Reconciliation without Convergence?
China-Taiwan Relations in Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives

Vincent Wei-cheng Wang
Ithaca College
vwang@ithaca.edu

Paper for delivery at the ISA International Conference 2017, Hong Kong, June 15-17, 2017
Reconciliation without Convergence?
China-Taiwan Relations in Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives

Abstract

Three most well-known cases of divided nations after World War II era have been compared: the two Germanys unified in 1990. The two Koreas remain in a tense standoff bounded multinationaly. Relations between the two Chinas (People’s Republic of China and Republic of China) have changed monumentally in recent years. Once a “flashpoint,” today the Taiwan Strait’s future is more open-ended (or uncertain) than before. This paper distills key lessons from the historical evolution of cross-strait relations, compares the ROC-PRC ties with inter-Korean and inter-German relationships, conceptualizes the state of the cross-strait relationship and conjectures likely scenarios of development. It traces the four phases of cross-strait relations -- military confrontation, peaceful interaction, tension-ridden stalemate, and uncertain (or open-ended) future. It examines size asymmetry, regime asymmetry, and identity politics that make the cross-strait relationship more intractable than the other two cases. It argues that the cross-strait relationship is heading toward a *modus vivendi* that neither “convergence” nor “collision” can totally capture, but reconciliation is possible. Key drivers include Taiwan’s 2016 Taiwanese elections, China’s more proactive or assertive Taiwan policy under Xi (including the historic or ephemeral summit meeting between the leaders of Taiwan and China on November 7, 2015), and America’s Asian Rebalance policy.¹

The strikingly discordant prognoses of the relationship across the Taiwan Strait between the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the Mainland have confounded analysts.² Until recently many analysts regard the cross-strait politico-military standoff as a flash-point that could perilously embroil two nuclear powers – the United States and the PRC – in a conflict over Taiwan.³ Hence, some writers have openly advocated U.S. disengagement from Taiwan to avoid conflict with China.⁴ Others are more sanguine. They cite the vibrant unofficial cross-strait economic ties as evidence of the emergence of the world’s newest economic power – the Greater China Economic Region.⁵ Since 2008, tensions between China and Taiwan have eased. However, as Richard C. Bush points out, the movement toward full rapprochement remains fragile, and he concludes that the future of the Taiwan Strait today is more wide-open than at any time in recent decades.⁶ Its practical importance notwithstanding, the cross-strait relationship also provides rich theoretical material for students of democracy, nationalism, and international law.⁷ The relationship, so drastically transformed in the last decade, not only poses a challenge to the
CROSS-Strait relations in retrospect: Lessons from recent history

Two apparently contradictory forces–democratization in Taiwan and the rise of nationalism on the mainland–have significantly shaped the direction and thrust of cross-strait relations. As democratic transition ran its course in Taiwan, the demands by the people in Taiwan on their government to assert state sovereignty and break the diplomatic isolation grew. On the mainland, sustained economic performance has bred a new sense of national pride among the populace and a desire to join the ranks of dynamic, mostly Sinic, Asian economies. This new assertive nationalism has helped reinvigorate the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) old negative defensive nationalism based on China’s humiliating experiences with Western imperialism. Nationalism, in conjunction with economic performance, has replaced the embattled Communist ideology as an important pillar of the CCP’s continued rule and political monopoly.

These two strands of nationalism fundamentally affect Taiwan. On the one hand, Taiwan represents the last and most prized “lost territory” for the PRC and a visible symbol for its “Century of Humiliation” official narrative. Taiwan thus lies at the heart of CCP’s legitimacy and China’s irredentism. On the other hand, growing economic power and global stature have bolstered Beijing’s confidence in its ability to absorb Taiwan on its own terms. This new-found confidence is further displayed by Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader who has consolidated more power than any of his predecessors since Mao Zedong and has demonstrated his propensity to take decisive (and sometimes assertive) actions in foreign policy.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's flowering democracy has instilled among its voters a distinct identity and a desire to be their own political masters. Although scholars are still wrestling with the connotations of this new identity, opinion polls in Taiwan reveal a steady rise of the percentage of respondents that identify themselves as “Taiwanese.” Polls tracked by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University in Taipei show a sea change: Respondents who identify themselves as “Taiwanese” rose from about 18% in 1992 to approximately 59.5% in 2015, whereas respondents who identify themselves as “Chinese” decreased from 26% to 3.3% during
the same period, with the balance holding a dual identity as “both Taiwanese and Chinese.” See Figure 1.

(Figures 1 and 2 about here)

These polls also show that while the overwhelming majority of Taiwan voters prefer to put off their decision on the future of the relationship between the mainland and Taiwan, they nonetheless want to make this decision by themselves. Figure 2 shows that according to the latest available poll data (December 2015), only 4.3% and 1.5% of respondents prefer independence and unification as soon as possible, respectively. An overwhelming majority (85.4%) opt for maintaining the status quo. Within this extremely large (and arguably stable) group, 34.0% prefer to maintain the status quo for now and decide at a later date, and 25.4% want to maintain the status quo indefinitely (see Figure 2).

In a fundamental sense, China’s rising nationalism and Taiwan’s democratization have tended to drive the two sides further apart. Beijing finds this tendency unacceptable and vows to stop with force, if necessary. This growing political divergence has raised the stakes for all concerned parties. Until recently, a pattern (or a vicious cycle) emerged: the more Beijing affronted and intimidated Taiwan, the more frustrated Taiwan’s voters became, and they in turn exerted pressure on their leadership to clarify Taiwan’s state sovereignty and protect their collective rights. Yet, the more Taiwan’s leaders came up with innovative approaches to reiterate Taiwan’s sovereignty, the more impatient Beijing became. Potential collision across the Strait then compelled Taiwan’s leaders to retreat from existing definitions of cross-strait relations and undertake some conciliatory measures. As Taiwan’s sovereignty eroded, popular frustration mounted, and leaders were compelled to re-define Taiwan’s ties with the mainland again. The cycle continued, and the cross-strait relationship diverged more often than it converged.

Three important cases illustrate this pattern. The first, which former President Lee Teng-hui promoted, was the so-called “pragmatic diplomacy”: Taiwan’s attempt to break out of its diplomatic isolation. Under this policy, Taipei arduously pursued informal but substantive relations with many countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe. The second was Taipei's
use of economic statecraft, especially foreign aid, to consolidate or broaden its ties with allies and other countries. The third was Taipei’s annual bid, since 1993, to enter the United Nations. The PRC has equated Taiwan's quest for greater international breathing space with the pursuit of independence. Thus a vicious cycle is created, leading to deteriorating cross-strait relations: the PRC diplomatic stranglehold has led to Taiwan's efforts to break out, which in turn has led to the PRC's saber-rattling, as shown by the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait missile crisis.

