Coercion with Restraint: China and Extended Coercive Diplomacy

Dong Wang
School of International Studies
Peking University

*Prepared for delivery at workshop for the Summer Institute on IR Theory and Method, jointly organized by Peking University and University of Chicago, August 18-22, 2014. Earlier drafts of the paper have been presented at international conferences held in Beijing, Shanghai, Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

On April 10, 2012, sailors from the largest warship of the Philippine navy boarded Chinese fishing boats anchored in a lagoon at the Huangyan Island (or the Scarborough Shoal), a reef that is located in north of the Nansha (or Spratly) Islands and in dispute between China and the Philippines, and attempted to arrest the Chinese fishermen on allegation of “illegal fishing”. The Pilipino attempt, however, was thwarted by two Chinese maritime surveillance ships which intercepted and positioned themselves between the Philippine navy ship and the Chinese fishing boats. The encounter triggered a two-month standoff between Manila and Beijing.\(^1\) Beijing’s restraint in responding to the Philippines by merely deploying civilian maritime-enforcement forces to compel Manila to back down was widely noted and dubbed “small stick diplomacy” by security analysts.\(^2\) In fact, China was practicing coercive diplomacy, or “forceful persuasion”—as Alexander George puts it, during the standoff.\(^3\)

The use of coercion strategy to get others to comply with one’s demands is a common practice in human affairs as well as international relations. Strategists and statesmen have for centuries employed coercive diplomacy—defined as the attempt to compel a target to change its behavior through the threat to use force or the actual limited use of force—to achieve strategic and political aims.\(^4\) As scholars note, the


United States has throughout international history repeatedly resorted to the coercion strategy.\(^5\)

However, what distinguishes China’s standoff with the Philippines over the Huangyan/Scarborough from other cases of coercive diplomacy is the involvement of a third party, the United States, which is allied with the Philippines, in the game. The presence of a third party—a big power that is allied with the targeted adversary—has transformed the dynamics of conventional coercive diplomacy. Among other things, the coercer would have to exercise more caution and restraint lest prompting the third party to throw its weight behind the adversary, with which the third party is bound by either an alliance treaty or other forms of security commitments.

Despite the fact that scholars have developed and refined understanding of coercive diplomacy over the years, there is little study to date in the literature regarding coercive behavior involving a coercer vis-a-vis an adversary allied with or supported by another big power, a triangular scenario which might be called “extended coercive diplomacy”.\(^6\) Introducing a third party into the conventional coercive diplomacy will make the game more complicated, but also all the more interesting. It opens new theoretical realm that has yet been explored and raises important theoretical questions that have not been addressed before. How does extended coercive diplomacy differ from conventional coercive diplomacy? How would a state coerce an adversary allied with another big power? What are the characteristics of extended coercive diplomacy? What are the conditions that will affect the success or failure of such kind of coercive strategy? These are important theoretical questions one has to ask if we want to gain a better theoretical understanding of extended coercive diplomacy.

As the Huangyan/Scarborough standoff shows, China’s employment of coercive diplomacy presents a new type of strategic and policy dilemma for the United States: Washington has to walk a delicate balance between deterring China without emboldening the Philippines, and reining in the Philippines without weakening U.S. credibility in alliance commitment. Understanding the dynamics of the game of extended coercive diplomacy as well as the logic of China’s behavior in such a game thus becomes important for ensuring U.S. foreign policy goals. Likewise, for Chinese policy makers, understanding the logic of the adversary’s (i.e., the Philippines) and, particularly, the third party’s (i.e., the United States) behaviors, as well as efficient bargaining strategies of extended coercive diplomacy and its limits are of crucial importance of the pursuit of China’s strategic and security interests.

---


\(^6\) Lawrence Freeman mentions in passing a type of strategic coercion in which the coercer (A) puts pressure on actor B to bring Client C to heel but without elaborating on the dynamics of such a strategic triangle. George and his colleagues also briefly mention cases in which the adversary is supported by allies but without elaboration on the dynamics of such a kind of coercive diplomacy. Art and Cronin eds. mention cases of coercive diplomacy involving either more than one coercers or more than one target. However, those cases do not resemble the kind of tripartite game such as extended coercive diplomacy we have identified here. See George and Simons eds., *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (second edition), pp. 273-274; Lawrence Freeman, *Deterrence*, Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2004, pp. 212-213; Art and Cronin eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, esp. chapters 2, 3 and 9.
In this paper, I try to develop a theory of extended coercive diplomacy, and test it in six cases involving the People’s Republic of China (PRC)’s practices of extended coercion. In part one, I will define extended coercive diplomacy and lay out negotiating strategies of a coercer engaged in extended coercive diplomacy. Party two will present six case studies of China’s use of extended coercion strategy. Part three will conclude the paper.

EXTENDED COERCIVE DIPLOMACY: DEFINITION, STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND NEGOTIATING STRATEGIES

Defining Extended Coercive Diplomacy

Although diplomats and strategists have practiced coercion strategy for centuries, it was not until during 1960s and 1970s—when policy makers and security analysts were concerned about how to use limited amounts of force to pursue strategic interests—that the scholarly literatures on nuclear coercion and later generic coercion strategy flourished. The classic works of Thomas Schelling, Alexander George, and William Simons have laid the foundation for coercive theory. Coercive diplomacy is a foreign policy instrument that aims at prevailing in conflict situations “on the cheap”, because the alternative to coercive diplomacy—war—is too costly. Schelling notes that coercive diplomacy is based on “the power to hurt”, and the power to hurt is “most successful when held in reserve”, adding, “It is the threat of damage, or of more damage to come, that can make someone yield or comply”. Therefore, creating the belief in the mind of the target that the coercer will carry through the punishment if the target does not comply will be crucial to the success of coercive diplomacy. The coercer does so by issuing threats to use force or engaging in exemplary or limited use of force to demonstrate its resolve and willingness to escalate if necessary. Credibility thus becomes a key component of coercive diplomacy.

Coercive diplomacy is different from deterrence: whereas deterrence is a strategy that employs threats to dissuade an adversary from undertaking an action, coercive
diplomacy refers to a strategy to compel an adversary to change its behavior (to stop or reverse its action) by the threat to use force or actual limited use of force.\textsuperscript{11}

According to Paul K. Huth, extended deterrence can be defined as a triangular strategic scenario in which state A sends a deterrence signal to its adversary state B, threatening the use of force in an attempt to prevent the latter from launching military attack against state C, which is an ally of A.\textsuperscript{12} Figure 1 provides a visual presentation of the dynamics of extended deterrence

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{fig1.png}
\caption{Dynamics of Extended Deterrence}
\end{figure}

In a sense, extended coercive diplomacy may be viewed a reverse case of extended deterrence. Unlike the conventional coercive diplomacy, extended coercive diplomacy refers to a triangular strategic scenario in which state A sends a coercive signal to its adversary state B, with a threat to use force or actual limited use of force, in an attempt to compel the latter to change its behavior, whereas state B is either formally allied with the third party, state C or the two are tied by other forms of security commitments.

Figure 2 presents a visual depiction of the dynamics of extended coercive diplomacy.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{fig2.png}
\caption{Dynamics of Extended Coercive Diplomacy}
\end{figure}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{} George and Simons eds., \textit{The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy} (Second Edition), p. 7. Schelling coins the term “compellence” to distinguish it from deterrence. For Schelling, compellence is “a threat intended to make an adversary do something” whereas deterrence refers to “a threat intended to keep him from starting something”. See Schelling, \textit{Arms and Influence}, p. 69. In this paper, I use “coercive diplomacy” since it is the term that is more widely used in the literature.

\end{thebibliography}
In extended deterrence, one of the key challenges is for a major power, the deterring party, to make credible its commitment to defending a small ally from attack by another major power.\textsuperscript{13} The success of extended coercive diplomacy would not only—as in the conventional coercive diplomacy—require the coercer to convince its adversary of the coercer’s resolve to carry through the threat if it is faced with non-compliance, or to manipulate the adversary’s perception of its determination, but also require the coercer to carefully deal with the third party, a major power that is a patron of the coercer’s adversary. Extended coercive diplomacy introduces complication into the conventional coercive diplomacy since the third party’s action will greatly affect the outcome of the game. All other things being equal, adding the third party to the game and extending it to become a tripartite game makes the third party a pivotal player that is likely to swing the outcome of the game. If the third party chooses to throw its weights behind the targeted adversary, or otherwise come to the latter’s aid, then it will become a lot more difficult, if not impossible, for the coercer to successfully compel the adversary to change its behavior, since the adversary would now believe that it has the back of the third party, the big power and patron. The adversary’s such belief will be reinforced by the treaty alliance or security ties between itself and its patron, the third party.

As George points out, coercive diplomacy encompasses two forms: diplomatic use of force—the issuance of threats to use force against an adversary if it does not comply with what it is demanded of; and demonstrative or exemplary use of force—using “just enough force” to demonstrate resolution and to “establish the credibility of one’s determination to use more force if necessary”.\textsuperscript{14} In extended coercive diplomacy, the coercer would have to not only rely on the diplomatic and exemplary use of force to put pressure on the targeted adversary and, by extension, the third party, but also, more important, try to convince the third party that it is in its own interests to not “side with” the targeted adversary and rather to help “rein in” or otherwise put pressure on the targeted adversary to “cave in”.

\textsuperscript{13} Russett, “The Calculus of Deterrence”; Morgan, Deterrence Now, pp. 15-16, 49.

