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14. ABSTRACT

An understanding of China's strategic culture can significantly assist the Joint Force Commander (JFC) in planning for and responding to potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) are the JFC's tools to control escalation, with two basic purposes: to resolve a crisis before armed conflict and, if that fails, to position U.S. forces to decisively prevail in the ensuing military action. Strategic culture is best understood as the impact of a unique historical, cultural and national perspective in shaping a nation's strategic preferences on the use of force. In the case of China, this strategic culture is based on an active defense that includes preemptive action in order to maintain territorial integrity and defend China's sovereignty. This paper examines the elements of deterrence – interests, capabilities and resolve – in terms of how Chinese strategic culture influence potential conflict across the Taiwan Strait. While this paper does not recommend specific FDOs for responding to a potential conflict with the PRC, it does offer conclusions about how the JFC's planning for a Taiwan Strait crisis is strengthened through an understanding of Chinese strategic culture.

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Peaceful Rise:
Using Chinese Strategic Culture to Shape Flexible Deterrent Options for a Taiwan Strait Conflict

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

An understanding of China's strategic culture can significantly assist the Joint Force Commander (JFC) in planning for and responding to potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) are the JFC's tools to control escalation, with two basic purposes: to resolve a crisis before armed conflict and, if that fails, to position U.S. forces to decisively prevail in the ensuing military action. Strategic culture is best understood as the impact of a unique historical, cultural and national perspective in shaping a nation's strategic preferences on the use of force. In the case of China, this strategic culture is based on an active defense that includes preemptive action in order to maintain territorial integrity and defend China's sovereignty. This paper examines the elements of deterrence – interests, capabilities and resolve – in terms of how Chinese strategic culture influence potential conflict across the Taiwan Strait. While this paper does not recommend specific FDOs for responding to a potential conflict with the PRC, it does offer conclusions about how the JFC's planning for a Taiwan Strait crisis is strengthened through an understanding of Chinese strategic culture.

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The Joint Force Commander (JFC) receives an intelligence report of a planned Chinese missile launch.[1] *As the commander waits for subsequent reports and analysis, he tries to understand the significance of this latest event in the growing tensions between China and Taiwan. His forces were alerted and are beginning deployment to the region to deter, and if necessary, intervene to prevent Chinese aggression against Taiwan. The JFC considers the People Liberation Army's (PLA)*[2] *missile capabilities and the possible implications of each: will this be a limited "test" of China's anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities to remind U.S. leaders of the PLA's ongoing military modernization and policy of warfare under asymmetric conditions, a short range ballistic missile (SRBM) launch targeting Taiwan or U.S. naval forces in the region, or a long-range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) exercise meant to threaten the continental United States and communicate to Americans the potential cost of interfering in China's national unification efforts? This probable escalation of the conflict between China and Taiwan has the Joint Force Commander considering the role of military forces in the joint, interagency Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) ordered by the President of the United States. Have military deterrent efforts failed? Could they have succeeded?*

Could a better understanding of the strategic culture of a potential Chinese adversary have helped the Joint Force Commander shape FDOs for a more effective response that could have de-escalated the crisis?

With its "peaceful rise" development policy, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is an emerging great power – economically, diplomatically and militarily.[3] These growing capabilities led the Department of Defense to list the PRC as a military competitor for the first time in its 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). Politically and strategically, the United States "seeks to encourage China to make the right strategic choices for its people, while we ***hedge*** against other possibilities."[4] This hedging follows the Latin axiom *si vis pacem, para bellum*: "if you want peace, prepare for war." This "*parabellum* paradigm" is also central to China's strategic culture and its historical use of

[1] The term Joint Force Commander is used throughout this paper to represent the commander responsible for planning and executing a military response to a potential Taiwan Strait conflict, although this could vary from the Commander, Pacific Command to a subordinate joint task force depending on phasing and escalation. This use is in accordance with the doctrinal joint definition of JFC: "A general term applied to a combatant commander, subunified commander, or joint task force commander (CJTF) authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a force." (JP 1-02, p 285).
[2] In general, People's Liberation Army (PLA) will be used to refer to the entire Chinese defense structure/ forces, to include the PLA Navy (PLAN) and PLA Air Force (PLAAF), unless otherwise specified.
[3] For a good overview/analysis of China's "peaceful rise" policy, see the referenced work by Esther Pan.
[4] *National Security Strategy*, p 42 (emphasis added); see also DOD, *Report to Congress*, p 7.