However, the PRC’s military intimidation was not the only thing that alienated Taiwan voters. Taiwan's continued diplomatic setbacks caused the Taiwanese voters to demand that their leaders to improve Taiwan's international stature. These developments prompted Taiwan's leaders to find new ways to articulate Taiwan's sovereignty and interests. Before any significant breakthrough was achieved, Taipei found the door leading to a greater international presence abruptly slammed shut. President Bill Clinton, during his visit to China in 1998, became the first US president to publicly state, on Chinese soil, the “Three Noes” policy: no US support for Taiwan independence; no support for 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan'; and no Taiwanese membership in international organizations where statehood is required.

Shocked and slighted by Clinton's about-face, and anxious to shore up Taiwan's bargaining position, President Lee Teng-hui declared in a radio interview in July 1999 that henceforth relations between Taiwan and the mainland would be considered “special state-to-state” relations, surprising both Beijing and Washington. This, in turn, led to another round of vitriolic attacks and military threats from China.

Another instance of the conflict between Taiwan's democratization and China’s rising nationalism arose from Lee’s 1995 US visit. Cross-strait relations plummeted afterward. Blaming this event for cross-strait tensions would be misleading and to mistake syndrome for cause. Being excluded from nearly every international organization and suffering from the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition by almost every major country, Taiwan's leaders were impelled to pursue pragmatic diplomacy and do their utmost to be present at any possible international venue. Some other event would have prodded the PRC to draw the line, retaliate against breakthroughs in pragmatic diplomacy and attempt to influence the democratic
elections in Taiwan, which the PRC feared were moving perilously close to proclaiming Taiwan's *de jure* independence.

Efforts such as Lee’s to clarify Taiwan's sovereignty enjoyed popular support in Taiwan but were perceived as provocative by Beijing. The view held by some that it was Lee’s “conspiracy” or “grand scheme” that caused tensions in cross-strait relations and strains in Sino-US relations is oversimplified. Lee faced more severe domestic constraints than most other leaders. His remarks on cross-strait relations were not always consistent, reflecting the political necessity for him to compromise in the early stage of Taiwan’s democratization. Unfortunately, Taiwan’s policy inconsistencies, not unusual in most democracies, led Beijing and even Washington to impute ulterior motives.

The Chen Shui-bian era (2000-2008) was even more tumultuous. Skeptical about the first Taiwanese leader from the traditionally pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and displeased that its attempt to sway Taiwan voters backfired again, Beijing was initially aloof to and even rebuffed Chen’s assurances and overtures.\(^{11}\) In 2002, after China snatched Nauru from Taiwan, Chen altered his conciliatory approach. He began asserting that China and Taiwan are each a country on either side of the Taiwan Strait. After his controversial reelection in 2004, he pushed for “defensive referendums” about Taiwan’s entry into the UN and defense against Chinese missiles aimed at Taiwan. Convinced that Chen was pursuing *de jure* Taiwan independence, Chinese leaders enlisted the United States to “co-manage” Chen. This further frustrated DPP supporters, as well as many ordinary Taiwanese people.

Cross-strait relationship entered a structural stalemate. The PRC can neither convince Taiwan to accept Beijing’s “one country, two systems” proposal, nor easily absorb Taiwan militarily; in other words, as it currently stands, Beijing is unlikely to achieve unification either diplomatically or militarily. In terms of peaceful unification, the “one country, two systems” proposal has been a non-starter. Under this agreement, Taiwan can have autonomy as Beijing see fit, but not statehood, a condition that many Taiwanese consider worse than the present situation.\(^{12}\) Consequently, Taiwan has watched the post-1997 political changes in Hong Kong with great concern. The so-called Umbrella Movement of 2014 served as a reminder.
Under the “one country, two systems” formula, Beijing permits Hong Kong’s pre-existing socio-economic system to remain unchanged for fifty years (until 2047). Essentially an interim and transitional arrangement and not without internal contradictions, the “one country, two systems” formula seeks as much to preserve the mainland's socialist system as Hong Kong's capitalist system. The long-term stability of this scheme, however, lacks political credibility. The final arbitration of the Basic Law -- the mini-constitution for Hong Kong -- lies in the hands of the National People’s Congress in Beijing, traditionally considered to be the Communist Party’s rubber stamp, rather than a strong defender or the rule of law. The chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the most important leader to safeguard Hong Kong's autonomy, is selected mainly by small pro-Beijing business circles, ensuring that he will be receptive to the central government in Beijing. In 2014, serious disagreements over the method to select the chief executive in 2017 resulted in the so-called Umbrella Movement – a dramatic challenge to Beijing’s authority. Dependent on the mainland for its economic well-being -- and water supply -- and unable to participate in Sino-British negotiations over the issue of reversion, Hong Kong as a colony had no choice but to accept the “one country, two systems” formula. Unlike most colonies during the post-World War II decolonization movement, Hong Kong’s six and one-half million residents then never had a choice to decide their own political future.

Resolved to avoid the same fate, Taiwan maintains that, unlike Hong Kong, it is not a colony. With a formidable defense capability and a fully-developed central government, Taiwan has no incentive to downgrade itself from an effectively independent polity to a local or regional government of the PRC. Even the KMT party, which espouses “one China, but each side has its own interpretations,” insists that Taiwan be treated equally as the mainland. Moreover, as a democracy, the government in Taiwan is obligated to allow its twenty-three million people to have a say in their own political future. Poll after poll shows that Beijing’s “one country, two systems” offer has attracted scant support in Taiwan, despite almost three decades of promotion (and insistence) by the PRC.

