by most Taiwanese or even by the DPP. A key example was the failed presidential election bid of the TIM figure Peng Ming-min (彭明敏) in 1996. Phillips shows that it is incorrect to equate the DPP with the TIM, for even at the time the DPP was established, Taiwan independence was just one of a range of political issues prominent in the party policy platform. The process of contesting elections forced the returning exiles to compromise. The DPP was only able to expand its support base by espousing a more moderate form of Taiwan independence and combining this with alternative appeals, on such issues as social welfare, political corruption, and environmental protection.

Nevertheless, despite the divided and chaotic nature of much of the TIM, they have been remarkably successful at achieving many of their objectives both in the Lee Teng-hui era and since the change of ruling party. Education and cultural policy has been Taiwanized, the KMT has lost national power, referendum legislation has been passed, and unification has become a political taboo. This success is summed up by a comment made to the reviewer by DPP legislator Lin Cho-shui (林濁水) in 2001:

In my view the Taiwan independence movement is basically like a hire purchase; I mean that you have already had the first, second, and third payments. The remaining payment is international recognition, and even now we are not completely unrecognized, now is an incomplete recognition.... The point is that once most of the goals have been achieved, why continue focusing on the question? I cannot just make a speech shouting "Taiwan independence!" "Taiwan independence!" all the way through for ten minutes, then come off the stage.<sup>5</sup>

The third chapter reviewed is Richard Bush's analysis of Lee Teng-hui's record of statements on cross-Strait relations during his presidency. The highly polarized views of Lee make a balanced approach to this controversial figure all the more challenging. To some on the island, Lee has

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<sup>5</sup>Lin Cho-shui, interview by reviewer, Taipei, September 24, 2001.

been deified to the degree that he has replaced Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙) as the father of the nation. In contrast, both the PRC and many on the pan-Blue (泛藍) side of politics view Lee as a traitor. In interviews with Taiwanese politicians, it was common to hear that Lee had always had a long-term plot for Taiwan independence. As early as 1994 he had been accused of having a timetable for Taiwan independence.<sup>6</sup>

The Bush chapter takes a refreshingly different approach. Although Bush shows the changing tone of Lee's statements, he also shows how Lee maintained a high degree of consistency on core principles throughout his presidency. The three areas of consistency that Bush argues Lee held to were: "within the context of a unified China, the governing authorities in Taipei possessed sovereignty and were essentially equal to the government in Beijing; Taipei had the right to play a significant role in the international community; and Beijing's growing military capabilities and its refusal to renounce their use were an obstacle to reconciliation" (p. 90).

Bush convincingly challenges the PRC view that Lee was already a separatist early in his presidency. Instead, Lee (like many DPP politicians) was not opposed to unification *per se*, but opposed to unification under the PRC's "one country, two systems" (一國兩制). We should recall that during Lee's presidency the Guidelines for National Unification (國家統一綱領) were passed; Lee chaired the National Unification Council (國家統一委員會); and in 1999, Lee explained that even the "special state-to-state relationship" (特殊國與國關係) concept came under the Guidelines for National Unification. A comment that Lee made to the reviewer as late as 2001 backs up Bush's interpretation: "The ROC is a country, there is no need to talk of independence. What matters is identifying with Taiwan. It is enough to localize and democratize. The DPP are fools, always talking about Taiwan independence, we do not need to discuss Taiwan independence."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>New Party (新黨) candidate, Chao Shaw-kong (趙少康), made this accusation in the televised debate for the Taipei mayoral election in 1994.

<sup>7</sup>Lee Teng-hui, interview by reviewer, Taipei, October 16, 2001.