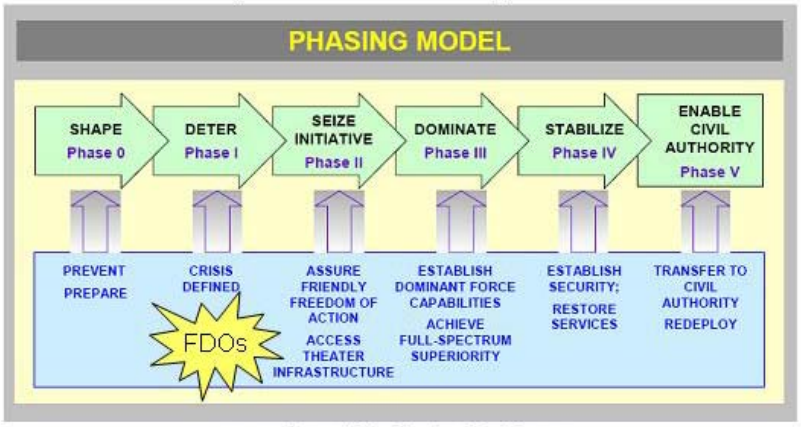
force.[5] This same paradigm also explains the fundamental goal of U.S. strategic planning across the range of military operations (ROMO), which seeks to incorporate all instruments of national power in order to maintain peace and prevail in war. For the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), these efforts range from Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP) actions that include military exchanges with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces as well as materiel support to the defense of Taiwan, a global force posture focused on maintaining regional stability, and operational planning prepared to respond in crisis and prevail in conflict. One of PACOM's primary missions is to sustain "the calm that appears to pervade today across the Straits [sic] of Taiwan."[6]

An understanding of China's strategic culture can significantly assist the Joint Force Commander (JFC) in planning for and responding to potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait. This perspective is most important in planning the deterrence phase of any potential crisis, when the JFC is not necessarily concerned with how to use military force to ***prevail*** in conflict, but rather, how to use military force to ***prevent*** further conflict. Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) are the JFC's tools to control escalation, with two basic purposes: to resolve a crisis before armed conflict and, if that fails, to position U.S. forces to decisively prevail in the ensuing military action. FDOs are defined as "preplanned, deterrence-oriented actions *carefully tailored* to send the *right signal* and *influence an adversary's actions.*"[7] These options are executed during Phase I (Deter) and serve as the JFC's bridge, when necessary, from TSCP efforts to execution of an operational plan (see Figure 1 for the joint phasing model). In the Taiwan Strait, these

[5] For an examination of the "*parabellum* paradigm" in Chinese strategic culture, see Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, particularly p 61 and p 107, although all of Chapter 3 (pp 61-108) develops this topic.
[6] Keating, Senate Armed Services Committee testimony, (no pg #).
[7] *JP 5-0*, p A-1 (emphasis added).

FDOs have in the past taken the most visible military form of aircraft carrier deployments to the region.[8] However, this "gunboat diplomacy" is only one aspect of deterrence across the instruments of national power. These FDOs can and should span the full range of military, diplomatic, economic and informational options available to the United States. (A list of FDOs across the instruments of national power is at Appendix A.)

Figure 1: The Joint Phasing Model



(Reference: JP 5-0, Figure IV-9, p IV- 36)

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how an understanding of Chinese strategic culture can help the Joint Force Commander and his staff in the early stages of planning deterrent options. Strategic culture is best understood as the impact of a unique historical, cultural and national perspective in shaping a nation's strategic preferences on the use of force; for military students, this is a familiar concept embodied in our own self-assessment of the "American Way of War." This paper is not written with any knowledge of current or previous contingency, operational or crisis action plans for a potential Taiwan Strait crisis, nor from any knowledge of Pacific Command beyond what

[8] These naval deployments can be classified as *gunboat diplomacy*, "the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than an act of war, in order to secure advantage or to avert loss." This definition was provided by James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy 1919-1979*, as characterized in Goodall, "Gunboat Diplomacy."

is available in official, open source references.[9] Similarly, the intent of this analysis is not to recommend specific FDOs for the JFC to employ in a potential Taiwan Strait crisis; such a response would depend on the situation surrounding crisis development, the military forces available, and the strategic guidance and objectives provided by the JFC's higher headquarters. Rather, the purpose is to highlight how an understanding of strategic culture leads to a better appreciation of strategic preferences, which can help shape the JFC's concept of a credible deterrent. This credibility must be based both in terms of what Chinese leaders think deters and what might deter a rising China. Thus, one must focus on the deterrent relationship; and specifically, how the key factors of deterrence – interests, capabilities, and resolve – play out within that relationship.[10] Because this analysis is not tied to a specific scenario for a cross-Strait crisis, the doctrinal goals of FDOs (Figure 2) provide an effective framework for analyzing how strategic culture offers a useful tool at the operational level for the JFC to plan and shape deterrent efforts.