\textsuperscript{14} Art and Cronin eds., The United States and Coercive Diplomacy, p. 9; George, Forceful Persuasion, p. 5.
In an extended coercive diplomacy scenario, the coercer would, in principle, have to **at the minimum, try to “neutralize” the third party and, at the maximum, try to “enlist” the “help” of the third party to put pressure on the adversary.** Schelling argues that in a conflict situation such as deterrence, there will be both conflict and common interests between parties involved, and that to prevail in a conflict means seeking the “common interest in reaching outcomes that are mutually advantageous” and avoiding mutually damaging outcomes.\(^{15}\) Likewise, in order to successfully coerce an adversary by “threatening war rather than waging it”,\(^{16}\) the coercer in an extended coercive diplomacy scenario would also aim at seeking mutual accommodation. But what distinguishes extended coercive diplomacy from the conventional one is that the coercing power in an extended coercive diplomacy scenario will not merely aim at seeking common interests with the targeted adversary. Rather, the coercer would put more emphasis on seeking common interests with the third party because all other things being equal, the latter will likely determine the outcome of the tripartite game. The coercer would have to put up enough pressure on the targeted adversary to compel it to change behavior through threat to use of force or actual limited use of force without actually resorting to war, but not overdo it. The tricky part is that the coercer would have to put **just enough but not excessive** pressures on the targeted adversary. Excessive pressures might reduce the “overlap” of common interests between the coercer and the third party, and force the third party to decide to throw its weight behind its client, because of the treaty obligation or security commitment between them, thus significantly changing the correlation of force in the game.

Exercise of caution and restraint, therefore, becomes a very important characteristic of extended coercive diplomacy. The coercer would have the incentive to either avoid “entangling” the third party into a direct military conflict with itself or prevent the third party from throwing its weight behind the targeted adversary. Overdoing coercion might reduce the overlap of common interests between the coercer and the third party, and force the third party to decide to throw its weight behind its client, because of the treaty obligation or security commitment between them, thus significantly changing the correlation of force in the game.

**Structural Variables of the Game**

In the context of extended coercive diplomacy, there are a few structural variables that might be critical in determining the outcome of the game.

1) **Strength of security ties between the targeted adversary and the third party**

The stronger security ties between the target and its patron, the third party, the more likely that the third party will be resistant to the coercer’s pressure, and thus reluctant to pressure its client to back down. On the other hand, all else being equal, the weaker the patron-client relationship between the third party and the targeted adversary, the less constraint the third party will be facing when it chooses to put pressure on its client.

---


\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 5.
2) Power balances between the coercer and the third party

The third party patron, by definition, is a major power. The greater the power balance favors the third party vis-à-vis the coercer, the more likely the third party will bring its power to bear to resist the coercer’s pressure to “pressure” its ally or client to change behavior.

3) Power balances between the coercer and the targeted adversary

George cogently points out that great military capability does not guarantee the success of coercive diplomacy since the militarily weaker target might be “strongly motivated by what is at stake and refuse to back down”. However, relative power (as measured by military and economic capabilities) matters in extended coercive diplomacy, but in a way that is somewhat counter-intuitive. The greater the power balance favoring the coencer vis-à-vis the targeted adversary, the more likely that the coencer would exercise caution and restraint in practicing extended coercive diplomacy, in an attempt to “enlist” the help of the third party to press the targeted adversary to back down. The huge power advantage the coencer enjoys would leave no doubt in the mind of everyone that the coencer could easily prevail in any military conflict should coercive diplomacy fails, which, ironically, would enable the coencer to rely less on the compellent threats and to exercise more caution and restraint. As power disparity shrinks, however, the coencer would have to increase the credibility of its compellent threat through demonstration of more “recklessness” or manipulation of risk.

During the Huangyan Island/Scarborough Shoal standoff, the enormous power disparity China enjoys means that it can afford to rely on “small stick”—civilian maritime patrol vessels—instead of naval force, to engage the Philippine naval warship. When China signaled its strong motivation by defining maritime disputes as “core interest”, the vast power gap indeed allows China to exhibit caution and restraint without the need to communicate its resolve through the explicit threat to use force or actual limited use of force.

**Bargaining Strategies of Extended Coercive Diplomacy**

Strategic coercion is essentially a game of brinkmanship, and the threat to “go over the brink” matters greatly in the game. To prevail in the game of extended coercive diplomacy, the coencer could employ a number of negotiation strategies. In theory, the coencer can pursue two broad categories of strategies (or Master Strategies).

**Master Strategy I: To issue direct military threats**

The coencer can choose to issue direct military threats by threatening to use force or through actual limited use of force if the adversary does not comply, and/or the third party patron does not compromise.

---

17 George, *Forceful Persuasion*, pp. 6-7.
Master Strategy II: Tying hands/ shifting the burden of initiative/ relinquishing the initiative to the targeted adversary and, by extension, the third party patron.

As Schelling reveals in the classic *Arms and Influence*, to prevail in conflict situations would oftentimes require maneuvering ourselves into a position where “the initiative is up to the enemy and it is he who has to make the awful decision to proceed to a clash”. We can do so by “relinquishing the initiative to the other side” or “leav(es)ing the other the ‘last clear chance’ to stop or turn aside”\(^{18}\) The coercer, when practicing extended coercive diplomacy, can try to convince the third party that its hands are tied, and that if “cornered”, it would have no choice but to resort to actions that will damage interests of all parties. By tying its own hands, the coercer relinquishes the initiative to the third party and therefore increases the third party’s incentives to compromise and step in to “rein in” the targeted adversary. During the 1962 Taiwan Strait crisis, Beijing tried and successfully convinced Washington that the latter should rein in Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek)’s efforts to launch a massive “counter-attack” of the Chinese mainland; otherwise, Washington would be enveloped into a conflict with Beijing that neither wanted to be in.\(^{19}\) Again, during several cases of crisis over the Taiwan Strait since the end of the Cold War, Beijing had repeatedly tried to pressure Washington to “rein in” Taipei by sending the signal that it might be forced to use force to reverse any course of inevitable moving toward Taiwan independence.

Under the two broad categories, I identify four other sub-strategies that a coercer might also employ in pursuing extended coercion.

**Sub-Strategy I: To Drive a Wedge-Type 1 (To Portray the Third Party as Unreliable)**

The coercer can try to split the targeted adversary and the third party by driving a wedge between the two. It can achieve that goal by pursuing two types of driving-a-wedge tactics. In Type 1, the coercer can try to convince the adversary that the third party is unreliable and therefore eroding the adversary’s faith in the third party’s commitment and reducing the adversary’s incentives to resist against pressure from the coercer.

**Sub-Strategy II: To Drive a Wedge-Type 2 (To Portray the Adversary as Irresponsible)**

An alternative way of “driving a wedge” (or Type 2) between the adversary and the third party is to portray the targeted adversary as provocative, irresponsible, and dangerous. By convincing the third party that the targeted adversary is reckless, the coercer would increase the third party’s incentive to “rein in” its client and pressure it to change behavior. And this is precisely what Beijing did during the 2012 Huangyan Island/Scarborough Shoal standoff.

---


Sub-Strategy III: To Make the Costs of the Third Party Unbearable

The coercer can try to increase (or threaten to increase) the costs of the third party to the extent that they become unbearable, thus reducing the third party’s incentives to interfere on behalf of the targeted adversary.

The coercer can do so by directly increasing the costs for the third party to intervene on behalf of the targeted adversary through deterrence.20 This is what Beijing did during the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis when it issued an implicit nuclear threat against Washington—a Chinese senior military official told U.S. official that he believed the U.S. “would care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan”.21 The challenge for the coercer, of course, is how to make such a deterrence threat credible. Unfortunately, for China in this case, U.S. policy makers were incredulous about such an implicit nuclear threat.

The coercer can also choose to indirectly increase the third party’s costs of inaction. When the North Korea nuclear crisis was unfolding in late 2002 and early 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush tried to pressure Chinese President Jiang Zemin to persuade China’s de facto ally, North Korea, to abandon its nuclear weapons program and come to the negotiation table. After an initial futile attempt in October 2002 to urge Jiang to use China’s influence to rein in North Korea, Bush impressed Jiang by issuing a warning in January 2003 that he would not be able to stop Japan from going nuclear and again a month later that he would have no choice but to “consider a military strike against North Korea”, if North Korea’s nuclear ambitions cannot be curbed. The Six Party Talks took place in Beijing six month after Bush issued the second “threat”.22 Clearly, Washington succeeded in “persuading” Beijing to put pressure on Pyongyang to come to the negotiation table by raising China’s costs of inaction to the extent that it becomes intolerable to bear.23

To increase the costs for the third party to intervene or support the adversary is different from what Pape and Art identify as “punishment strategy”, which seeks to change the targeted adversary’s behavior by raising the costs of its continued resistance.24

Using deterrence against the third party is probably one of the most widely used instruments in extended coercive diplomacy but its effectiveness varied across cases.

---

20 Art suggests that under certain circumstances, deterrence and compellence might become intermingled, and that in situations where deterrence has failed, deterrent threats might become transformed into compellent actions. Art also notes that the deterrer might exercise compellence to bolster deterrent posture. However, what I identify here is something different: in extended coercive diplomacy, the coercer might employ deterrence against the third party in an attempt to shape its behavior by influencing its incentive structure. See Robert J. Art, “Introduction,” in Art and Cronin eds., The United States and Coercive Diplomacy, p. 8.


24 Pape, Bombing to Win, pp. 18-19; Art, “Coercive Diplomacy: What Do We Know?” in Art and Cronin eds., The United States and Coercive Diplomacy, p. 362.
China did that to Moscow during the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese border war. And in various crises over the Taiwan Strait (1954-1955, 1958, 1995-1996), Beijing also employed deterrent threats against Washington, the third party, in an attempt to deter it from coming to the aid of Taipei.

Sub-Strategy IV: To Provide Positive Inducements to the Third Party

Theorists of coercive diplomacy have emphasized the importance of “carrot and stick” strategy—combining compellent threats with positive inducements and reassurances, in practicing coercive diplomacy. The positive inducements can range from genuine quid pro quo to face-saving concessions. In addition, discontinuance of a punitive action can also be regarded as a form of positive inducement. In extended coercion, the coercer can try to alter the third party’s calculus of cost and benefit not only by increasing the costs of its intervention or inaction, but also by increasing the third party’s expected utility of “cooperation” by provision of positive inducements.