Its peace overtures repeatedly rebuffed by Taiwan, the PRC reiterates that it may resort to
force to bring Taiwan under Beijing’s sovereignty, regardless of the Taiwan people’s wishes. It first attempted to establish legal pretexts to justify use of force against Taiwan (2000 White Paper, 2005 Anti-Secession Law, and 2015 National Security Law). In the past two decades, Beijing has attached great importance to modernizing the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to increase its military capacity to accomplish this goal, most evidently in the PLA’s massive build-up of missiles near China's southeastern coast and effort to transform its “brown navy” (coastal defense) into a “blue navy” (power projection). However, this approach is not necessarily more promising or without cost, as it must reckon with probable American intervention. The US has continuously insisted upon a peaceful settlement of cross-strait differences, and, to President Bill Clinton’s credit, with the assent of the people of Taiwan. The Clinton Administration’s dispatch of two aircraft carrier battle groups to the waters off Taiwan in 1996 amid China's war games underscored this abiding American interest. However, that showdown also arguably toughened the Chinese resolve to never let it happen again. China’s military development since then has focused on denying or raising the cost of U.S. intervention.

At the same time, that military showdown also caused the Clinton Administration to become more cautious and conciliatory toward the PRC. To avert another crisis in the Taiwan Strait in the spirit of preventive diplomacy, it decided to regularize summit meetings with China. However, in his eagerness to build a “strategic partnership” with China -- shift that caused concerns for Tokyo, New Delhi, and many in the US -- Clinton, while in China, announced the “Three Noes” policy. His remarks reduced the diplomatic “wiggle room” established by the Nixon administration’s 1972 Shanghai Communiqué and moved the previously uncommitted US position regarding Taiwan's status closer toward Beijing's. However, the US still appears determined that it will not permit anything but peaceful means in solving the cross-strait dispute.

For its part, the ROC has been unable to either convince the PRC to accept its “one nation, two states” formula, or to elevate its legal status in international arenas. For nearly a decade, Lee sought to regulate Taiwan’s economic exchanges with the mainland in order to persuade Beijing to renounce the use of force against Taiwan, to treat the PRC and Taiwan governments
as two equal political entities and not to interfere with the ROC’s development of foreign
relations. However, economic leverage has proved unsuccessful.

Over time, while the democratic regime in Taiwan has gradually lost control of the capital
outflow to the PRC, a Taiwanese identity has also evolved and, as discussed above, a basic
consensus on how to resolve the cross-strait problem is taking shape -- the status quo is
preferable to change, unless the change is for the better. However, the status quo is never
static. Given the structural stalemate in cross-strait relationship, what might a final, or
interim, settlement look like?

COMPARING THE ROC-PRC DYAD: LESSONS FROM DMDED NATIONS

In speculating on the future of the cross-strait relationship, it is instructive to compare the
experiences of the three most prominent divided nations after World War II: West Germany
(FRG) and East Germany (GDR); South Korea (ROK) and North Korea (DPRK); and mainland
China (PRC) and Taiwan (ROC). The German pair was reunited in 1990, but the Korean and
Chinese pairs remain divided. What caused these different outcomes?

These three pairs all avowed their commitment to reunification – at least initially.15
However, they adopted different approaches and policies. Table 1 compares the evolution of
four sets of relations -- political, economic, security, and socio/humanitarian -- between each
pair since the end of World War II. The table compares three points in time: 1954, the height of the
Cold War era; 1974, the beginning of détente; and 2000, the post-Cold War era, or in the
German case, the conditions on the eve of unification in late 1990. Following the original
model, I update the cross-strait case up to 2015.

(Table 1 about here)

A full comparative analysis is beyond the scope of this paper. A brief comparison yields
four important lessons that are pertinent to our discussions on China-Taiwan. First, as the Cold
War waned, the forces conducive to integration grew. Interactions in the economic, social and
humanitarian realms were generally considered conducive to reconciliation and integration. Competition in the political and security realms had the opposite effect. The German pair had advanced at a much faster pace. In fact, on the eve of German unification in 1990, thirteen of the sixteen relationships being examined had already turned integrative. This progression importantly portended the eventual outcome – unification. The Korean and Chinese pairs advanced more slowly, which partially explains their continued division. Although integrative forces have grown between the two Koreas and the two Chinas in recent years, if the German experience is any guide, unification is likely to be a remote and arduous prospect unless there is a fundamental change in attitudes and policies on either side. Reflecting a very recent development (the historic first meeting between the leaders of Taiwan and China on November 7, 2015), I updated Table 1 to show that more integrative forces have been at work since 2008. But whether the historic summit meeting will turn out to be more akin to the inter-Korean or the inter-German cases remains to be seen. With the ascension of Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as the ROC president in 2016 and China’s insistence that she accepts the so-called 1992 Consensus, as Beijing defines it, cross-strait relations cooled off considerably. The official contacts between the two sides’ principal agencies dealing with cross-strait relations stopped and the dialogues between the two sides’ semi-official bodies dealing with each other (Taiwan’s Straits Exchange Foundation and China’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait) were also suspended. Although Tsai did not reverse economic exchanges, it is reasonable to infer that unification is less likely during her term.

Hoping to draw some patterns, scholars compare the similarities and differences of these cases. Hyug-Baeg Im and Yu-Jeong Choi posit that experts on the inter-Korea and cross-Strait cases often quip that “Between North and South Korea, there have been “no actions, talks only (NATO),” while between China and Taiwan there have been “no talk, many actions (NTMA).”16 They point out that in the cross-strait case there was a clear failure to develop political collaboration out of economic exchange. Functionalism has worked well, but it has failed to advance toward neo-functionalism because the issue of Taiwanese sovereignty is still unresolved. In inter-Korean relations, the failure of South Korea’s Sunshine Policy was regarded as a failure of functionalism.17 Although the summit meeting between the leaders of the two Koreas under the Sunshine Policy was praised at the time, most now regard it as a one-time event, failing to
bring the two sides closer together.