Figure 2: Doctrinal Goals of Flexible Deterrent Options

- Deter aggression by communicating the strength of US commitments to treaty obligations and regional peace and stability
- Confront the adversary with unacceptable costs for their possible aggression
- Isolate the adversary from regional neighbors and attempt to split the adversary coalition
- Rapidly improve the military balance of power in the AOR without precipitating armed response from the adversary.

(Reference: JP 5-0, p A-1)

[9] For example, the PACOM webpage (www.pacom.mil) posts speech/testimony transcripts, press releases and general mission, training and exercise information.

[10] For an examination of the deterrence relationship in the Taiwan Strait, see Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait," p 49.

The Challenge of Deterrence

Most critiques of U.S. paradigms of deterrence during the Cold War point to the failure of American leaders, policymakers and strategists to adequately understand the motivations and interpret the actions of their Soviet counterparts.[11] The lesson is that "deterrence isn't about numbers, it's about relationships."[12] Admittedly, much of deterrence is focused at the strategic level, not just in terms of nuclear/global strike capabilities, but also at the nexus of strategy, policy and diplomacy. At the theater-strategic level, PACOM already works to further the relationships necessary for effective deterrence through its Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP), which increasingly aims to build military-military relationships and greater transparency with the PLA.[13]

Joint doctrine defines deterrence as the "prevention from action by fear of the consequences. Deterrence is a state of mind brought about by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction."[14] At the operational level, the Joint Force Commander is forced to consider effects, and not just objectives, in shaping deterrent options. These effects are the description of "system behavior in the operational environment **– desired effects are the *conditions* related to achieving objectives.**"[15] This perspective highlights the challenge of deterrence for the JFC: using enough military force (whether threatened or employed) to discourage further aggression by creating a "state of mind" in the adversary that is neither destabilizing nor escalatory. This becomes an even greater challenge when one considers the unique strategic culture of China.

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[11] For example, see Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style*.
[12] Hall et al, *Post-Cold War Nuclear Strategy Model*, p 7.
[13] Admiral Fallon, *Shenyang, China Press Conference*, 15 May 2006.
[14] *JP 1-02*, p 157.
[15] *JP 5-0*, p III-14, (original emphasis).

Chinese Strategic Culture

The strategic culture of China – throughout ancient and modern history – is based on an ***active defense*** that includes ***preemptive*** action in order to maintain territorial integrity and defend China's ***sovereignty***. Inherent to this active defense is a rational calculus based on the comparison of relative capabilities and a confidence in China's ability to control escalation. This results in a willingness to assume significant risk, even against a stronger enemy. The Army War College's Andrew Scobell calls this the "Cult of Defense," citing China's historical tendency to aggressively use force against perceived threats (internal or external), while insisting its "strategic tradition is pacifist, nonexpansionist, and purely defensive."[16] This strategic culture has its roots in Confucian "cultural moralism," emphasizing Chinese confidence in the "justness" of its use of force.[17] Finally, China's strategic culture is not only derived from the *parabellum* paradigm, but is also dependent on the notion of *quan bian*, "absolute flexibility." This flexibility is rooted in a high expectation of violence and an assessment of one's capability to defeat the adversary.[18] This flexibility, when combined with *guidao*, the art of ambiguity, leads to a "purposive ambiguity" intended to allow political/strategic leaders to control escalation.[19] However, this same ambiguity is a potential source of risk, as effective escalation control requires effective communications.

Chinese and American leaders learned the importance of communications in escalation control after the United States dismissed "as unreliable or mere bluff" the

[16] Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*, p 3.
[17] It should be noted that Zhang argues for "cultural moralism" in response to/against Johnston's concept of "cultural realism." Both of these perspectives are combined in Scobell, whose "Cult of Defense" is formed from the "two strands" of Confucian and Realpolitik cultures found in China.
[18] Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p 151.
[19] See Lin, *China's Nuclear Weapon Strategy*, pp 18 – 22, for a discussion of *guidao*. Thanks to Naval War College professor Andrew Wilson for the succinct term "purposive ambiguity."

warnings that preceded Chinese intervention in the Korean War.[20] While the roots of Chinese strategic culture are in the *Sun Zi Bing Fa* (Sun Tzu's Art of War), it is embodied today in China's "immutable principle" of national unification. The importance of national unification can be attributed to both "China's history of division and inability to stop exploitation and oppression by foreign powers" and the PRC leadership's lack of "any other inviolable principles."[21] Thus, this idea of unification is invariably linked to the status of Taiwan.