The Sino-American rapprochement is a typical example. The Nixon administration tried to incentivize Beijing to help end the Vietnam War by actively pursuing rapprochement with Beijing and offering to help China to counter the Soviet threat, which can be considered as positive inducements for the third party and patron, Beijing, to put pressure on Hanoi to come to the negotiation table. Indeed, Beijing’s efforts to try to “persuade” Hanoi to enter negotiations created bitterness, suspicion and a sense of betrayal on the North Vietnam side, and became one of the factors that contributed to the deterioration of relations and the eventual break-up and bloody border wars between Beijing and Hanoi.

As U.S.-China ties have been growing rapidly since the normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations in 1979, the costs for the United States to go into conflict with China have increased dramatically. Simply put, for the United States, there is now more to lose in destabilizing U.S.-China relations than before. Not only so, the “complex interdependence” between China and the United States also introduces the possibility for China to provide positive inducements to the United States through “issue linkage”. For instance, since the outbreak of the China-Japan standoff over

25 George, Forceful Persuasion, pp. 10-11.
27 Ibid.
the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, some Chinese analysts have advocated the idea of a “grand bargain” that follows the logic of issue linkage: China pressuring North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons programs in exchange for U.S. help to “rein in” Japan on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes. 31

CHINA AND EXTENDED COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

The Data

As students of Chinese military strategy and foreign policy note, Chinese leaders have repeatedly practiced coercive diplomacy in pursuit of strategic and political goals. 32 The six cases I will examine in this paper involve China’s experiences of extended coercion: (1) offshore islands operations during the first Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-55; (2) the shelling of offshore islands during the second Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1958; (3) the Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1962; (4) the Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1995-96; (5) Taipei’s push for referendum on “constitutional reform”, 2003-2004; (6) Taipei’s push for referendum on “joining the U.N. under the name of Taiwan”, 2007-2008.

Several cases that have been documented in the literature but nevertheless fall into the category of conventional coercive diplomacy will be excluded from my study. For instance, China’s failed attempt to coerce the United States from moving across the 38th parallel or Beijing’s failed coercive diplomacy against New Delhi leading up to the 1962 border war with India. 33

In all six cases, Beijing is the coercer, Taipei is the targeted adversary or local target, and Washington is the third party patron. The Beijing-Taipei-Washington triangle provides an excellent group for focused comparison. All six cases have similar structures, but three succeeded and three failed. In terms of structural variables, security ties between Taipei, the local target, and Washington, the third party patron remained strong in all six cases. Across all six cases, the cross-Strait power balance favors the Chinese mainland vis-à-vis. In all six cases, the U.S.-China power balance favors the United States vis-à-vis China. In other words, the selection of the six cases involving Beijing-Taipei-Washington helps control for the structural variables.34


34 Two additional cases of China’s extended coercive diplomacy are excluded from this study: China’s standoff with the Philippines over the Hauangyan Island/Scarborough Shoal in 2012, and the ongoing China-Japan standoff
Table 1 displays the success and failure of six cases of China’s extended coercion.

Art codes the outcome of U.S. coercive diplomacy against China during the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis as “ambiguous”. However, in this paper, looking from the perspective of China’s practice of extended coercion, I code the case of the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis as “mixed” or “partial failure”.

**Table 1. Six Cases Under Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-55</td>
<td>Mixed/Partial Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1958</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1962</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1995-96</td>
<td>Mixed/Partial Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan “Constitutional Reform Referendum,” 2003-04</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan “U.N. Membership Referendum,” 2007-08</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Art compares the success rates of George’s studies and Art and Cronin’s studies. Following Art, I report in table 2 a comparison of the success rates among China’s extended coercive diplomacy vis-à-vis George’s and Art and Cronin’s studies of U.S. experiences of coercive diplomacy. A caveat needs to be borne out, however. The comparison here is merely suggestive at best. What we might conclude from the comparison is limited by the fact that my study is based on China’s experiences whereas George’s as well as Art and Cronin’s studies are based on U.S. experiences.

**Table 2. Comparative Success Rates Across Different Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Failure</th>
<th>Ambiguous</th>
<th>Mixed/Partial Failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George: 7 cases (U.S.)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Cronin: 8 cases (U.S.)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Cronin: 16 cases (U.S.)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, 2012-now. These two cases are excluded because they do not share the similar structural features with the six cases involving Taiwan.
Combined cases: 22 cases (U.S.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Strategy</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive diplomacy (U.S.)</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive diplomacy (China)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic sanctions</td>
<td>25-33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended deterrence</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) the rows (except the fourth row) do not total 100 percent because the percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number; 2) the sixth row assumes the outcome of the Diaoyu/Senkaku standoff is “ambiguous”; 3) The seventh row assumes the outcome of the Diaoyu/Senkaku standoff is “mixed/partial failure”; 4) The eighth row reports the case of the 1962 Sino-Indian border war as well. If extended coercive diplomacy is regarded as a unique form of coercive diplomacy, then the eighth row reports all cases of China’s coercive diplomacy.

Allen S. Whiting suggests there might be triangular dynamics involved in the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict case: throughout the conflict, China was keenly aware that the Soviet response might strengthen India resistance.\(^\text{35}\) If we relax the rule of coding and include the Indian case into our dataset, then it will reduce the success rate from 50% to 44% and increase the failure rate from 38% to 44% (see Table 2).

Table 3. Comparative Success Rates Across Different Strategies\(^\text{36}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Strategy</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive diplomacy (U.S.)</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive diplomacy (China)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic sanctions</td>
<td>25-33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended deterrence</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^\text{36}\) Parts of the data are drawn from Art, “Coercive Diplomacy: What Do We Know?” in Art and Cronin eds., The United States and Coercive Diplomacy, p. 405.
Extended coercive diplomacy (China) | 50%
---|---
Extended coercive diplomacy (China)* | 50%

*Notes: the sixth row supposes the outcome of the Diaoyu/Senkaku standoff is “ambiguous”.

Following Art, I compare success rates of different strategies in Table 3. Again, we need to be cautious in interpreting the comparative data. The success rates of coercive diplomacy and extended coercive diplomacy reported here might not be compared directly since the data are derived from different basis. A better way is to compare the success rates of China’s coercive diplomacy vis-a-vis that of extended coercive diplomacy. The data is inconclusive at best. And the success rate of China’s extended coercive diplomacy might change if the current dataset is expanded.

Main Propositions

The core argument of the paper is that success of extended coercive diplomacy is a function of bargaining strategies the coercer employs, not shifts in core structural variables. Specifically, first, bargaining strategies focusing on direct military threats to the targeted adversary or the local target fail, because they will increase the security concerns of the target’s major power patron and in fact will bring the targeted adversary and the third party patron closer together.

Second, bargaining strategies that shift the burden of initiative to the targeted adversary or the local target succeed, because they will create incentive for the target’s major power patron to keep the target from escalating the crisis.

Third, these propositions are born out in the six cases examined here: Beijing used direct military threats three times and failed in all three, while Beijing shifted the burden of the initiative or relinquishing the initiative of “going over the brink” three times and achieved success in those three cases.

CHINA AND EXTENDED COERCION: CASE STUDIES

In the following pages, I will test the above propositions by examining six cases of the PRC’s involvement in extended coercion.

The Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-1955

In the wake of the conclusion of the armistice of the Korean war, Washington quickly moved to construct a strategic containment against the PRC by beefing up its military alliances in East Asia, including strengthening military ties with the Nationalist regime in Taiwan. By the end of 1953 and early 1954, Taipei had repeatedly raised with Washington the possibility of signing a mutual defense treaty, though the latter, partly out of the concern of being dragged into the Chinese Civil War, was non-committal. The news that a mutual defense treaty was under consideration by Washington and Taipei nevertheless alarmed the Chinese
Communist leaders. 37 Perceiving U.S. intent to perpetuate the separation of Taiwan from the Chinese mainland, Chinese leaders decided to take actions to thwart the initiative.

On July 7, 1954, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), noted at an expanded Politburo meeting that China should try to “sabotage” (pohuai) the possibility of U.S. signing a military treaty with Taiwan through using propaganda work and diplomacy. By combining criticizing U.S. policies and diplomatic engagement, Mao argued, China should “compel the United States to not sign the treaty with Taiwan”. 38 Tensions over the Taiwan Strait continued to rise. On July 26, two Chinese jet fighters were shot down by the American air force in an area close to the Hainan Island, greatly aggravating the tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The next day, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CCP (CC CCP) convened an emergent meeting and arrived at a dire assessment of U.S. intention as well as possibility of war in the Taiwan Strait. The Politburo believed that a U.S.-Taiwan mutual defense treaty would pose serious threat to the mainland, with the military encirclement against China “being expanded to the coast of Guangdong and the Northern Gulf (The Gulf of Tonkin)”. The Politburo concluded that China should put forward the task of “liberating Taiwan” as a way to “break up” (jipo) the U.S.-Taiwan military treaty. 39

By the summer of 1954, the PLA had developed military plans to overtake offshore islands in the southeast coast of China. The military campaigns were designed to prevent the United States and Taiwan from signing a mutual defense treaty and, at the minimum, preventing offshore islands from being included in the military treaty, as well as to counter U.S. efforts to enhancing strategic containment against China. 40

On July 23, 1954, the People’s Daily ran an editorial entitled “We Must Liberate Taiwan!” (yiding yao jiefang taiwan), denouncing U.S. and Taiwan authority’s plot to sign a military treaty and reaffirming China’s determination to “liberate Taiwan”. On August 11, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, in a speech at the thirty-third meeting of the Central People’s Government, declared that Taiwan was China’s sacred territory, any treaties signed by Washington and Taipei were “illegal and null and void”, and warned that any invaders “shall have to bear responsibility for all possible consequences of their aggression”. 41

On September 3, 1954, the PLA artillery suddenly shelled the offshore island of Jinmen (Quemoy), a fortified military stronghold of the Nationalist forces, sinking and wounding seven Kuomingtang (KMT) naval vessels, and wiping out nine KMT


38Mao Zedong, “Tong yiqie yuanyi heping de guojia tuanjie hezuo” (Unite and Cooperate with All Countries that Are for Peace), July 7, 1954, in Mao Zedong wenji (Collection of Mao Zedong’s Papers), Vol. 6, Beijing: People’s Press, 2009, pp. 333-335; Gong Li, “Tension across the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s,” pp. 145-146.