In another comparative study, Nien-chung Chang Liao list the similarities between the inter-Korean and cross-Strait cases: (1) Both South Korea and China played down their goals of national unification in order to reassure North Korea and Taiwan. (2) Both South Korea and China provided economic inducements to their counterparts in the hope of creating common interests and mutual goodwill. In recent years China has reached out to Taiwan and enlarged economic cooperation with the island. Similarly, after the 2000 Korean summit, South Korea supplied North Korea with food and fertilizer. However, there are also important differences. First, the two Koreas primarily pursued political agreements and then followed with functional ones (i.e., politics first, economics later). Beijing and Taipei instead sought economic cooperation as a basis for further political negotiations (economics first, politics later). Second, the two Koreas established formal communication channels while their social interactions were restrained. Conversely, official contacts between China and Taiwan had been under restraint until 2014, but individual contacts were widespread.\(^{18}\)

The second comparative lesson is that path-breaking policies, pushed by leaders willing to take risks and premised on existing realities and compromises, rather than unassailable principled stances, unleashed integrative forces. In the German case, the Hallstein Doctrine of the 1950s -- FRG’s One Germany policy -- succeeded in diplomatically isolating the GDR. However, it failed to advance relations with the GDR. Bilateral relations did not fundamentally improve and tensions did not reduce until former FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt courageously promoted the Ostpolitik policy, which earned him a Nobel Peace Prize. This policy “acknowledged the existence of two German states.” While it did not offer de jure diplomatic relations, it established “a workable *modus vivendi* between two parts of the German nation.”\(^{19}\)

Shao-cheng Tang of National Chengchi University, in an article written in Chinese for the Taipei Forum, “The German Model and Cross-Strait Relations,” highlight several aspects of the German model that would have applicability for Cross-Strait relations.\(^{20}\)

(1) The status of each party: Willy Brandt defined GDR as “non-foreign country.” Due to FDR’s Basic Law and Allied occupation, FDR could not formally recognize GDR as a
state. Brandt could thus only define GDR’s status by what it wasn’t. However, what was under the effective control of GDR was not under the control of FDR. Since the territory under GDR was not foreign country, Brandt could only define it as “special area.” This would become a *sui generis* special arrangement. This aspect is immediately relevant to the cross-Strait case. As early as 2008, Ma Ying-jeou defined cross-Strait relations as “special relations.” He pointed out that cross-strait relations were not between two countries, marking a clear contrast with Lee’s “special state-to-state relations” formula and Chen’s “one country on either side of the Taiwan Strait” theory. Citing the ROC Constitution and its Amendments, as well as the Statute Regulating Relations Between People Across the Taiwan Strait, the current government sees the mainland as a special area under the ROC.  

Ma thus advocated “mutual non-denial” (mutual non-recognition of sovereignty, but mutual non-denial of jurisdiction) with PRC authorities.

2) **Rooftop theory:** While the German model’s premise of “one nation, two states” may not directly apply to cross-Strait relations, the rooftop theory is illustrative. Basically, the “one China” is the rooftop that links the respective constitutional orders of the ROC and the PRC.

3) **Differentiating between *inter se* and international:** Because FDR regarded GDR as “non-foreign country,” its policy toward GDR distinguished between *inter se* and international relations. Rather than setting up embassies in each’s capital, the two German states set up “permanent representative’s office” in each’s capital. Rather than dealing with FDR’s foreign ministry, the GDR permanent representative dealt with the FDR Chancellor’s Office, so as to adhere to the “non-foreign country” nature. As a result of this special arrangement, FDR lifted all diplomatic blockade against GDR, and GDR thus enjoyed normal international status (including parallel seats in the United Nations). The PRC arguably also distinguishes the inter se and international aspects of cross-Strait relations, but treats these two aspects of two sides of the same coin. On international forums, the PRC insists “There is only one China in the world; Taiwan is a part of China; the PRC is the only legal government representing the whole China.” But in dealing with Taiwan, Beijing’s syllogism is slightly modified: “There is only one China in the world; both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one China; China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity
cannot be divided.” However, when it comes to Taiwan’s international status, Beijing is orthodox and restrictive. It insists that Taiwan’s international activities cannot create (impressions of) two Chinas or one China, One Taiwan, and that they must be negotiated with Beijing. Consequently, Taiwan has not enjoyed the kind of international status that GDR used to enjoy as a result of inter-German reconciliation.

Tensions have remained high on the Korean peninsula, where the 1950-53 war technically ended with only an armistice. Former ROK President Kim Dae Jung pursued a “Sunshine Policy” toward the DPRK, which led to the historic summit meeting in June 2000 between North and South. The summit also earned Kim a Nobel Peace Prize. After the summit, intra-Korean reconciliation accelerated. Kim asserted that the two leaders “concurred that for now the two Koreas should focus on realizing peaceful coexistence and exchanges” in preparation for a future (loose) (con-) federation of “one people, two systems, and two governments.” However, inter-Korean relations, since that historic summit, have not markedly changed. The integrative dynamics unleashed by that historic summit did not continue. A stalemate persisted.

In the Chinese case, the relationship remained fundamentally deadlocked until 2008. In the early years this was because both the ROC and the PRC maintained their respective “one China” policies. Although the ROC had abandoned its position in 1991 by acknowledging Beijing’s rule on the mainland, the PRC has continued to refuse to acknowledge the existence of two Chinese states. It insists on a formula that treats Taiwan as being under PRC sovereignty: “There is only one China. Taiwan is a part of China. Beijing is the only legal government of all China.” Although Beijing’s unchanging stance has severely restricted Taiwan’s international space, it also has not contributed to cross-strait reconciliation.

The third lesson from this comparative study of divided nations is that national unification and international representation have not proved mutually exclusive. The FRG and the GDR maintained parallel UN observer status until 1990, when they merged into a single German seat. The ROK and the DPRK have also maintained parallel seats in the UN since 1991. However, the politics of Chinese representation have turned cross-strait diplomacy into a zero-sum game. The ROC was expelled from the UN in 1971. Every Taiwan leader will be expected
by his / her people to raise the ROC's international stature, as befits its democratic system and economic power. Holding the exclusive China seat and a Security Council veto, Beijing is able to thwart Taipei’s annual quest to enter the UN.

The last lesson is that, as the German case illustrates, orderly unification resulted from hope, parity, consent and mutual gain, rather than from desperation, asymmetry, coercion or unilateral surrender. Even the South Koreans fear a premature unification as a result of North Korea’s implosion. There exists greater asymmetry between the two Chinese sides in terms of size, population, global stature and nuclear weapons. Because Beijing appears more fervent about unification, ironically China is only more likely to achieve its own goal of peaceful unification by bestowing upon Taipei a proper modicum of parity and respect. Conversely, driving Taiwan toward desperation may in fact toughen its resolve for independence, rather than unification.

In sum, the experiences of divided nations show that both international and domestic forces have influenced the political dynamics of separation and integration. Flexibility and compromise have facilitated convergence, whereas intransigence and confrontation have led to collision. Demonstrating tangible future benefits has proved a more promising approach than appealing to contorted historical claims and nationalism. Can Beijing and Taipei learn the lessons from these comparative divided dynamisms?