U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations – from the Deterrence Perspective

In planning for a Taiwan Strait crisis, the Joint Force staff must consider how Chinese strategic culture translates to interests, capabilities and resolve in the deterrent relationship. These key factors of deterrence serve as useful analytical considerations in the initial stages of planning FDOs for a Taiwan Strait conflict.

Interests

As much as the United States sees China as its next potential peer competitor (and thus, a threat), the U.S. is already viewed as the primary security threat to China.[22] This threat perception can be attributed to the "intimate involvement of [the U.S.] with the prime objective of China's unification policy: the island of Taiwan."[23] This past experience allows the Joint Force Commander and his staff to consider what may motivate Chinese leaders to use force against Taiwan, as well as what lessons the PRC

[20] Wortzel, "China's Foreign Conflicts Since 1949," p 272.
[21] Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*, p 11.
[22] *Ibid*, p 16. Scobell writes: "The United States is not so much a direct military threat as a broader security threat, because of the perception that the United States is trying to contain China and undermine China through "peaceful evolution" and prevent unification with Taiwan."
[23] *Ibid*, p 14.

may have learned from previous U.S. intervention in cross-Strait conflicts. While none of the past Taiwan Straits crises have resulted in the ultimate objective of unification, the use of force has eventually led to political advantages for the People's Republic of China.[24] These gains are in keeping with China's strategic culture: the preemptive use of force, even against a stronger adversary, in order to protect Chinese sovereignty. Taiwan is at once a security, nationalist, and domestic political issue for China, and as such, "together, these interests ensure that the mainland would be prepared to use force to reverse seriously unwelcome trends in Taiwan's international role."[25] The PRC's potential triggers for action against Taiwan are listed in Figure 3. Currently, the prosperous cross-Strait economic relationship provides considerable motivation for both China and Taiwan to maintain the status quo; this economic aspect is also a major factor for regional and global trade partners.

Figure 3: Likely Triggers for Chinese Use of Force Against Taiwan

- Formal declaration of independence from Taipei
- Undefined moves "toward independence"
- Foreign intervention in Taiwan's internal affairs
- Indefinite delays in resumption of cross-Strait dialogue
- Taiwan's acquisition of nuclear weapons
- Internal unrest on Taiwan

(Reference: DOD, *Report to Congress*, 2006, p 38)

The Chinese perception that the U.S. uses Taiwan as "chess piece to contain China" means that any PRC planning for coercive action against the island also includes

[24] The three Taiwan Straits crises include conflicts in 1954 and 1958 (offshore island disputes) and the 1995-1996 Missile Crisis. From the PRC perspective, the benefits of this "coercive diplomacy" includes the forced U.S. recognition of the mainland Communist government, rather than the Nationalist leadership on Taiwan (1958 - albeit normalization did not come until 1979), and disruption of popular (and U.S.) support to Taiwanese independence efforts after the 1996 "missile exercises."
[25] Ross, "Stability of Deterrence," p 69.

considerations to deter or defeat U.S. intervention.[26] However, the interests of the United States are less clear in this matter; purposefully so, due to the American policy of "strategic ambiguity" toward Taiwan. This ambiguity seeks to adhere to the "one China" policy, expressing no preference for an outcome other than peaceful resolution.[27] In April 2001, President Bush stated that the United States would do "whatever it takes" to defend Taiwan. The statement raised questions about whether this signaled a change from the past ambiguity of the "one China" policy, especially since it followed approval of a major arms sale to the Taiwanese.[28] Subsequent statements sought to clarify that these remarks were not a departure from the "one China" policy, nor were they meant to encourage or condone Taiwanese independence efforts.

Because the United States does not have vital security or political interests in Taiwan's international recognition, its own security is not affected by either China's unification or Taiwan's independence, and thus, the U.S. can maintain this ambiguity.[29] However, the United States does have significant interests in maintaining regional stability in the Western Pacific and continuing to foster its growing economic/diplomatic ties with the PRC. How these interests are translated to strategic guidance and objectives for the JFC will play a major role in shaping military Flexible Deterrent Options.