The final important conclusion that Bush makes is to remind the reader that "Lee was right in the mainstream of Taiwan views in the 1990s on how to approach cross-Strait relations" (p. 91). Initiatives taken by Lee such as the bid to rejoin the United Nations, vacation diplomacy, pragmatic diplomacy, the 1998 concept of everyone being "New Taiwanese," and even the "special state-to-state relationship" were all highly popular with the general public. In politics we can never be certain if the politicians are following public opinion or vice versa. Nevertheless, both election results and public opinion surveys from the 1990s show that Lee's middle-of-the-road approach to Taiwan's external relations was well-supported. In a democratic context, Lee's cross-Strait positioning was entirely rational. If Lee had taken a more defeatist or rapid unification stance in the 1990s, it is quite likely that Taiwan's electorate would have punished the KMT in the same way as it would treat the New Party after 2000.

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# Traversing the Dangerous Waters

GANG LIN



This admirably coherent volume contains eight fine essays that share new thinking and interpretations of an old and daunting predicament across the Taiwan Strait. As Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, the editor, puts it in the Introduction, "each of these essays has in one way or another challenged existing views of the alarming confrontation in the Taiwan Strait and sought fresh understandings of the dynamics in Taiwan or among Taiwan, China, and the United States" (p. 15).

The three chapters following the Introduction explore the source of the Taipei-Beijing-Washington crisis mainly from the perspective of Taiwan's domestic politics. Shelley Rigger's chapter addresses the frustrating stalemate in Taiwan's journey toward democracy and raises a perplexing question as to how long Taiwan can enjoy the luxury of its domestic political disarray given the pressing security problems that the island faces. Rigger maintains that Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) political need to court the fundamentalists and his frustration with Beijing's unresponsiveness to his friendly gesture account for his provocative remarks about "one country on each side of the Strait" (海峽兩岸一邊一國) in August 2002. Richard Bush's chapter challenges the conventional view that sees Lee Teng-hui

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GANG LIN (林岡) (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University, 1997) is Professor of Political Science at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of International and Public Affairs. He served as Program Associate in the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson Center's Asia Program (1999-2005), President of the Association of Chinese Political Studies (1998-1999), and taught at American University and Johns Hopkins University. He has co-edited *China after Jiang* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Stanford University Press, 2003), *Transition toward Post-Deng China* (Singapore University Press, 2001), and *Prospects for Cross-Taiwan Strait Developments* (Hong Kong: Asia Sciences Press, 2000), co-authored *Taiwan's Political Transition* (Hong Kong: Social Sciences Press, 1997), and contributed numerous articles and book chapters. His research interests include China's political development, Taiwan's domestic politics and cross-Strait relations, U.S.-China relations, and democracy and democratization. Dr. Lin can be reached at <lingang@sjtu.edu.cn>.

(李登輝) as a man seeking independence, and contends that Lee as president was not opposed to unification, but rather objected to the specific kind of unification that Beijing was proposing. According to Bush, Beijing's determination to define Lee's views as "splittist" has made the Strait even more dangerous. Steven Phillips' essay argues that although Taiwan's independence movement continues to be a "disorderly, faction-ridden nationalist coalition lacking international support," it has contributed to a quickening of Taiwanization—in language, history, culture, and symbols—to distinguish the island from China (p. 68).

Few on the mainland, however, would agree that Lee Teng-hui really wanted to accept reunification or that Chen Shui-bian's "one country on each side of the Strait" was partly attributable to Beijing's cold shouldering his initial conciliatory gesture. While many people on the Chinese mainland have recognized a growing trend toward Taiwanization and even independence on the island, they would attribute such a development to Lee's and Chen's persistent pushing for Taiwan's independence over the past decades. From the Chinese perspective, declaring Taiwan's independence (台獨, *taidu*) and insisting on Taiwan's independent sovereignty (獨台, *dutai*) are simply two sides of the same coin. Geopolitical asymmetry between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, in addition to the historical legacy of and political preference for a unitary state, rather than federation or confederation, has made it extremely difficult for both political elites and ordinary people on the mainland to accept a loosely integrated one-China framework that would treat the mainland and Taiwan as two really equivalent political entities. According to this mentality, China's reunification is considered as an end of extending the scope of the current unitary state, rather than a gradual process of political integration starting from confederation or federation. Also, given China's political system and political culture, mainlanders tend to believe that political elites can fundamentally shape and lead public opinion, rather than be controlled by it. Such a "mirror image" was associated with a great effort on the mainland to figure out the exact inner mind-set of Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian regarding Taiwan's future when they first came to power. From the same mirror image, many on the mainland believe that Taiwanese perceptions of their