CONCEPTUALIZING THE STATE OF THE CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONSHIP

The intractability of the cross-strait relationship is a result of the fundamental contradiction between two principles: democracy and nationalism. This contradiction could be solved if Taiwan seized a historical moment to sever its ties with the PRC (as in the case of Bangladesh with India, or the Baltic States with the Soviet Union), if China were able to gobble up Taiwan, or if Taiwan wanted to join the PRC. However, none of these three scenarios appears likely soon.

The best window of opportunity for Taiwan to sever its ties with China was probably at
the turn of the 1990s, immediately after the Tiananmen massacre in Beijing and the widespread
democratic revolution in East Europe. However, it was not until 2000 that the Democratic
Progressive Party (DPP) -- the party committed to the establishment of an independent
Republic of Taiwan -- dislodged the Kuomintang (KMT) -- a party committed to the
principle of one future China -- from power. Taiwan’s complete separation from China
would require the assistance of the West as well as the solidarity of the island, neither of
which can be taken for granted. Most residents of Taiwan identify themselves as middle class,
and hence probably would not easily risk their prosperity for *de jure* independence. Yet
Beijing’s propaganda may have dramatically increased the saliency and fervency of the
Taiwan issue to the people on the mainland. Size asymmetry is also so acute that even
countries sympathetic to Taiwan may well hesitate to extend it help.\(^{25}\) China’s rise has
further accentuated the problem. The US is the only exception, but even it is wary of being
entrapped. It has warned against any “unilateral change of the status quo” by either side -- a
reference to a declaration of *de jure* independence in Taiwan’s case.

Prudence and pragmatism seem to be prevailing. The DPP is no longer entertaining the
idea of creating a Republic of Taiwan; to the DPP, the ROC as a sovereign state is perfectly
acceptable and some sort of association with the PRC might even be conceivable. For example,
President Chen in his inauguration speech in May 2000 declared his “Five Noes.” Provided
that the PRC had no intention to use military force against Taiwan, he pledged that he would
not declare independence, change the national title, press for the inclusion of the “state-to-
state” policy in Taiwan’s Constitution, promote a referendum on the issue of independence
or unification, and that there would be no question of abolishing the Guidelines for National
Unification and the National Unification Council.\(^{26}\) In his first New Year address, Chen urged
the Chinese leaders to renounce the use of force against Taiwan and allow the island to raise its
international profile so that two sides can establish a “new framework for political
integration.”\(^{27}\) From being an advocate of Taiwan independence, to being a cautious
wordsmith arguing that “independence is not the only choice,” to being a bold politician
proposing an integrative political framework with the rival PRC, Chen’s political maturation
reflects the prudent and pragmatic views prevailing in Taiwan. That he later became more
radical is another issue.
What about the second “solution,” namely the PRC’s military conquest of Taiwan? The high cost of invasion, potential US intervention, and the outcry from world public opinion should continue to deter the PRC from attacking Taiwan. The PRC has aggressively expanded and modernized its missile arsenal and can launch a missile attack to damage some localities and cause widespread panic in Taiwan. This action alone cannot subjugate Taiwan. To physically absorb Taiwan would require large-scale amphibious forces, control of sea-lanes and air superiority. While the PRC is modernizing its military, including building a sea-going navy, Taiwan is also building its own military capability. Moreover, any military action against Taiwan is likely to frighten neighboring countries and cause them to update their security arrangements to balance the PRC. One clear example is the strengthening of the US-Japan Security Treaty following the PRC’s war game in the Taiwan Straits in 1995-96. A military approach toward settling cross-strait differences is fraught with dangers.

At a fundamental level, resolving the cross-strait stalemate requires consideration of ideational factors, an area long ignored by the conventional wisdom based on traditional realpolitik or military strategy. It is clear that Taiwan has developed a new identity distinct from China's. This “imagined community” -- to use Benedict Anderson's phrase -- is formed on the basis of shared collective experiences, such as the island’s long separation from China, its authoritarian legacy, democratization and the PRC’s threats and intimidation. Empirical evidence buttresses this observation. Similarly-worded opinion polls conducted in Taiwan since 1995 consistently show that more and more people identify themselves as “Taiwanese,” rather than “both Taiwanese and Chinese” or “Chinese” (see Figure 1). The Taiwanese people have also shown little desire for union with China, as an overwhelming majority of the population choose status quo and only a tiny amount of people choose either immediate unification or immediate independence (see Figure 2). This new Taiwan identity is important to a reconstruction of Chinese sovereignty, as a cohesive cultural identity is a necessary condition for successful political integration.

At the same time, more attention should be focused on the influence of China’s democratization on cross-strait relations. A democratic China, which would provide political
convergence between the two sides, may be the best hope for future unification. However, even if China should democratize, the people of Taiwan, with their distinct identity and cherished democratic rights, will still insist that their assent should be a precondition for any change of Taiwan’s political destiny. All political leaders in Taiwan embrace this notion of popular sovereignty. To be sure, the people in Taiwan may or may not choose to become loosely associated with China, a wish that may not have the blessing of the Chinese people on the mainland. It is also true that democracy is not necessarily pacifist when it comes to defending territorial integrity. Moreover, as the title of a new book asks, what if China does not democratize, and, after it becomes rich and strong, decides to “solve” the Taiwan issue by coercion?30

The complex picture of the cross-strait relationship cannot be easily captured by either “convergence” or “collision” alone, but reconciliation is possible. As an analytic tool combining realist and liberal international relations theories, Figure 3 identifies three important causes for peace:31 nuclear deterrence, economic interdependence and democracy. The first scenario posits that if both parties are nuclear-capable, peace may result from the doctrine of mutual assured destruction, provided both sides possess credible second-strike capabilities. To be sure, this peace, an outcome of a balance of terror, is prudential rather than positive. Nuclear deterrence, however, does not apply to China-Taiwan. Between the two, only China possesses nuclear weapons (and their means of delivery), and Taiwan has been warned by China that “going nuclear” will be grounds for invasion. Even conventional deterrence appears increasingly unlikely in the Taiwan Strait, as China possesses either a monopoly or a vast quantitative or qualitative advantage in an array of conventional weapons. So the source for peace must be found elsewhere.

(Figure 3 about here)

The second cause for peace is economic interdependence. Conventional wisdom states that economic interdependence makes war prohibitively costly. However, economic interdependence alone does not always prevent war. Contestants locked in a security dilemma may especially regard growing interdependence as damaging to
their security. Britain and Germany were each other’s leading economic partners leading up to World War I, but this did not prevent them from fighting each other. Similarly, Taiwan’s President Lee sought to reduce or slow down Taiwan’s economic dependence on the mainland in light of its security implications. When economic interdependence is coupled with other variables, such as democracy or international law or organization, then peace is more assured.