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[26] See Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*, p 16. The author references a Chinese military research report that states: "Since the end of the Cold War, Taiwan has increasingly been used by the United States as an extremely important chess piece to contain China."

[27] See Kan, "Evolution of the "One China" Policy," for overview and evolution of this policy.

[28] See Karon, "Bush Comments Set Off Diplomatic Scramble" and Wallace, "Bush Pledges Whatever It Takes." China's 2006 Defense White Paper seems to carry a direct response to the incident, discussing the credibility of the U.S. "One China" policy and then stating that the U.S. "continues to sell advanced weapons to Taiwan, and has strengthened its military ties with Taiwan. A small number of countries have stirred up a racket about a "China threat," and intensified their preventive strategy against China and strove to hold its progress in check. Complex and sensitive historical and current issues in China's surrounding areas still affect its security environment."

[29] Ross, "Stability of Deterrence," p 73.

Capabilities

The PLA is working to develop capabilities that allow for flexibility in dealing with Taiwan and minimize risk of U.S. confrontation, while also preparing to "deter and/or slow third-party, including U.S., intervention; to defeat such intervention in an asymmetric, limited, quick war; or, fight to a standstill and pursue a protracted conflict."[30] These capabilities seek to build on current Chinese strengths in submarines, ballistic missiles, and land-based projection. Similarly, military modernization efforts aim to target the strengths and exploit the weaknesses of U.S. forces, particularly in the maritime realm where U.S. intervention in a cross-Strait conflict would likely play out. While the PLA has no operational "doctrine," the active defense strategy translates to PLA Navy (PLAN) theory and practice focused on "offshore defense."[31] This includes developing the six key PLAN campaigns (shown in Figure 4), as well as capabilities that target U.S. advantages. The desired capabilities of the "New Three Attacks" focus on defeating stealth aircraft, cruise missiles and armed helicopters, while the "New Three Defenses" protect against precision strikes, electronic jamming, and electronic reconnaissance and surveillance.[32] In addition, PLA conceptual writings on *Assassin's Mace* (*shashoujian*) and *Unrestricted Warfare* focus on asymmetric approaches to exploit perceived vulnerabilities and overcome the U.S. military's technological advantages.[33] These current and developing capabilities translate to the most likely PRC options for use of force against Taiwan (Figure 5).

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[30] DOD, *Report to Congress*, p 38.
[31] ONI, "China's Navy 2007," p 23: "The PLA does not have one specific word for doctrine, and it does not use a word substitute for "doctrine" in referring to its own operational theory or operational concepts. What the PLA does write about is operational "theory" and operational "practice."
[32] *Ibid*, p 27.
[33] These conceptual writings are "doctrinal debates" presented in Chinese military journals, publications and statements that discuss military doctrine, but do not necessarily reflect official PLA policy or doctrine. See DOD, *Report to Congress*, p 24, re: *Assassin's Mace* in terms of PLA force modernization.

Figure 4: Six Key PLA Navy Campaigns

- Sea Blockade Campaign
- Anti-Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC) Campaign
- Sea-to-Land Attack Campaign
- Anti-ship Campaign
- Sea Transportation Protection Campaign
- Naval Base Defense Campaign

(Reference: Office of Naval Intelligence, *China's Navy 2007*, p 27)

Figure 5: Beijing's Options for the Use of Force Against Taiwan

- Persuasion and Coercion (economic and diplomatic, backed by military threat)
- Limited Force Options ("non-war" use of force, such as Computer Network Attack (CNA), small, coordinated use of SOF, SRBMs and air strikes)
- Air and Missile Campaign
- Blockade
- Amphibious Invasion

(Reference: DOD, *Report to Congress*, p 38-41; see also Grinter.)

Because the Joint Force Commander's mission is to deter, it would be easy to plan by assessing what capabilities are required to counter Beijing's options for the use of force against Taiwan. This leads to a simple translation to tasks, which "direct friendly action," (*ie*, the employment of those capabilities.)[34] Figure 6 lists some of these tasks.[35]

Figure 6: US Tasks for Intervention in a Taiwan Strait Conflict

- Air supremacy
- Sea control to protect Taiwan's SLOCs
- Sea denial of Taiwan Strait
- Sea control around friendly coalition forces
- Ensure protection of friendly LOCs
- Sea control to protect allies' SLOCs (eg Japan)
- Ballistic missile defense (to counter Chinese threat/capability)
- Port protection – US, Japan and Taiwan

However, thinking in terms of tasks and capabilities, without using ***effects*** in the planning of deterrent options, might lead to actions that escalate rather than deter. The

[34] See JP 5-0, p III-14 for the relationship of objectives, effects and tasks: "Objectives prescribe friendly goals. Effects describe system behavior in the operational environment — desired effects are the *conditions* related to achieving objectives. Tasks direct friendly action."