relations with the mainland can be reshaped if Beijing adopts favorable policies toward the Taiwanese people and if the pan-Blue (泛藍) takes power back from the pro-independence pan-Green (泛綠) after the 2008 election.

The last four chapters, contributed by T. J. Cheng, Michael D. Swaine, Michael S. Chase, and the editor herself, examine the "dangerous Strait" from the perspective of relations among the three parties, concentrating on the security issue, which is also the focus of this review essay.

T. J. Cheng discusses the growing economic linkage between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and claims that the process of economic exchange should not be called "integration," which would assume "a goal-driven process that nation-states legally commit to and consciously promote" (p. 94). That condition does not exist between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC), he contends. Cheng also argues that asymmetric economic interdependence does not seem to give Beijing leverage to coerce Taipei, nor does it necessarily turn Taiwan businessmen into a pro-unification force. While recognizing the danger of the "hollowing out" of Taiwan's economy in the future, resulting from increasing Taiwanese investment in the mainland, he believes the immediate hazard has so far been avoided thanks to Taipei's careful management.

Cheng's argument challenges the conventional wisdom informed by functionalism that expects closer economic exchange to bring about closer political relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait sooner or later. Cheng is perfectly right to point out that Taipei does not consciously promote a goal-driven process of economic *integration* with the mainland, not to mention political integration. However, Beijing does consider economic exchanges across the Taiwan Strait as a way of promoting political reunification. In other words, Taipei's political effort to slow down economic exchange with the mainland is counterbalanced by Beijing's determination to promote political unification through economic *integration*. Such a clash of political will between the two sides has made it difficult to define cross-Strait economic relations as integration or not. Moreover, Taipei's political will is continuously challenged by the Taiwanese business community which has developed various ways to escape from Taipei's regula-



tions and intervention. While Taiwanese businesspeople with stakes on the mainland do not necessarily support China's reunification, they are clearly in favor of closer associations with the mainland. Although the business community on Taiwan is not strong enough to create "civilian governance" of economic relations with the mainland, public opinion does present a challenge to Taipei's autonomy in managing cross-Strait affairs based on its political will and security concerns.

Michael Swaine's chapter shifts readers' attention from Taiwan's economic security to military security by analyzing the objectives, achievements, and obstacles of military reform on the island. Taipei's goal is to revolutionize its defense capabilities, remedy the shortfalls, and cope with Beijing's accelerating military transformation. This demands the conversion of a party army into a national defense force and the acceptance of civilian control and the oversight of the Legislative Yuan (立法院). Swaine observes that the quality of Taiwan's armed forces has increased in recent years, but serious problems remain in coordination, communication, integration, and planning among Taiwan's fighting units. With the mutual suspicion that exists among the Chen administration, the Legislative Yuan, and the military, improvements in the military's hardware capabilities and software infrastructure are highly dependent on the vagaries of U.S. support and assistance. This does not suggest a bright prospect for Taiwan's defense reform.

Michael Chase explores U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation that has developed to an extraordinary degree in recent years. By detailing the dialogue and the large number of projects and training ventures that engage Taiwan with the United States in improving the island's military software capabilities, Chase argues that the common view of a largely isolated Taiwan military is greatly outdated. However, he highlights emerging differences between Washington and Taipei over weapons procurement and threat perceptions, which result from conflicting assessments of the performance and appropriateness of specific weapons and the pricing policies of the United States as well as disparate estimates of whether Beijing will attack Taiwan. As Chase points out, officials in Taiwan resent what they characterize as the overbearing behavior of their American interlocutors,

and the Americans believe that Taipei is too indecisive and unrealistic.