41Gong Li, “Tension across the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s,” p. 147; Niu Jun, Lengzhan yu xin Zhongguo de yuanqi, p. 426.
artillery posts. The PLA artillery troops again shelled Jinmen on September 22. The shelling of Jinmen was limited operations in scope and length, designed to demonstrate Beijing’s resolve. Yet, the shelling quickly triggered a crisis over the Taiwan Strait. On November 1, the PLA embarked on military operations involving bombing raids and naval operations against Dachen, islets off the east coast of Zhejiang province. Unsure about Beijing’s intentions, the Eisenhower administration decided to respond with what U.S. Secretary of State John F. Dulles called “two-pronged operations”—a combination of involving the United Nations (U.N.) and deterrence posture—in hopes of restraining and dissuading Beijing from risking a war. The Seventh Fleet was quickly dispatched to the Taiwan Strait. After the Eisenhower administration’s initial attempt to seek a “cease-fire” through the U.N. failed, Dulles publicly declared on November 11 that the United States would use force to defend Taiwan. Nevertheless, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Dulles, determined to avoid “getting sucked into” a war over offshore islands, tried to persuade Jiang Jieshi to withdraw troops from offshore islands during negotiations over the mutual defense treaty. In fact, whether or not offshore islands should be included in the mutual defense treaty became one of the most heatedly debated issues during the Washington-Taipei negotiations. Resisting Taipei’s efforts to “rope Washington into formal obligations” toward the offshore islands, Washington eventually managed to deliberately keep ambiguity in the treaty language as to whether or not it was committed to the defense of the offshore islands. Dulles explained to the National Security Council (NSC): any “U.S. actions specified would not be specifically limited to an attack on Formosa and the Pescadores, but would leave open to U.S. determination whether or not to construe an attack on the offshore islands as an attack on Formosa itself”. Such a “fuzzing up” of language, Dulles believed, would have the advantage of “maintain(ing) doubt in the minds of the Communists as to how the U.S. would react to an attack.”

The conclusion of the mutual defense treaty on December 2 thus left open the question whether or not Washington was committed to the defense of offshore islands. Calculating, correctly, that Washington, even after signing up the mutual defense treaty with Taipei, would not be prepared to go into war with Beijing over several small offshore islands, Chinese Communist leaders decided to launch operations to overtake Yijiangshan and Dachen, Nationalist military strongholds off the coastal province of Zhejiang. The PLA launched the attack on January 18, 1955, quickly crushed the Nationalist forces and occupied the Yijiangshan Island within twelve hours. The military operation was limited in scale, resulting in merely hundreds of death on both sides, and therefore might be interpreted as part of Beijing coercive

---


strategy. Another piece of evidence in support of such an interpretation is that even two days before the conclusion of the mutual defense treaty, on November 30, General Shu Yu, Chief of the General Staff of the PLA, had issued an order to the East China Military Region, urging the PLA to take military actions over Yijiangshan, so as to “compel” Washington and Taipei to not include offshore islands in the mutual defense treaty. Apparently, Beijing’s determination to carry out military operations against Yijiangshan and Dachen even after the conclusion of the U.S.-Taiwan mutual defense treaty served as a test of the resolve of Washington and Taipei and, particularly, of whether or not the treaty will apply to offshore islands. Indeed, after the PLA’s takeover of Yijiangshan, Washington, instead of direct military intervention, chose to help evacuate the Nationalist forces from Dachen. Washington even asked Moscow to help persuade Beijing not to attack Nationalist forces during the evacuation operations.

Beijing’s military move prompted the Eisenhower administration to seek a Congressional resolution that would give Eisenhower the authority to use U.S. forces to defend Taiwan and the offshore islands. Unsure of Beijing’s intentions, the Eisenhower administration even resorted to nuclear threats, believing that the frightening power of U.S. nuclear arsenal would force Beijing to pause before engaging in reckless behavior. Mao, however, seemed to be defiant of Washington’s nuclear threat. When receiving the Finnish ambassador to China, Mao declared that “American nuclear blackmail cannot intimidate the Chinese people. We have a population of six hundred million and nine million six hundred thousand square kilometers of territory. The atomic bombs owned by the United States cannot wipe out all the Chinese people.” Nevertheless, Beijing was prudent to not escalate the tensions. The CMC ordered the PLA to postpone the attack on Dacheng while continue to bomb the island. Facing mounting military pressure from the PLA, Jiang Jieshi was forced to withdraw his troops from Dachen. The evacuation, escorted by U.S. naval vessels, was not intercepted by the PLA. On February 13, 1955, the PLA occupied Dachen and nearby islands, thus bringing all the offshore islands in the east coast of Zhejiang province under the control of the Chinese mainland.

Explaining the Mixed Outcome of China’s Extended Coercion

The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1954-1955 has been widely interpreted as a setback for Mao, since his plan to coerce Washington and Taipei not to sign up the mutual

---

47 There were 536 soldiers killed on the KMT side and 393 on the PLA side, with a total death toll of 929. Therefore, if following the criterion of quantitative studies in the IR literature, the battle over Yijiangshan should not even be counted as a “war” since its death toll was below 1000. Rather, it may constitute a limited use of force when states employing strategic coercion. For the death tolls of the Yijiangshan battle, see Xu Yan, Jinmen zhi zhan, pp. 127-128.

48 Xu Yan, Jinmen zhi zhan, p. 124; Niu Jun, Leng zhan yu xin Zhongguo wai jiao de yuan qi, p. 429.

49 Gong Li, “Tensions across the Taiwan Strait,” p. 151; Niu Jun, Leng zhan yu xin Zhongguo wai jiao de yuan qi, p. 429.

50 Xu Yan, Jinmen zhi zhan, p. 131.

51 Gong Li, “Tensions across the Taiwan Strait,” p. 150.
defense treaty backfired. In fact, the tensions created by the shelling of Jinmen and the ensuing military operations prompted Washington and Taipei to conclude the negotiations of the treaty. Beijing exhibited prudence and caution in its operations, carefully not to involve U.S. troops directly or otherwise escalate the crisis. Yet, restraint alone cannot help Beijing achieve its coercive goals. Perceiving an aggressive Communist China, Washington regarded a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan as crucial in constructing a military encirclement and strategic containment of the communist regime. The demonstrative and limited use of force per se, including the shelling of Jinmen and the takeover of Yijiangshan, failed to compel Washington to change course. If anything, Beijing’s communication of its resolve through the ratcheting up of military pressures only reinforced Washington’s determination to conclude the defense treaty, thus bolstering the containment posture against Beijing.

However, another goal of Beijing was to compel Washington and Taiwan not to include offshore islands in the mutual defense treaty. Judging from such a perspective, Beijing’s extended coercion might not be a complete failure. Beijing’s demonstration of its “recklessness” and resolve had convinced Washington that to include offshore islands in the mutual defense treaty would be risky. In fact, Eisenhower insisted that the offshore islands should not be included in the defense treaty. As Eisenhower put it bluntly at a NSC meeting on November 2, “it was better to accept some loss of face in the world than to go to general war in the defense of these small islands”.

Beijing’s limited use of force and thereby exerting of military pressures, including the shelling of Jinmen and the takeover of Yijiangshan, had to some extent created the effect of “driving a wedge” (Type I and II) between Taipei and Washington, as Taipei would desperately want to “rope Washington into obligations” on the defense of the offshore islands, an effort Washington resisted and resented.

The variables we identified as pivotal in determining the outcome of extended coercive diplomacy generally worked against Beijing. Relatively strong security ties between Taipei and Washington ensure that the United States would have strong incentive to come to the aid of the Jiang Jieshi regime in Taiwan. Strongly convinced of the vital importance of Taiwan to the U.S. strategic posture in East Asia, American leaders clearly would not budge under Chinese pressure to not to sign the treaty. As Dulles put it, if Chinese Communists’ “probing” was not resisted, the United States would soon be “faced with the clear alternative between...a general war with China...or an abandonment of the entire [U.S.] position in the western Pacific.”

Therefore, having coercing Washington to retract from signing a mutual defense with Taipei as one of its goals clearly puts U.S. strategic interests at odds with that of China, leading Washington to decide to throw its weights behind Taipei. The power asymmetry between Beijing and Washington, particularly the nuclear monopoly Washington enjoyed vis-a-vis Beijing, enabled Washington to use nuclear threat to


coerce Beijing during the crisis. And, keenly aware of the huge power asymmetry, especially in terms of air and naval forces, Chinese leaders also displayed restraint and caution in carrying out extended coercion. Power asymmetry alone, however, does not determine that Beijing would falter in practicing extended coercion, as the 1962 Taiwan Strait Crisis would demonstrate.

The Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1958

The signing of the U.S.-Taiwan “Mutual Defense Treaty”, which took effect in March 1955, left open the question whether or not the United States was committed to the defense of the offshore islands. Jiang Jieshi continued to build the offshore island of Jinmen into a military stronghold and forward base for his plan of “counter-attack” of the Chinese mainland. By early 1958, Jiang had assembled in Jinmen six infantry divisions and special forces, in total of 85,000 troops, or about one third of total Nationalist forces.55

In January 1958, seniors PLA leaders convened an important military meeting in the Fujian Military Region. The meeting concluded, among other things, that “there is possibility to compel the enemies in Jinmen and Mazu to leave even without landing [PLA] infantry troops”. A report coming out of the meeting was sent to top leaders.56 On July 18, Chairman Mao Zedong convened a meeting attended by all senior military leaders in which he gave the instruction on shelling Jinmen.57 Mao explained that the purpose of shelling of Jinmen was to “directly target Jiang and indirectly target the U.S. (zhijie dui Jiang, jianjie dui Mei)”.58

On August 23, the PLA artillery suddenly launched massive shelling of Jinmen. Having lasted for more than two hours and consumed about 30,000 shells, the bombardment killed and wounded over 600 KMT troops, including three lieutenant generals, destroyed a great number of military facilities, and severely damaged the communication systems on the island. Two American military advisers were also killed by the shelling. The follow-up shelling of Jinmen in the next a few days formed a de facto blockade of the offshore island.59

On the same day of the shelling, Mao made it clear at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo that the goal of the shelling was to force “Jiang’s troops to withdraw from Jinmen and Mazu”.60 Again, two days later, Mao further explained to his comrades at the Standing Committee of the Politburo, “we do not say we will

---

60Wu Lengxi, Yi Maozhuxi (Reminiscences of Chairman Mao), Beijing: Xinhua Press, 1995, p. 74.
definitely land on Jinmen, nor do we say we will not land [on Jinmen].” Mao urged his colleagues to “act according to circumstances, redouble caution, and think twice before take action”. “Landing on Jinmen is no small matter,” Mao noted, adding the key was “the U.S. government’s attitude”. Mao observed that it was “not clearly specified” whether or not the mutual defense treaty signed by the United States and the KMT would cover Jinmen and Mazu, and “It is worth observing whether or not the Americans will also put on themselves these two baggage”. The shelling was designed to, Mao noted, “scout the Americans’ resolve, and test the Americans’ determination.”

The PLA’s shelling and blockade of Jinmen triggered a serious crisis over the Taiwan Strait. Believing that the Chinese Communists’ ultimate goal was to take over Taiwan and undo the U.S. strategic position in the western Pacific, Washington responded by taking a resolute deterrence posture. By early September, the United States had assembled an armada of over 60 naval vessels and over 430 air crafts. In an attempt to break the PLA’s blockade, U.S. President Eisenhower ordered U.S. naval vessels to escort Nationalist supply ships to approach Jinmen. On September 4, Dulles, following a meeting with Eisenhower at Newport, issued an unambiguous warning to Beijing: the United States was under treaty obligation to prevent Taiwan from being attacked, and the U.S. Congressional resolution had authorized the president to used armed force to protect areas including Jinmen and Mazu. At the same time, however, Dulles also hinted that the United States did not give up the hope of resolving the Taiwan issue through Sino-American ambassadorial talks. Two days later, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai issued a statement which, while stressing that the Chinese people would “not tolerate” the “direct threat” posed by offshore islands such as Jinmen and Mazu, echoed U.S. proposal to resume ambassadorial talks in Warsaw. In a September 18 letter to Mao, Zhou Enlai provided a shrewd assessment of each side’s position: “both [China and the U.S.] have revealed the cards. The United States knows that at present we will not expand the military operations to involve Taiwan, we know the United States does not want to get involved in the battle over Jinmen and Mazu. Jiang Jieshi wanted to the battle over Jinmen to escalate and therefore drag the United States down the water; whereas the United States wanted to pressure us to cease fire and get rid of its position of passivity”.

The resumption of ambassadorial talks heightened American policy makers’ hope that a cease-fire might be reachable. Dulles believed that should there be a “durable cease-fire” in the Taiwan Strait, it would be “foolish”, “unwise,” and “imprudent” to station a large amount of troops in Jinmen and Mazu. When Washington began to publicly pressure Jiang Jieshi to remove troops from Jinmen and Mazu, such a move invited resentment from Jiang.

---

61 Wu Lengxi, Yi Maozhuxi , pp. 76-77.
Explaining the Case of the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis

Mao Zedong’s goal in practicing extended coercion in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis was to replicate what the PLA did to Dachen in 1954, that is, to compel Jiang Jieshi to withdraw the Nationalist troops from Jinmen and Mazu through demonstrative and limited use of force, thus taking-over the offshore islands without having to actually fighting a war. Unlike in the case of 1954-1955 Taiwan Strait Crisis, however, Beijing chose not to directly “coerce the U.S.” this time around. In fact, Beijing tried to “neutralize” the role of the third party, the United States, when employing extended coercion. Beijing even tried to drive a wedge between Taipei and Washington. In a much publicized “Statement to the Taiwan Compatriots”, published on October 6, Mao stated, “The United States will sooner or later abandon you. Do you not believe that? The giant of history will come out and testify to that. The early sign of that can already be spotted in Dulles’ statement on September 30. Seen from where you stand, isn’t that disheartening?”66 This is a typical Type I “drive-a-wedge” strategy. Taking advantage of Taipei’s anxiety of being abandoned by Washington, Beijing attempted to portray Washington as unreliable, thus eroding Taipei’s faith in the U.S.’ commitment to the defense of the offshore islands and reducing its incentive to resist pressure from Beijing.

Beijing also exhibited restraint and caution in not involving U.S. forces into direct military confrontation. Nevertheless, Mao’s efforts to try to directly apply military pressure on the Nationalist forces failed. It failed largely because direct military threat of taking over the offshore islands increased the security concern of the third party patron, the United States. As Dulles argued, the fall of Jinmen would greatly weaken the authority and military capability of the Nationalist government and, worse still, might even expose the Jiang regime to subversion. In the eyes of American leaders, a Communist takeover would not only greatly boost Beijing’s prestige and sway in Asia, but would also “seriously jeopardize” U.S. strategic posture and the “anti-Communist barrier” it had erected in the western Pacific.67

The Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1962

In the wake of the devastating Great Leap Forward (GLF), Jiang Jieshi believed the time was ripe for making a massive counter-attack against the Chinese mainland. By April, 1962, Beijing received intelligence reports indicating that the Nationalist forces were actively making comprehensive preparations for a “sudden military adventure” against the mainland coastal areas.68

---


67 Accinelli, “‘A Thorn in the Side of Peace’: The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis,” p. 120.

As early as in February 1962, Beijing proposed to “consolidate the army for war preparations” ( Zhengjun beizhan), but the unfolding of events in spring added a note of urgency to the Chinese Communist leaders. By May, with tensions simmering across the Taiwan Strait, Mao became increasingly worried that the danger of war was mounting. In a May 29 meeting with the Chief of the General Staff General Luo Ruiqing, Mao directed the PLA to strengthen war preparations. The next day, on May 30, the Strategic Group of the CMC, co-chaired by Marshals Liu Bocheng and Ye Jianying, held an urgent meeting in Beijing to discuss military strategies and operational preparations on the southeast coast. Mao gave the instructions that the PLA should “maneuver overtly” after discreetly and swiftly moving into defense positions, and the PLA’s operations should be intended to “wreck his [Jiang Jieshi] offensive” and “delay his [Jiang Jieshi] movement.”

On June 10, the CC CCP issued a directive to call on the party and the army to be prepared, militarily, psychologically, and politically, for a landing of possibly 200-300 thousand KMT troops on the southeast coast around the monsoon season. Meanwhile, troops from outside Fujian were swiftly marching into the coastal province facing Taiwan. Within ten days, seven army divisions had been moved into Fujian, and within a month, a total of 500,000 troops would have been deployed along the coast opposite the Taiwan Strait.

Beijing also issued warnings to Washington both publicly and through the private channel of ambassadorial talks in Warsaw, that the United States would be held responsible for all the consequences of Jiang’s military adventurism. Clearly, Mao’s strategy was a combination of deterrence and coercion. On the one hand, the PLA tried to deter the Nationalist forces from attacking recklessly by demonstrating that the Chinese Communist forces were strong and well prepared. On the other hand, Beijing was also pursuing extended coercion. As Zhou Enlai made it clear that China’s goal was to “strive to let the U.S. stop Jiang Jieshi’s military actions


70 ZJJS, Vol. 5, p. 316.

71 “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu zhunbei fensui jiangfeibang jinfan dongnan yanhai diqu de zhishi” (The CC CCP Instruction Concerning Preparing to Crush the Jiang Bandit Clique’s Aggression against Southeast Coastal Areas), June 10, 1962, JZWX, Vol., 15, pp. 481-484; “Tigao jingti, zuohao zhunbei, chedi fensui Jiang feibang de jinfan yinmou” (Increase Vigilance, Make Good Preparations, and Completely Crush the Plot of Attacking by the Jiang Bandit Gang), June 7, Anjuan hao: 173, Malu hao: 2, Quanzong hao: 102, Zhonggong Fujian shengwei xuanachuabu (The Propaganda Department of the CCP Fujian Provincial Committee), FPA; Huang Yao and Zhang Mingzhe eds., Luo Ruiqin zhuan, p. 372.


of counter-attacking the mainland.” By ordering the PLA troops to “moves overtly”, Beijing tried also to signal to Washington that the PLA’s intention was defensive; and by carrying out a phased-operation, Beijing would create a “war scare” which would then compel the United States to “put a damper” on Jiang’s aspirations to attack the mainland. Mao’s strategy evidently produced results. Senior U.S. officials in Washington quickly took heed of the openness surrounding the PLA movements in Fujian, which differed dramatically from the “secrecy” associated with the Chinese Communists’ military movements during the Korean War. At a White House meeting a few weeks later, on June 19, General Maxwell D. Taylor, Military Representative to the President, called Kennedy’ attention to the unusual pattern of “overt” movements of Chinese Communist forces and the implied defensive nature of the Chinese Communist military build-up.