[35] Tasks based on course discussion as part of "OPS IV-1: Maritime Dominance (Sea Control vs. Sea Denial)" seminar in reference to NWC instructional PRC-Taiwan Vignette (NWC4027), 08 March 2007.

use of effects in the planning process is "a way to clarify the relationship between objectives and tasks and help the JFC and staff determine conditions for achieving objectives." In this scenario, the conditions necessary to achieve the JFC's objective are clearly *effects*, since "deterrence is a state of mind."

Resolve

An appreciation of Chinese strategic culture leaves no question of the resolve of the PRC if (or when) it chooses to pursue unification through the use of force.[36] But the *if* and *when* of such action is dependent on the interrelationship of that resolve with China's interests and capabilities; thus, it is these factors that the U.S. must target in the deterrent relationship. The paradox, of course, is that deterrence is all about targeting resolve, or the "enemy state of mind." While there is not a joint definition for resolve, the DOD dictionary does define a means for demonstrating U.S. resolve:

> **"show of force —** An operation designed to demonstrate US resolve that involves increased visibility of US deployed forces in an attempt to defuse a specific situation that, if allowed to continue, may be detrimental to US interests or national objectives."[37]

The U.S. military clearly has the capabilities to *communicate* resolve, even as Chinese forces modernize. But the challenge for the JFC in a Taiwan Strait crisis is how to truly *demonstrate* resolve when American interests and objectives are so unclear.

Flexible Deterrence – within the JFC's capabilities?

Much of what has been written here, in terms of interests, capabilities and resolve, is really focused at the political and strategic level – in an attempt to demonstrate how

[36] See Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," p 59: "Concessions for any reason are unlikely in homeland disputes. The overriding importance of completing national unification suggests that these conflicts are basically nonnegotiable. Few threats, internal or external, would be great enough to make any territorial compromise appear more attractive than delay and the achievement of unification."
[37] JP 1-02, p 488.

these aspects influence the Joint Force Commander's planning efforts. While the capabilities and technological advantages of U.S. forces cannot be underestimated, the JFC's mission of deterrence forces him to focus on effects. The JFC must translate the strategic aspects of deterrence into operational effects (and the tasks necessary to achieve these effects) in order to realize the operational objective. While a specific scenario will more clearly define this objective for the JFC, in general it can be stated as the need to re-balance the deterrent relationship. This can be done either by weakening the adversary's interests, capabilities and resolve or strengthening those factors on the friendly side of the equation. In consideration of a Chinese strategic culture willing to assume the offensive when its territorial integrity or sovereignty is threatened, it is unlikely that military force alone can achieve the effects necessary to rebalance the deterrent relation. Unless integrated across all levels of war and instruments of national power, the JFC's deterrent efforts may be insufficient to de-escalate a cross-Strait crisis.

The operational factors of time, space and force will shape the JFC's deterrent options. These factors drive certain responses, such as a heavy maritime component with the required capabilities to gain and maintain sea and air control in order to deter Chinese use of force, support the Taiwanese defense (if intervention becomes necessary), and limit the impact of the cross-Strait conflict on the region. The tasks listed in Figure 6 would begin to accomplish these objectives. FDOs must also be both visible and tied to the most likely threat; again, the listed tasks meet these criteria. Likewise, operational art requires consideration of objectives: both friendly and those of the adversary. The JFC's deterrent options must account for the PRC's objective for the use of force against Taiwan, whether the intent is truly unification or the use of "coercive diplomacy" for

more limited economic or political gains. It is in the scrutiny of these objectives, and the resulting *how*, *where* and *when* that tasks and capabilities are linked, that the JFC must take into account Chinese strategic culture. The doctrinal goals of Flexible Deterrent Options allow for analysis of what the JFC's operational objectives will encompass in order to analyze whether deterrence is within his forces' capabilities.

FDO Goal #1: Deter aggression by communicating the strength of U.S. commitments to treaty obligations and regional peace and stability.