The third scenario is the “democratic peace” proposition, which states that democracies do not fight each other. This path also implies growing convergence between the economies and polities on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and hence peace. Indeed in their book, Bruce Russett and John Oneal argue that democracy, interdependence and international organizations make up the three pillars of peace -- a notion inspired by the idea of a “Kantian peace.” They point out that if nation-states involved in a dispute are enmeshed in international organizations, then peaceful conflict resolution is more likely. However, Beijing has always insisted that the Taiwan question is its own “internal affair.” It has successfully prevented regional security organizations from even discussing Taiwan, let alone including it. These facts would suggest that international organizations might play little role in peacefully resolving the China-Taiwan conflict.

Using the framework established above, we surmise that increasing trade and investment ties, facilitated by the eventual opening of direct shipping and aviation links and the two sides’ entry into WTO, have already led to growing convergence between China’s and Taiwan’s economies. However, China’s security threat against Taiwan, China’s rising nationalism and Taiwan’s democracy may push the two towards a collision. Growing economic interdependence across the Taiwan Strait (more accurately, Taiwan’s growing economic dependence on China) without ideological affinity or regime compatibility may actually exacerbate Taiwan’s anxiety or potential for conflict arising from China’s possible use of coercion. Given the acute size, regime and international participation asymmetries between the two sides, if the two are left to develop their separate ways, to maintain the status quo may become increasingly unfeasible. Perhaps out of a concern for preventing war, a few
scholars such as Kenneth Lieberthal and Harry Harding have advocated reaching an interim agreement, since a final solution appears out of reach for now. So far these ideas have not been accepted by either Beijing or Taipei. If a US-brokered settlement is not viable, what kind of political relationship can exist between the mainland and Taiwan?

IMAGINING THE POSSIBLE: EXPANDING THE RANGE OF CHOICE

Other than de jure independence for Taiwan, political arrangements between China and Taiwan can still choose from a wide spectrum of existent or constructed possibilities. These options include, but are not limited to, a British-style commonwealth, a European Union-style confederation, a US-style federation, a British-style devolution under a unitary state and the PRC’s “one country, two systems” formula. Not all of these formulas are equally promising, and the final contours of cross-strait relations may well defy any of these “ideal types.”

Beijing objects to a commonwealth, such as the British Commonwealth or the Commonwealth of Independent States, as it would imply a loose coordinating entity made up of sovereign states that were previously parts of China. Beijing views this as implying the finality of China’s division and Taiwan’s sovereign status. The only solace is a loose political association with Taiwan based on an historical and cultural legacy.

A confederation is an association in which states delegate some power to a supranational central government but retain primary power. Although confederations can serve many useful functions for member states, their effectiveness is contingent upon the support of their members. In the Chinese case, confederation has been suggested as the most likely and desirable solution for the cross-strait relationship. Is it?

To answer this question, we will develop a simple game-theoretical model to examine the various scenarios of Taiwan’s future status vis-a-vis China (See Figure 4).
The distinctive contribution of this model is that it underscores the importance of China’s democratization for Taiwan's future – a point few scholars have considered. In this model, the first key “decision” is whether the first player, China, decides to democratize or not. The second key decision is Taiwan’s: whether to separate or unify with China, either peacefully or forcefully. Based on our knowledge about the preference of the three players involved (the PRC, the KMT, and the DPP), we can further postulate the following preference-ranking for these three players, where “>” means “preferable to”:

For the PRC: union > status quo > separation; peaceful outcome > forceful outcome

For the DPP: separation > status quo > union; peaceful outcome > forceful outcome

For the KMT: status quo > separation > union; peaceful outcome > forceful outcome

These strategic decisions result in six possible scenarios. We assign a payoff of 6 for the best outcome, 5 for the second best, down to 1 for the worst. In each bracket, the first payoff is PRC’s, the second the DPP’s, and the third the KMT’s.

Scenario I (1, 6, 5) – “amicable separation” -- is for Taiwan to peacefully separate from China after China democratizes. This is the best outcome for the DPP (6), but the worst for the PRC (1).

Scenario II (5, 4, 6) – “democratic confederation” -- is for Taiwan and China to peacefully form some type of political union after China becomes democratic. This is the KMT’s best outcome (according to its official rhetoric)(6), second best for China (5), and third best for the DPP (4).

Scenario IV (6, 2, 3) – “one country, two systems-plus” -- is for Taiwan to unify with China (presumably under more autonomy than Hong Kong) without China becoming democratic. This is the PRC’s best outcome (6), but a poor one for the KMT (3) and the DPP (2), albeit not the worst.
The worst outcome for the KMT and the DPP is Scenario V (4, 1, 1) – “military conquest.”

Scenarios III and VI – “democratic conquest” and “spiteful separation” -- are very unlikely.

Although these three players’ payoff structures differ, the outcome with the highest sum of payoffs is the one most acceptable to most players. The following ranking order emerges:

Democratic confederation > amicable separation > one country, two systems-plus > spiteful separation > “democratic” conquest > military conquest

“Democratic confederation” emerges as the best outcome for all at the aggregate level (score=15). “Military conquest” the worst (score=6), with “one country, two systems-plus” falling in between (score=11). Therefore, “democratic confederation,” a compromise outcome, is the best overall outcome of all six scenarios. Not surprisingly, pundits have interpreted Chen’s talk of “political integration,” Ma’s talk of “one China, each side with its own interpretation,” and China’s new “one China that includes both the mainland and Taiwan” as signals of both sides’ increasing interest in confederation. Herein lies an important lesson for China: the best hope for Taiwan to unify with China is for China to democratize; acquisition of Taiwan through military conquest does not pay. Yet, by democratizing, China also risks losing Taiwan amicably. This is China’s dilemma.

However, confederation has had few enduring success stories. As most political scientists know, confederation has not been an equilibrium solution, as it eventually falls into federation or commonwealth. In the Chinese case, the PRC’s lack of democratic and legal structures increases the probability that confederation may become only a phased absorption of Taiwan.

Other arrangements with less autonomy than confederation will probably not be attractive to Taiwan, as they all involve relationships between a central and a local government. Although a federation provides a constitutional division of power and functions between a
central government and regional governments, practices have varied greatly and in most countries adopting federalism the central government seems to be steadily gaining power.