As the Chinese Communist military preparations rushed in full swing, senior U.S. officials became increasingly worried that a large-scale military conflict might break out. In an April 29 telegram to the U.S. Embassy in Taipei, Under Secretary of State George Ball revealed that the “best intelligence” of the United States “convinces” U.S. Policy makers that “Chinese Communist controls have not yet deteriorated to [the] point where attacks at present time or in immediate future could have any hope of success.” Five days later, on May 4, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Averell A. Harriman informed Taipei that the United States was “very disturbed over” the Nationalist military buildup programs. Speaking for the “highest levels” of U.S. Government, Harriman urged that new military preparedness program be “held in abeyance.”

U.S. policy makers were mindful of Taipei’s calculations of eventually “dragging” the United States into “GRC plans for an invasion of the mainland.” U.S. officials believed that any Nationalist efforts to “retake” the mainland would face “either quick defeat” or “short-lived success.” The “accompanying risks” for the United States would range from “political embarrassment” to a “war of escalation.”

Beijing was anxious to ascertain Washington’s intention. On June 23, an ad hoc, informal session of the Sino-American ambassadorial talks in Warsaw was arranged. It was at this informal meeting that U.S. Ambassador to Poland John M. Cabot assured Chinese Ambassador to Poland Wang Bingnan that “we would disassociate ourselves in word and in deed” from any Nationalist attack against the mainland and would “seek to restore peace”. Moreover, toward the end of the meeting, Cabot stressed that “we will never want a world war; we should make every effort to prevent

75Wang Bingnan, Zhongmei huitan jiunian huigu, p. 87.
76Hughes to Ball, “Taiwan Strait Crisis: GRC on the Defensive,” June 28, 1962, NSF/CO, Box 25A, China, Cables, 6/16/62-6/30/62, JFKL.
80Memo for the Record, “Presidential Conference on Taiwan,” ibid., p. 240
such a thing.” 82 Again, at a press conference on June 27, U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent a public re-assurance message by emphasizing the “defensive” nature of U.S. commitment to Taiwan. 83

**Explaining the Case of 1962 Taiwan Strait Crisis**

Beijing’s success in not only neutralizing the United States, but also “enlisting” U.S. help to “rein in” Jiang Jiezhi during the 1962 Taiwan Strait Crisis is worth noting. By making large-scale military deployments opposite Taiwan in an “overt” manner, Beijing not only signaled the defensive nature of its military operations, but also increased Washington’s cost of inaction. Moreover, Beijing successfully convinced Washington that its hands were tied, and if Washington were not to restrain Jiang, the war could easily escalate and involve the United States. As Chinese Ambassador Wang Bingnan warned his American counterpart at the June 23 informal session of the Warsaw Talks, “Once Jiang Jieshi provokes a war with the mainland, it will never bring any benefit to the U.S.,” adding, “it will then become a problem between China and the U.S.” 84

A comparison of the case of 1962 Taiwan Strait Crisis with two previous cases (the 1954-55 Taiwan Strait Crisis and the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis) shows that all structural factors remained roughly the same. Security ties between Taipei, the targeted adversary, and the third party, the United States, remained as strong as it was in 1954-55 or 1958; power asymmetry between Beijing and Washington remained as big as it was in the case of 1954-55 or the case of 1958. Despite the increase in the PLA’s military capabilities, the military balance between Taipei and Beijing did not have any fundamental shift. However, Beijing prevailed in the case of 1962 Taiwan Strait Crisis whereas failed in the two previous cases. Apparently, it is Beijing’s bargaining strategies rather than structural variables that accounted for the differences in the outcomes. First and foremost, Beijing’s strategy of shifting the burden of “going over the brink” to Taipei had created the incentive for the third party patron, Washington to pressure Taipei to back down and prevent the latter from escalating the crisis and therefore dragging the United States into a costly military conflict with Beijing.

**The Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1995-1996**

On May 22, 1995, the Clinton administration granted a visa for Taiwan leader Lee Teng-hui to enter the United States in early June to pay a “private visit” to his alma
mater Cornell University. The decision was a reversal of previous public statements and private assurances to Chinese leaders that such a visit would be contrary to U.S. policy. The U.S. decision to issue a visa to Lee triggered strong reactions from China. The People’s Daily published a Xinhua commentary which charged that the United States was emboldening Lee and pro-independence forces in Taiwan, and angrily questioned, “Where does the United States really want to lead Sino-U.S. relations?” China was determined to compel the Clinton administration to reverse what it perceived as a trend of increasing support of Taiwan independence. Beijing retaliated to the visa decision by canceling upcoming high-level visits to the United States by Defense Minister Chí Haotian and State Counselor Li Guixian, and by cutting short a visit to Washington by the chief of staffs of the PLA air force. It also suspended bilateral talks on arms proliferation and human rights, and called the Chinese ambassador back to China for “consultations.” Moreover, China decided to signal its resolve to curtail the perceived Taiwan’s move toward independence and increasing U.S. support of it through the demonstrative use of force. On July 18, 1995, Beijing announced that from July 21 to July 28 it would carry out missile tests, along with naval and air exercises in the waters near Taiwan. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson put it bluntly, “what we are going to do is to make the U.S. realize the importance of U.S.-China relations to urge it to take the right track”.

Washington took a low-key posture toward China’s military exercises. On August 1, Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with Chinese Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in Brunei. Christopher presented Qian with a confidential letter from U.S. President Bill to Chinese President Jiang Zemin. In the letter, Clinton wrote that the United States opposed Taiwan independence; did not support a two-China policy, or a policy of one China and one Taiwan; and did not support Taiwan membership in the U.N. Christopher also took the opportunity to reassure Qian that Lee’s visit had been a “special situation” and that future visits would be “personal, unofficial, and rare, and would be decided on a case-by-case basis.”

During the crisis, China tried to increase U.S.’ expected utility of “cooperation” through provision of positive inducement. At a September 27 meeting with Christopher in New York, Qian told the latter that China would suspend assistance to Iran regarding nuclear energy, and stressed that China was ready to work for greater cooperation with the United States. Apparently, Qian was trying to “link” the Taiwan issue with the Iran issue. However, China’s “positive inducements” failed to elicit desired changes in U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

87Ross, “The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,” p. 94.
88Quoted in Ross, “The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,” p. 95.
On October 24, the two presidents met in New York for an informal summit. During the meeting, however, Clinton merely iterated the U.S. positions Christopher had previously related to Qian. Having failed to persuade Washington to consider a fourth communiqué or otherwise make more commitments to “oppose Taiwan independence” and facing continuing defiance by the Taiwan leader Lee, Beijing decided to escalate its demonstrative use of force.

On November 15, China began a new round of military exercises, a time when U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye was visiting Beijing to resume the U.S.-China military dialogue. The exercises involved PLA army, naval, and air forces, and also included a simulation of an amphibious PLA landing on a Taiwan-controlled island and attacks on a mock-up of Taiwan’s largest airport. Beijing declared that the exercises were intended to demonstrate the “military’s resolve and capability to defend national sovereignty and...safeguard the motherland’s unity”, and constituted the “most serious warning” to the pro-independence forces both in Taiwan and beyond. While in Beijing, Nye made a cautious response to China’s move, and merely privately reiterated U.S. view that China’s military exercises were counterproductive. The fact that Nye did not come out publicly criticizing China’s military maneuvers might have helped create the impression that Washington was not as “reliable” an ally as many in Taiwan would have assumed. China’s extended coercion clearly worked in terms of compelling Taiwanese voters to have a second-thought on approving Lee Teng-hui’s provocative mainland policy. In the legislative election held in early December 1995, Lee Teng-hui’s KMT suffered a big loss and barely kept its majority by only two seats. By contrast, the newly established, pro-unification New Party fared well, having all of its candidates elected into the legislature.

U.S. officials saw Beijing as the “offended party” and did not want to worsen the situation by overreacting to China’s moves. As one National Security Council (NSC) official later put is, Washington wanted the message to get across to Taiwan that its “actions have consequences,” and that the United States would not support a provocative policy toward Beijing. As long as Beijing was not prepared to attack Taiwan by force, Washington would not be anxious to rush to the defense of Taiwan. Meanwhile, however, Washington was resistant to Beijing’s demands to shift its Taiwan policy. Indeed, in the eyes of leaders in Beijing, Washington appeared to be lending support to Taiwan’s independence drive. On December 19, Washington sent U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz to pass through the Taiwan Strait, the first of such transit since the normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979. Washington approved additional visas to Taiwan senior leaders, including Lee Teng-hui for “transition” in the United States. Beijing believed that it had to “raise the stakes” to make Washington understand the risks of its pro-Taiwan policy, and decided that a next

---


93 Ross, “The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,” p.103.

round of PLA exercises were needed to further demonstrate China’s resolve to use force against any move toward Taiwan independence.  

From late January to February, Beijing assembled more than 100,000 PLA troops in the coastal province of Fujian, opposite to Taiwan. On March 4, Beijing announced that the PLA would conduct surface-to-surface missile tests from March 8-18, in waters just off two of Taiwan’s largest port cities, Keelung and Kaohsiung. The missile tests were also designed to compel Taiwan voters to not elect Lee Teng-hui in the upcoming general election in Taiwan. On March 7, the PLA fired three M-9 missiles into the waters near Taiwan. A March 8 joint editorial, published by the People’s Daily and the Liberation Army Daily, declared that “[we will] exert all our efforts to defend our country’s unity. We mean what we say.”  

Senior U.S. officials warned Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu, who was visiting Washington at the time, that the Chinese missile tests were “reckless” and “aggressive” and could be regarded as a threat to U.S. interests. However, Beijing ignored Washington’s warnings and went on to announce that from March 12 to March 20 it would carry out air and naval exercises with live ammunition in waters near Taiwan. In response, Washington ordered two carrier battle groups to the waters close to Taiwan. From March 18 to March 25, the PLA carried out joint air, ground, and naval exercises near Pintan Island, within ten nautical miles of the offshore islands controlled by Taiwan.