This is the Joint Force Commander's first challenge: based on the current policy of strategic ambiguity, what is the U.S. commitment? Giving appropriate strategic guidance to the JFC requires political and strategic leaders to make a commitment (or at least appear to make a commitment) that violates the "one China" policy and threatens China's unification. Similarly, if the PRC chooses to use force "more subtle than actual combat," it may prove exceedingly difficult to employ U.S. deterrent forces with enough restraint not to trigger a defensive response.[38] And based on the opening vignette's mention of China's formidable missile capabilities, the U.S. commitment is closely tied to the next goal of costs. For both the U.S. and China, national leaders must seriously ponder whether or not the commitment of American military forces for deterrence in a cross-Strait conflict includes costs that make a return to the *status quo ante* impossible.

FDO Goal #2: Confront the adversary with unacceptable costs for their possible aggression.

If and when China chooses to pursue unification, their strategic culture dictates that the only unacceptable cost would be a result that eliminates any future efforts at unification: the international recognition of Taiwan. U.S. deterrence in a cross-Strait

[38] See Wortzel, "China's Foreign Conflicts," p 268: "The use of force may be more subtle than actual combat, but could include military demonstrations, "well-timed military exercises, weapons tests, and troop, naval or air deployments."

conflict requires PRC leadership to believe that American military capabilities "can inflict sufficient costs on China that outweigh the benefits of unification through war."[39] To do this militarily, the U.S. must also be willing to accept great costs, especially considering the Chinese ability (and threat) to respond with nuclear weapons "if the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition on to the target zone on China's territory."[40] Using a range of deterrent options across the instruments of national power, and only restrained and limited military force, may reduce these costs.

FDO Goal #3: Isolate the adversary from regional neighbors and attempt to split the adversary coalition.

China is large enough – and growing stronger – that it does not need a coalition to pursue its own unification, at least until the U.S. intervenes. But the PRC is setting the stage and is building its *Comprehensive National Power (CNP)* through economic, diplomatic and security relationships in the region and around the globe. These relationship will likely make isolating China difficult, as most of these partners have economic interests that far exceed any interest in the international recognition of Taiwan.

FDO Goal #4: Rapidly improve the military balance of power in the AOR without precipitating armed response from the adversary.

Again, based on China's strategic culture this presents a challenge for the Joint Force Commander. Military forces can rapidly deploy to improve the military balance of power across the Taiwan Strait, but this deployment may provoke a preemptive response from the PRC in order to protect against a perceived threat to its sovereignty. Military deterrent options must be carefully shaped, and integrated with diplomatic, economic and informational efforts, with an appreciation of China's strategic culture.

[39] Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait," p 50.
[40] Kahn, "Chinese General Threatens Use of A-Bombs if U.S. Intrudes."

Conclusion

Flexible Deterrent Options serve two basic purposes: to resolve issues before armed conflict "by sending an appropriate message to belligerent parties" and to "position U.S. forces in a manner that facilitates implementation of OPLANs or OPORDs" if hostilities prove unavoidable.[41] In a Taiwan Strait crisis, the Joint Force Commander may be able to do the latter, but is not likely to achieve deterrence without significant coordination with diplomatic, economic and information efforts. Based on China's strategic culture, the leverage available to the Joint Force Commander is limited.[42] But, the levers of coercion and persuasion coordinated across the instruments of national power "could achieve strategic objectives and leverage against the adversary with less risk and requirement for combat operations."[43]

Arguments could be made that this analysis focuses too much on effects, overstates the difficulty of deterrence, and underestimates the capabilities of U.S. military. But while stable deterrence exists now in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. can neither "get behind" PLA's military modernization nor allow the PRC's Comprehensive National Power to grow unchecked. Similarly, while the "fog of culture" may seem like a concern for strategic leaders, not operational commanders, "cultural analysis may help remove illusions and wishful thinking from official deliberations."[44] The U.S. continues to learn lessons in Operation Iraqi Freedom that demonstrate the importance of seeing through the "fog of culture" at the operational level.

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[41] JP 5-0, p A-1.
[42] *Ibid*, p IV-26: "In joint operations, *leverage* is a relative advantage in combat power and/or other circumstances against the adversary across one or more domains (air, land, sea, and space) and/or the information environment sufficient to exploit that advantage …. Leverage allows JFCs to impose their will on the adversary, increase the adversary's dilemma, and maintain the initiative."
[43] *Ibid*, p IV-27.
[44] Gray, "Comparative Strategic Culture."