In British-style devolution, local governments may have some decision-making autonomy granted by the central government, but it can also be revoked.

All these models have limits. Resolving the cross-strait dilemma requires an imaginative approach. Beijing has a penchant for historical references: its historical claims on Taiwan or Tibet or the South China Sea, the absence of a confederation or federation in Chinese history as an excuse for rejecting these proposals, and so on. However, history can also inhibit imagination and trail-blazing, and certainly can become a burden. As Thomas Jefferson eloquently stated in 1824: “The earth belongs to the living (not the dead). Nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man.”35 A stable and viable long-term relationship between the two Chinas should be based on the rights and aspirations of their current residents, not the death wishes of their aggrieved ancestors.

Before we focus on China taking the first step, it is equally important to note that Taiwan is an actor and has agency. Its democratization has imbued its citizenry of pride and quest for dignity. Figure 5 considers the possibility of Taiwan making the first move. If Taiwan’s government declares de jure independence, then China has two choices: to use force or not to use force. If China uses force, there can be two possible outcomes: either China’s attack succeeds, resulting in unification by force, or its attack fails, leading to Taiwan’s permanent separation. If Taiwan declares independence and China does not use force, this will lead to Taiwan’s permanent separation.

If Taiwan does not declare independence but also refuses to negotiate unification, China could lose patience and decide to use force, which could succeed or fail, leading to unification (by force) or separation. It should be noted that in this case, since Taiwan is not the agitator and China uses force, the probability of outside (United States) intervention would rise. If Taiwan does not declare independence and China does not use force (or continues to be patient), then the status quo prevails.
The status quo might last a considerable period of time, but is unlikely to remain static. Logically it would lead to somewhere else – convergence or collision. Then we are back to Figure 5, in which China makes the first choice (whether to democratize or not).

A democratic China may have different views about itself and its relationship with Taiwan. Many analysts simply axiomatically assume that the PRC will never, or can never, compromise on the issue of sovereignty -- it is a non-negotiable principle. But this is a staid and uncritical stance reflecting the PRC’s perhaps anachronistic worldview. It has proved more a hindrance than a catalyst for resolving cross-strait differences.

A constructivist approach holds more promise than traditional realism. Alexander Wendt argues that states can view each other as enemies, rivals or friends, characterizing these roles as “cultures of anarchy,” which are shared ideas that help shape states' interests and capabilities. These cultures can evolve over time as ideas change. Accordingly, the nature of international politics is not fixed and the international system is not condemned to conflict and war. If this logic applies to cross-strait relations, then the impasse between Taiwan and China is not destined for an ultimate collision.

If anarchy is what states make of it, as Wendt points out, why can’t sovereignty be reconstructed? Stephen Krasner calls the concept of sovereignty an “organized hypocrisy.” Distinguishing among four different meanings of sovereignty -- domestic, interdependence, international legal and Westphalian -- he argues that states have never been as sovereign as some have supposed. Very few states truly possess all the attributes usually considered associated with sovereignty, such as territory, recognition, autonomy and control. In the twentieth century, sovereignty had eroded as a result of both trans-border movements like globalization and internal developments spurred on by the practice of self-determination. Would it not be rather like trying to shoot at a moving target if the PRC were to insist upon a unification formula based on exercising this imagined sovereignty over
Taiwan?

As the twenty-first century is well under way, the people on either side of the Taiwan Strait are urged to reconstruct their concept of sovereignty so that they can benefit both from their evident mutual economic gains and from a constructive mutual respect afforded to each side’s way of life and its external expression.

In this regard, the first meeting between the leaders of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in 66 years held promise. Reflecting the progression of relations as seen in Table 1, the Ma-Xi meeting in November 2015 represented a culmination of a complex relationship that had gone through military confrontation, peaceful interaction, tension-ridden stalemate, and incipient reconciliation. That it happened at all amidst analysts’ surprise proves that politics are about the possible, and human decisions make a difference. Whether this change was motivated by instrumental reasons (attempting to influence Taiwan’s upcoming presidential and legislative elections in January 2016 or drive a wedge between Taiwan and the U.S. against the backdrop of the U.S. “Pivot” policy) or inspired by a normative shift remains to be seen. But cross-Strait relations appear to avoid extremes and enter a period of reconciliation with the future more wide-open than any time before.
## TABLE 1: DIVIDED NATIONS: COMPARATIVE DYNAMISMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Germany (FRG/GDR)</th>
<th>Korea (ROK/DPRK)</th>
<th>China (ROC/PRC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Representatives</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Recognition</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Level Contacts</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Membership</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>Parallel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Ties</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Investments</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Transport</td>
<td>Flux</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Loans</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Aspects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Defense Treaty</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Troop Presence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Weapons</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aggression Pact</td>
<td>Flux</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio/Humanitarian Aspects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Ties</td>
<td>Flux</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Links</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary Convertibility</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Tourist Visits</td>
<td>Flux</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of integrative forces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULT (as of 2000/15)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unification</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Integrative forces are in bold. Yes* denotes a de facto but unofficial relationship.
Source: Authors’ update and adaptation of Metzler, 1996, 203-6.
Figure 1: Changing National Identities in Taiwan

Sources: Election Study Center, N.C.C.U., important political attitude trend distribution
Figure 2: The Resilient Status Quo?

 Sources: Election Study Center, N.C.C.U., important political attitude trend distribution
FIGURE 3: WHAT CAUSES PEACE?
NUCLEAR DETERRENCE, ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE, OR POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

- **BOTH NUCLEAR?**
  - **No**
  - **Yes**
    - **Economically Interdependent?**
      - **No**
      - **Yes**
        - **Both Democratic?**
          - **No**
          - **Yes**
            - Most likely war?
            - Peace > War?
            - War > Peace? (e.g., Britain and Germany before WWI) [Current ROC-PRC?]
            - Peace (Democratic Peace Theory) [Future ROC-PRC?]
FIGURE 4: SCENARIOS OF TAIWAN’S FUTURE STATUS VIS-À-VIS CHINA

CHINA

Not democratize

Democratic

V Spiteful Separation (2,5,4)

III 'Democratic' Conquest (3,3,2)

II Amicable Separation (1,6,5)

VI Spiteful Separation (2,5,4)

Union

Forceful

Peaceful

Forceful

V Military Conquest (4,1,1)

IV 'One country, two systems' Plus (6,2,3)

II Democratic (con-) federation (5,4,6)
FIGURE 5: TAIWAN’S CHOICES, CHINA’S REACTIONS

China

Use Force

Unification

Separation

Taiwan

No Force

Separation

Independence

No independence

Use Force

Unification

Separation

No Force

Status quo
NOTES

1 This paper draws upon Tun-jen Cheng and Vincent Wei-cheng Wang, “Between Convergence and Collision: Whither Cross-Strait Relations?” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* XIV(2)(April 2001): 239-256. The author acknowledges Professor Cheng’s contributions to the original article.