Taipei's underestimate of the dangerous Strait is associated with its confidence in possessing a U.S. deterrent in a possible crisis. This brings us to a debatable issue as to whether Washington must clarify its position in order to avoid a military conflict. Nancy Tucker, however, argues in the last chapter that Washington should maintain its traditional policy of strategic ambiguity. Her major reason is that no one can predict all possible contingencies, and that by attempting to define what the United States will do under specific circumstances, policymakers will encourage probing and limit their options in a complex crisis. Since American domestic politics, as much as circumstances in the Strait, will determine Washington's reaction to the crisis, no president will want to be constrained by decisions made in the past. Similarly, the U.S. military establishment will want to be free to utilize force in the national interest during a possible war.

The unpredictability of U.S. reaction toward a possible war in the Taiwan Strait, while giving Washington a freer hand in crisis management, may not work as well as "strategic clarity" in preventing the outbreak of the war. The more likely it is that a military conflict will occur between the mainland and Taiwan and will involve the United States, the more vital it is that Washington should prevent misperceptions of its possible reaction by either side. Indeed, since the 1995-96 Strait crisis Washington has increased its military ties with Taipei while making it clear that the U.S. commitment to Taiwan's security is not a blank check that can be cashed by Taipei under any circumstances. In other words, Washington has adopted a clearer strategy of double deterrent to discourage Beijing's use of arms against Taiwan and Taipei's movement toward *de jure* independence. This was reflected in President George W. Bush's December 2003 remarks about opposing any unilateral change of the status quo across the Taiwan Strait when he met PRC Premier Wen Jiabao (溫家寶). While Beijing is unhappy with U.S.-Taiwan military and political connections, it may consider a U.S. policy of "strategic clarity" as the second-worst choice, which would work better than "strategic ambiguity" in deterring Taipei's unilateral change of the status quo. Also, strategic clarity may be welcomed by Taiwan's opposition parties who do not want to endorse the ruling party's

risky strategy of seeking independence and provoking Beijing.

This book offers useful insights and fresh ideas on the complex and dynamic relationships among Beijing, Taipei, and Washington. It is worth considering as a textbook for graduate courses in Asia-Pacific security and cooperation, as well as in U.S.-Taiwan-PRC relations. Experts in the related areas may also find this volume useful and thought-provoking. Most scholars and experts in mainland China, however, may argue that this volume should have accommodated the Chinese perspective regarding the danger of the Strait—its fundamental roots, exacerbating factors, and possible ways out of the crisis. Many on the mainland, furthermore, would perceive closer economic links between the two sides as an antidote to Taiwan's independence, and consider U.S. military cooperation with Taiwan as sending encouraging message to the "separatists" on the island. From the PRC's viewpoint, the easiest way to resolve the troublesome Taiwan issue is for the United States to reduce arms sales to Taiwan, and encourage cross-Strait economic exchange and political negotiation. One may contend that the substantial influence of the United States could go beyond the military perspective introduced in this volume. Nevertheless, it is Beijing and Taipei that have greater stakes in preventing a possible war between them. Increasing U.S. arms sales to Taiwan will not sufficiently enhance Taiwan's security nor will the PRC's missile deployment in Fujian Province (福建省) adequately deter Taipei's risky strategy. While an unexpected war might disrupt the PRC's "twenty-year opportunity period for development," it could carry even worse implications for Taiwan's future. As the island cannot afford to move itself away from the dangerous Strait, Taipei should at least avoid muddying the waters simply because of its obsession with domestic politics or its miscalculation of international trends. Given Taiwan's geographical proximity to the mainland, both political elites and the public on the island may have to choose to serve as a constructive linkage between Beijing and Washington, rather than relying on the United States as well as Japan to hedge against a rising China.