Explaining the case of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis

Beijing’s goals of extended coercion in the case of 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis were three-folds: first, Beijing tried to coerce Washington to reverse what it perceived as the trend of increasing support of Taiwan independence; second, it attempted to coerce Taiwan not to move further down the perceived pro-independence path; third, more specifically, Beijing also aimed to coerce the Taiwan voters to not support pro-independence forces in Taiwan.

The PLA’s missile tests and military exercises largely succeeded in eroding the support of Lee Teng-hui’s KMT in the December 1995 legislature election. However, the result of Beijing’s efforts to coerce Taiwanese voters to not to support pro-independence during the March 1996 general election was mixed. The pro-

---

98 The Xinhua News Agency, March 9, 1996.
99 Author interview with former Commander in Chief of U.S. Pacific Command Admiral Joseph A. Preuher, May 2013, Washington, D.C.
100 Ross, “The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,” p. 111.
101 Ross, “The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation,” p. 89.
independence Democratic Party of Progress (DPP) fared poorly in the election and was subsequently forced to adopt a cautious mainland policy to increase its popularity among voters. Lee, however, had garnered 52 percent of the popular vote and won an undisputed electoral victory.  

During the crisis, Beijing had tried to shift Washington’s calculus of costs and benefits through provision of positive inducements and “issue-linkage”. It also tried to portray Lee Teng-hui as provocative and irresponsible and, to some extent, won Washington’s sympathy in that regard. Washington’s low-key posture in response to China’s first rounds of military exercises in 1995 created the impression that the United States might not be as ‘reliable’ as assumed, and thus helped erode the support of Taiwan independence in Taiwan. However, when Beijing “over-did” its coercion by ratcheting up military threats and the level of the demonstrative use of force thus triggering strong counter-deterrence measures from Washington, Beijing’s extended coercion failed to achieve the outcome it desired regarding the March 1996 general election in Taiwan.

Beijing also tried to “increase the stake” by gradually ratcheting up the intensity of its coercion strategy by increasing the level of demonstrative use of force, primarily through military exercises. Particularly, Beijing even tried to raise the costs of Washington’s support of Taiwan independence to the extent that it became intolerable for the United States by issuing an implicit nuclear threat. Reportedly, a Chinese senior military official, Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Xiong Guangkai, told the visiting Chas W. Freeman, former Assistant Secretary of Defense, in January 1996, that he believed “you care more about Los Angeles than you do about Taiwan”, implying that China “would sacrifice ‘millions of men’ and ‘entire cities’ to assure the unity of China and ... the United States would not make comparable sacrifices”. Even though the U.S. policy makers were “incredulous” about the implicit nuclear threat, apparently Washington was impressed with Beijing’s “fixation on Taiwan”, if not its determination to prevent Taiwan independence.

Again, the structural variables largely remain the same as it was in the case of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis compared to three previous cases: by the time of mid-1990s, the security ties between Taipei and Washington had remained strong, as signified by the U.S. commitment embodied in the Taiwan Relations Act; despite Beijing’s efforts of military modernization, at the time of the mid-1990s, the mainland did not enjoy military superiority vis-à-vis Taiwan; and the power balance between China and the United States still greatly favored the latter. What explains the largely failed outcome of the 1995-96 case as compared to the 1962 case, is Beijing’s bargaining strategies. Much like in the cases of 1954-55 and 1958, Beijing’s efforts to apply direct military threats against Taipei in the 1995-96 case failed to elicit desired

---


The Crisis of Referendum on the “Constitution Amendments”, 2003-04

On September 28, 2003, the pro-independence Taiwan leader Chen Shui-bien announced his plan to push for a referendum to “produce a new constitution”. In the following months, Chen’s efforts to push for his “constitution amendments” agenda triggered a crisis in cross-Straits relations. In an attempt to mobilize his pro-independence political base to win the March 2004 re-election, Chen stepped up his Taiwan independence rhetoric. At a November 7 campaign event, Chen claimed that China “is a different country” and declared that he would complete a “major reform of the constitutional system” to produce a “New Taiwan Constitution”. Chen’s moves were met with strong reactions from Beijing, which regarded Chen’s efforts to push for a new constitution through referendum as pursuing de jure Taiwan independence. The State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office accused that Chen’s push for referendum on “constitution amendments” was “a very dangerous step toward the ‘Taiwan Independence’”.106 Beijing issued stern warnings that the “red line” for using force to prevent Taiwan independence might be crossed if Chen were to push through the referendum, and that Beijing would be willing to sacrifice the 2008 Olympics and economic developments to forcibly prevent Taiwan independence. To signal its resolve, Beijing sent missile brigades to Fujian and Jiangxi, provinces close to Taiwan, and put the PLA on second-level war alert.107

Interestingly, Beijing seemed to intuitively understand the logic of extended coercion, that is, China would have to “enlist” the help of Washington to rein in Taipei. As a China Daily commentary noted, “we should solemnly ask the Bush administration to join China in opposing the Taiwan independence”.108 Similarly, a Chinese analyst, citing U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage’s public opposition to Chen’s proposal to hold referendum, acknowledged that “the U.S. has been playing an increasingly more important role” in the Taiwan issue.109

On a November 21 interview with editors of The Washington Post, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao attempted to send a strong message and urged that “the U.S. side must be very straightforward in adhering to the principles of the three Sino-U.S. joint communiques and in opposing Taiwan independence. The U.S. side must be crystal clear in opposing the use of a referendum or writing a constitution or all other tactics


107 “Jiefangjun junguan tan fan taidu zhanzheng” (PLA Officiers on Counter-Taiwan Independence War), December 3, 2003, Liaowang xinwen zhoukan (Outlook News Weekly).


109 Chang Kong, “Meiguo ban yueluaiyue zhongyao de juese” (The U.S. Has been Playing an Increasingly More Important Role”), Qingnian cankao (Youth Reference), November 25, 2003.
used by the leader of Taiwan authorities to pursue his separatist agenda”. Quoting lines of Abraham Lincoln—“a house divided against itself will not stand” and “the Union is perpetual”, Wen warned that “the Chinese people will pay any price to safeguard the unity of the motherland.”110

Chinese Defense Minister General Cao Gangchuan, when receiving Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Richard Myers on January 14, 2004, tried to make a softened appeal to the United States, revealing Beijing’s hope that Washington “plays a positive role [in opposing Taiwan independence]”.111

Beijing’s efforts to persuade the United States to put pressures on Taipei resonated well in Washington. U.S. President George W. Bush, despite his sympathy toward Taiwan during the early months in his first term, had developed a very negative view of Chen Chui-bien due to the latter’s perceived provocations in cross-Strait relations. And U.S. officials believed that Chen also “saw a value in moving step by step toward de jure independence”.112 Chen’s “unpredictable nature” had so disturbed and worried Washington that a senior Bush administration official would call him, in internal meetings, “a frog on a lily pad”, meaning you would never know in which direction he would jump.113 Washington came to agree with Beijing’s argument that Chen was the “trouble maker” and the United States would have to restrain Chen’s provocation. As Douglas Paal, Director of American Institute on Taiwan (AIT), noted in a November 8 telegram to the State Department that “responsibility for putting down markers on how far Taiwan can push the independence agenda may increasingly fall on our shoulders.”114

Beijing’s efforts to persuade Washington to restrain Chen paid off, especially during Premier Wen Jiabao’s December 2003 visit to the United States. With Wen standing aside in the Oval Office, Bush told the press that “we oppose” decisions by “the leader of Taiwan” to “unilaterally to change the status quo”.115 Bush didn’t even mention Chen by name. Facing mounting pressure from Washington, Chen was forced to moderate the language of the election-day referendum.

Explaining the Success of the Case of the 2003-2004 Referendum on “Constitution Amendments”


111“Cao Gangchuan huijian Mai’ersi shi duncu Meifang fan taidu fahui jiji zuoyong” (Cao Gangchuan Urges the U.S. Side to Play a Positive Role in Opposing Taiwan Independence when Recieving Myers), Jiangfangjun bao (Liberation Army’s Daily), January 15, 2004, p. 1.

112Author interview with a former senior U.S. official, May 2013, Washington, D.C.

113Author interview with a former senior U.S. official, July 2013, Washington, D.C.

114Author interview with a former senior State Department official, July 2013, Washington, D.C.

Beijing tried to portray Chen Shui-bien as provocative, irresponsible, and dangerous. That effort was successful not the least because it converged with Washington’s perception of Chen. Through verbal warnings and military deployments, Beijing signaled to Washington its resolve to resort to the extreme—to use force to prevent Taipei’s move toward de jure independence. Particularly, Beijing successfully tied its hands, relinquishing the initiative to Taipei as well as the third party, the United States. And increasingly, Washington realized that it should bring its power to bear to “draw the line in the sand” and rein in Chen. Bush’s public warning of U.S. “opposition” to Taiwan independence was the first such statement by a U.S. president, and greatly helped curb Chen’s political adventurism.

Again, structural factors of the 2003-04 crisis had changed somewhat but largely remained the same. The security ties between the targeted adversary, Taipei, and the third party patron, the United States, remained strong. Due to the Chinese mainland’s military buildup, the cross-Strait military balance shifted in favor of Beijing somewhat but did not reverse. Despite the rapid increase in its military capabilities, China, by 2003-04, still lagged far behind the United States. Compared with previous cases (i.e., the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis), Beijing throughout the 2003-04 crisis practiced caution and restraint, while trying to impress upon Washington that its hands were tied and, if cornered, it would have to resort to use of force to prevent Chen. By shifting the burden of initiative or relinquishing the initiative to Taipei, Beijing successfully tied its own hands and incentivized Washington to step in to rein in Taipei.