An understanding of China's strategic culture can significantly assist the Joint Force Commander (JFC) in planning for and responding to potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Because deterrence is about creating changes in the behavior of a system (*ie,* effects), it is important to understand the motivations, strategies and culture of that system when shaping deterrent options. This allows planners – military and interagency– to understand the interests, capabilities and resolve that are key factors of the deterrent relationship. Returning to the opening vignette, the JFC's military deterrent efforts can succeed, but an over-reliance on military deterrent options is not likely to communicate the right message to a China that sees the United States as its greatest security threat. Similarly, the United States must ensure that its hedge in planning for war with the PRC, doesn't make such a conflict inevitable.

For Flexible Deterrent Options to succeed in ensuring China's rise remains peaceful, these efforts must be coordinated at all levels of war and across all instruments of national power, to represent a U.S. strategy, cognizant of Chinese strategic culture, but committed to protecting U.S. interests. For as Vego instructs us, "Strategy must always dominate operational art; otherwise the results will be fatal."[45]

[45] Vego, *Operational Warfare*, p 5.

Appendix A:
Examples of Flexible Deterrent Options Across the Instruments of National Power

Military
- Deploy Joint Task Force (JTF) Headquarters-Forward to area
- Employ reconnaissance assets to the area
- Increase military exchanges and staff visits to the area
- Conduct aircraft fly-overs
- Pre-stage sealift and airlift reception assets to air and sea ports of embarkation
- Deploy fighter squadrons/AWACS to region
- Deploy the afloat Amphibious Ready Group/ Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) (SOC) to the region
- Open pre-positioned stockage facilities
- Open and secure sea and air Lines of Communications (LOCs)
- Deploy carrier battle group (CVBG) to the region
- Activate reserve call-up
- Initiate or increase show of force actions
- Begin moving forces to air and sea ports of embarkation (APOEs and SPOEs)
- Pre-stage or deploy contingency ready brigades
- Establish curfews and impose restrictions on leaves, separations, and retirements
- Implement meaconing, interference, jamming, and intrusion of enemy information assets
- Deploy naval Surface Action Group (SAG) to the region
- Move Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS) to the region
- Move Marine Expeditionary Force (FWD) to the region
- Upgrade alert status
- Increase exercise activities, schedules, and scope
- Increase strategic reconnaissance
- Increase naval port calls or air squadron visits to the area
- Use naval or air capability to enforce sanctions
- Deploy intelligence collection and analysis to the area
- Exercise WMD passive defense
- Pre-stage airlift and airlift support assets
- Deploy J-STARS to the area
- Replace logistic infrastructure where possible
- Increase informational efforts: PSYOP, Mission awareness, Measures directed at the opponent's military force

Diplomatic
- Reduce international diplomatic ties
- Increase cultural group pressure
- Alter existing meetings, programs, or schedules
- Prepare to withdraw U.S. embassy personnel
- Pursue measures to increase regional support
- Identify the national leader who may be able to solve the problem
- Develop or work within existing coalition (avoid unilateral actions when possible)
- Alert and introduce special teams: Public diplomacy, MTT, Communication
- Initiate noncombatant evacuation procedures
- Use the UN or other international institutions
- Identify clearly the steps to peaceful resolution
- Restrict activities of diplomats
- Reduce national embassy personnel
- Take actions to win support of allies and friends
- Coordinate efforts to strengthen international support
- Promote democratic elections
- Heighten informational efforts directed at the International community, opinion leaders within the national population, and coalitions formed to overcome the situation

Informational*
- Promote U.S. policy objectives through public policy statements
- Take measures to increase public support
- Keep selected issues as lead stories
- Heighten public awareness of the program and potential for conflict
- Maintain an open dialogue with the press
- Invite in impartial observers
- Impose sanctions on C4I and weapon technology transfer
- Protect friendly C4I assets
- Develop informal as well as formal contacts with international opinion setters
- Increase C4I processing and transmission capability

Economic
- Seize real property in the United States
- Embargo goods and services
- Cancel U.S.-funded programs
- Heighten informational efforts directed at Financial institutions
- Reduce or eliminate corporate transactions
- Freeze monetary assets in the United States
- Freeze international assets
- Enact trade sanctions
- Encourage corporations to restrict transactions
- Reduce security assistance programs

* Listed as "Political" in the original source

(Reference: Example Flexible Deterrent Options list from Global Security.org website, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/fdo-list.htm. A list of FDOs by DIME are also available in JP 5-0, Appendix A, but this offers a more expansive and detailed list.)

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