2 This ambivalence is well captured by the question mark in the title of Ralph N. Clough’s study, *Cooperation or Conflict in the Taiwan Strait?* (Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).


Christopher Hughes argues that democratization in Taiwan presents an interesting case for theories of nationalism, in that Taiwan's emergent 'post-nationalist' identity may allow Taiwan to be part of the Chinese nation in terms of special cultural, kinship, and economic ties with the Chinese mainland while disavowing sovereignty under the PRC. Michael Yahuda attributes the Chinese Communist Party's (CCPJ inconsistent (and often dubious) nationalistic claims on Taiwan and Mongolia to its perceived changing national interests – in the case of Taiwan, legitimacy of the CCP rule and the PRC's ascending great power status. Christopher Hughes, 'Post-nationalist Taiwan,' (in Michael Leifer, ed., *Asian Nationalism*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 77); Michael Yahuda, 'The Changing Faces of Chinese Nationalism: The Dimensions of Statehood,' in Michael Leifer, ed., *Asian Nationalism*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 77 and 33.

Invoking contemporary international law, Jonathan Charney and J.R.V. Prescott urge new perspectives on a solution to cross-strait relations acceptable to all interested parties. 'International legal rights should reflect current realities and avoid anachronistic
situations...with the passage of time the actualities of [Taiwan's] independence [from the PRC for over 50 years] should have legal effects'. Further, they assert that 'Taiwan satisfies all the generally accepted criteria for statehood'. And that today even 'a non-state entity may hold territory...and the population of a territory may have rights of self-determination that deny the sovereign state the unqualified authority to control that territory and its population'. The international community has been less unequivocal on external than on internal self-determination — for example, Morton Halperin, David J. Scheffer, with Patricia Small, Self-Determination in the New World Order, Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992. But Charney and Prescott argue that Taiwan has never been subjected to the actual governance of the PRC...Taiwan is, and for decades has been, de facto, if not de jure, independent of China, Taiwan does not need to change the status quo to realize self-governance'. Hence, '[t]he current international status of Taiwan, the right of Taiwanese self-determination, and Taiwan's right of self-defense would ...make a PRC-initiated attack based merely upon a Taiwanese declaration of independence a violation of international law "inconsistent with the Purpose of the United Nations"'. Jonathan I. Charney, and J. R. V. Prescott, 'Resolving Cross-Strait Relations Between China and Taiwan,' American Journal of International Law. vol. 94, July 2000, pp. 463-5, 471. 477.

8 After 2008, the Ma Ying-jeou administration has pursued a less confrontational (also less visible) approach toward UN participation by substituting questing for UN membership with “meaningful participation” in UN-related organizations. Recently, the foreign minister of the Tsai Ing-wen administration David Lee also said that the government will not push for entry into UN campaign.

9 Drawing on newly declassified diplomatic records, James Mann shows that Henry Kissinger, President Nixon’s National Security Advisor, during his first meeting in 1971 with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, pledged what can be considered the origin of Clinton’s “Three Noes”: no two Chinas; no one China, one Taiwan; no independent Taiwan – a formula prepared by John Holdridge and followed by Nixon. James Mann, About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton (Vintage, 2000).


12 Currently 22 states, mostly in Latin America, Africa, and Oceania, plus Vatican, maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

13 In a speech at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies intended to sell PNTR for China, President Clinton enunciated, for the first time, “the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.” Jay Hancock, “Clinton Talks Up Trade Ties to China,” The Baltimore Sun (9 March 2000): p. 1A.

14 The US position in the Shanghai Communiqué was summed up by the famous diplomatic myth: “The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves.” Based on a position formally accepted by both Taipei and Beijing at the time (although they differed on who represented China), this formula permitted the US considerable flexibility and was followed by each administration after Nixon’s.

15 John Meltzer states that for divided nations, unification policy has often sounded like a central
political philosophy, an ethos, of the State, as a result of the traditional view espoused by the late French President Charles de Gaulle, “The State may change, but the Nation remains the same.” But this ethos also serves practical political needs, often molded to advance the agenda of the ruling party or oligarchy of the respective regimes. John J. Metzler, *Divided Dynamism: The Diplomacy of Separated Nations – Germany, Korea, China* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), p. xi.


11 Im and Choi, “Inter-Korean and Cross-Strait Relations.”


13 Metzler, *Divided Dynamism*, pp. 6-11.


16 Tang, pp. 5-6.


18 Lee Teng-hui, Understanding Taiwan.

19 The PRC’s population is 50 times that of the ROC’s, and its land mass 130 times greater. Moreover, the PRC is member of the world’s exclusive “nuclear club” and holds a UN Security Council veto.


24 Friedman and McCormick, eds., *What If China Doesn’t Democratize?*

25 Although most international relations scholars tend to define peace in binary terms – that is, absence of war, the quality of peace is also important. Therefore, peace as a concept is a continuum, ranging from absence of war to affinity. The kinds of peace maintained by prudential reasons (nuclear deterrence) or transactional reasons (economic interdependence), and ideational reasons (democratic peace) are not the same.


27 See Kenneth Lieberthal, “Preventing a War over Taiwan,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (March/April 2005), pp. 53–63. Lieberthal proposed that the PRC and Taiwan negotiate a twenty-to-thirty-year “agreed framework.” Such an agreement’s core bargain would trade Taiwanese
promises not to declare independence for PRC promises not to attack, and might include other provisions such as military confidence-building mechanisms.

34 We have not attempted to theorize on the intensity or between these ordinal numbers, that is, we are mainly interested in showing that 6 (best outcome) is better than 5 (second best), rather than how much better. While when we derive the aggregate scores we treat these numbers as if they were real numbers (i.e., equal distance), our point is still valid, for an outcome with a total “score” of 15 is still better (perhaps much better) than another outcome with a “score” of 11.