The Crisis of the Referendum on Joining the U.N., 2007-08

On June 18, 2007, Taiwanese leader Chen Shui-bien revealed to American visitors his plan to hold a referendum on joining the U.N. under the name Taiwan, in conjunction with the upcoming general election in March 2008. In a statement issued the next day, the U.S. State Department made it clear that the United States “opposes” the referendum because such a move “appears designed to change Taiwan’s status unilaterally”, “would increase tensions in the Taiwan Strait”, and “run counter to” Chen’s “repeated commitments to President Bush and the international community”.116 However, brushing aside U.S. objection, the defiant Chen vowed to press ahead with the referendum.117

Within days of Chen’s announcement, Chinese Foreign Ministry officials called on U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Daniel Piccuta, urging the United States to stop selling arms to Taiwan and to “explicitly oppose and curb” Chen’s attempts to achieve de jure independence. Claiming that arms sales would encourage Chen Shui-


bien’s “desperate and unscrupulous attempts” to change the status quo, the Chinese Foreign Ministry cautioned Washington not to send the “wrong signal” to Taipei.\footnote{Author interview with former U.S. State Department officials, May and July, 2013, Washington, D.C.}

On July 4, Director of State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office Chen Yunlin, told the visiting U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas Christensen that the situation now was “extremely serious” and “potentially explosive”, and we were headed toward the “brink of a crisis”. If Chen pushed through with the referendum, which Beijing considered as de jure Taiwan independence (fali taidu), then negative consequences, including the use of force, might be “very hard to avoid”, Chen Yunlin warned. Chen reiterated his hope that the United States would take “strong action” and “exercise its influence” to stop Chen Shui-bien. If the United States failed to manage the situation, Chen noted, then China would have no choice but to do what was necessary, with Chen Shui-bien being responsible for any “consequences”, including bloodshed. Chen Yunlin said the United States and China should “work together” to restrain Chen Shui-bien, just as they did regarding North Korea’s nuclear problem.\footnote{Author interview with a former senior U.S. State Department official, July 2013, Washington, D.C.; Xinhua Net, July 24, 2007, Beijing.}

China also tried to swing the opinion of U.S. Congress. On August 7, Jiang Enzhu, Director of the National People’s Congress Foreign Affairs Committee, told the visiting U.S. Congressman Robert Wexler that the United States should oppose “even more clearly, openly and firmly” Chen Shui-bien’s “reckless provocations”. Citing the recent House resolution calling for the lift of restrictions on meeting withTaiwan officials, Jiang urged Washington to avoid sending “wrong signals” since such moves only embolden Chen to go further down the “wrong path”, causing the situation to eventually “spin out of control”. U.S. Embassy in Beijing reported that Chinese counterparts were saying that Beijing was “counting on Washington” to “rein Chen in”, least he “force Beijing into a corner”, leaving it no choice but to “overreact”.\footnote{Author interview with former U.S. officials, May and July, Washington, D.C.}

Beijing’s messages apparently got across to Washington. As a former senior State Department official noted, there were constant messages coming from Beijing at the time, and “we took it seriously”.\footnote{Ibid.} U.S. policy makers now understood that “we have to go public on this”.\footnote{Ibid.} On August 28, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte gave an exclusive interview with Phoenix TV in which he stated that the United States “oppose(s)” referendum and regarded it as “a step toward Taiwan declaring independence” and “changing the status quo in cross-Strait relations”.\footnote{Ibid.; “Fenghuang zhuanyang Mei fuguowuqing: Mei shi rulian gongtou wei xuanbu taidu” (Phoenix’s Exlusive Interview with U.S. Deputy Serectary of State: The U.S. Regards Referendum on Joining the U.N as Declaring Taiwan Independence), August 28, 2007, http://news.ifeng.com/taiwan/1/200708/0828_351_204336.shtml.}

On September 6, Chinese President Hu Jintao told U.S. President Bush at the APEC Summit Meeting in Australia that this year and the next year were “a period of
high danger in cross-Strait relations” and urged the United States to “raise more stern warning” to Taiwan authorities against any form of separatist activities for Taiwan independence. Bush stated that the U.S. side “had consistently opposed any acts to change the status quo” and promised to “continue to use good influence over Taiwan” to try to change Taiwan authorities’ positions.124

As Chen Shui-bien continued to defy pressures from Washington, U.S. officials decided that more forceful warning was needed. U.S. policy makers, as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice later recalled, had come to believe that Chen’s move was a “thinly disguised ploy to get the people of Taiwan to vote for Taiwan independence”, and that Chen “had become a thorn” on U.S. side, not just Beijing’s.125

A few days before Taiwan’s March 2008 general election, Rice took a trip to Beijing. At the request of Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, Rice publicly rebuked the referendum. After Rice’s rebuke was played over and over again on television, the support for referendum in Taiwan quickly began to drop. As Rice later noted, “most people understood that Taipei could not be on the wrong side of the United States”.126

**Explaining the Success of the Case of the “Referendum on Joining the U.N.”**

Structurally speaking, the game of the 2007-08 case looks very similar to the previous cases. There is no fundamental change in terms of the strength of security ties between Taipei and Washington, or power balances between Beijing and Taipei, or Beijing and Washington.

Washington’s belief of Chen Shui-bien’s penchant for provocation had led U.S. policy makers to quickly attempt to restrain Chen even before Beijing pressured Washington to do so. Still, Beijing’s efforts of extended coercion impressed U.S. officials. Throughout the crisis, Beijing was trying, successfully, to convince Washington’s that Chen Shui-bien was provocative, irresponsible, and dangerous. Beijing avoided directly putting direct military threat against Taipei. Instead, leaders in Beijing repeatedly emphasized to Washington that China’s hands were tied and, if cornered, it would have no choice but to resort to extreme measures such as use of force to stop Chen’s pursuit of Taiwan independence. Beijing’s strategy of shifting the burden of initiative to Taipei and, by extension, Washington successfully convinced the U.S. policy makers that Beijing was restrained, and prompt Washington to put pressure on Taipei to back down.

126Rice, *No Higher Honor*, p. 647.
Table 4 provides a summary of the six cases of China’s extended coercive diplomacy.

[Insert Table 4 here]

CONCLUSION

This paper has outlined a preliminary theoretical framework for understanding the logic of extended coercive diplomacy. I test some of the propositions I develop by looking into six cases of the PRC’s practices of extended coercion strategy. The paper finds out that strategies rather than structural variables determine the outcomes of China’s practices of extended coercion. It shows that bargaining strategies of applying direct military threats to the targeted adversary and, by extension, the third party patron will fail. And the bargaining strategy of tying one’s own hands or shifting the burden of initiative to the targeted adversary and the third party patron will persuade the third party that it should put restrain its client in case the crisis might escalate into military conflict or war.

The logic of extended coercive diplomacy, however, is not limited to China’s experiences. The theory of extended coercive diplomacy indeed applies to any cases involving a coercer trying to coerce a targeted adversary which is an ally or client of a third party. For instance, two notable cases are: U.S. coercive pressure on North Vietnam to compel Hanoi to cease its campaign to take over South Vietnam and to come to negotiation table, whereas Hanoi was allied with Moscow; or U.S. coercive efforts to persuade and pressure Beijing, the perceived de facto ally of North Korea, to help pressure North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapon programs.127 Future researches can continue the theory development by looking at non-China cases.

Table 4. China and Extended Coercive Diplomacy, 1949-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Targeted Adversary</th>
<th>The Third Party</th>
<th>Chinese Goal/Demand</th>
<th>Bargaining Strategy</th>
<th>Structural Factors</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-55</td>
<td>Taipei; Washington</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>To prevent Taipei and Washington from signing mutual defense treaty</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: direct military threats to the local target and the third party</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Sub-Strategy III: to increase the costs of the third party</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1958</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>To force Nationalist forces to withdraw from Jinmen</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: direct military threat to the local target</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Sub-Strategy III: to increase the costs of the third party</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1962</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>To stop the Nationalist forces from attacking the mainland</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy II: Tying hands/Relinquishing the initiatives</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Sub-Strategy II: Drive the wedge-type 2</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3) Sub-Strategy III: to increase costs of the third party</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1995-1996</td>
<td>Taipei; Washington</td>
<td>To prevent Lee Teng-hui from getting elected; to reverse perceived U.S. support of Taiwan independence</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: Direct military threat to the local target 2) Sub-Strategy III: to increase the costs of the third party</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
<td>Partial failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan, “Constitutional Reform Referendum”, 2003-04</td>
<td>Taipei; Washington</td>
<td>To force Taipei to drop referendum on constitutional reform</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: Tying hands/relinquishing the initiative 2) Sub-Strategy II: Drive the wedge-type 2</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan, “U.N. Referendum”, 2007-08</td>
<td>Taipei; Washington</td>
<td>To force Taipei to drop referendum on joining the U.N.</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: Tying hands/relinquishing the initiative to the local target 2) Sub-Strategy II: Drive the wedge-type 2</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huangyan /Scarborough Standoff, 2012</td>
<td>The Philippines; The United States</td>
<td>To force the Philippines to back down in the Huangyan /Scarborough standoff</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: Tying hands/relinquishing the initiative to the local target 2) Sub-Strategy I: Drive the wedge-type 1 3) Sub-Strategy II: Drive the wedge-type 2 4) Sub-Strategy IV: Provision of positive inducements</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Standoff, 2012-2014</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>1) To compel Japan to recognize the disputes; 2) to break Japan’s de facto administration of Diaoyu/Senkaku</td>
<td>1) Master Strategy I: Tying hands/relinquishing the initiative to the local target 2) Sub-Strategy I&amp;II: Drive the wedge-type 1&amp;2 3) Sub-Strategy IV: Provision of positive inducements</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>