

VI. Conclusion

This paper set out to examine the cross-Strait relationship through the theoretical prism of Joseph S. Nye Jr.'s "soft power." Many scholars tend to look at China and its influence on international relations through the hard power theoretical lens. It is my belief, humanistic variables, more than that of military and economics are shaping the cross-Strait relationship. In today's modern society, far too many interests (NGOs, multinationals, interest groups, media etc.) are involved in the decision making process. A government must rely on the use of attraction to get others to do want what it wants. To accomplish its objectives a government relies on three main resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).¹⁷³

China has made significant efforts to promote its culture at home and abroad. China is welcoming hordes of tourists and scholars alike to come and experience China's 5,000-year-old culture. China is going beyond its borders and bringing Chinese civilization to the masses by establishing Confucius Institutes and Mandarin language learning centers in foreign countries. Although China's "rich cultural heritage" is admired by many nations, the influence of Chinese popular culture has not made much of a positive impression on the outside world. China still has ways to go before their cultural icons and brands can reach international fame such as Michael Jackson and Apple computers.

China has long been admired, especially in Asia, for its political values. China, a filial culture, prides itself on the importance of family. The collective good surpasses the importance of the individual. In recent years, China has made significant efforts to prove it can act as a responsible stakeholder within the international community. Yet, many western nations question the sincerity of China's intentions. Many look upon China's poor human rights record, insufficient public goods and services, and corrupt government as a potential risk for political instability. Unfortunately, this instability would not only

¹⁷³ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 11.

affect China, but with globalization, would seep out into the international community, potentially causing great global economic, political and social unrest.

China's foreign policy has become more sophisticated since the 1990s. It is participating in more international organizations, setting the agenda for bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements, and promoting its "good neighbor policy". However, China lacks coherency in its foreign policy, and China's "good neighbor policy" seems to extend only to those on the Southeast Asian continent. Especially, when one considers China's recent display of nationalism directed towards both Japan and South Korea. Furthermore, in the eyes of the global community, China lacks legitimacy in its foreign policy. China's support for suppressive regimes in Zimbabwe and Sudan leaves the global community uneasy with China's claim to be a responsible stakeholder in the international community. In any case, with the recent groundswell of NGOs and interest groups, China will continually have more difficulty navigating the rules and norms of international community.

The cross-Strait relationship has evolved significantly from the Jiang Zemin era to the Hu Jintao era. Jiang Zemin initially took a soft line approach to cross-Strait relations; this is signified by his eight point proposal. However, the relationship quickly deteriorated due to various determinants: 1. Taiwanese President Lee's controversial statements and visit to the United States, 2. a lack of symmetrical responses to Beijing's bilateral framework, 3. the democratization of Taiwan which would lead to an independence movement within Taiwan, 4. and Taiwan's evolving role within the international community. Jiang Zemin, feeling the pressure from within China's military apparatus reacted swiftly, utilizing two hard power tactics. The first was military coercion, exemplified by the 1995-1996 missile tests near Taiwan. The second was economic inducement, conducted by way of Beijing courting of Taiwan's top 100 conglomerates, inducing them to invest in the mainland.

After Hu Jintao took over power from Jiang Zemin, China's Taiwan policy dramatically shifted. Hu Jintao took a much more pragmatic approach to cross-Strait relations, in that he realized unification would not happen in the near future, his main goal would be to deter independence. This author believes Hu Jintao's strategy is much more sophisticated than Jiang Zemin's. Hu Jintao's strategy is best described as "the

hard gets harder, and the soft gets softer.” The hard is exemplified in 2005 by the promulgation of the Anti-Succession Law (ASL). Immediately following the implementation of the ASL, Hu followed up with a series of soft power tactics to “win the hearts and minds” of the Taiwanese public. Hu Jintao relied on the tactics of agenda setting and cultural attraction to garner favoritism within Taiwan. Hu has de-emphasized the military factor, relaxed the pre-conditions for negotiations and opened many channels to help progress dialogues with both the KMT and the DPP. During Hu Jintao’s era, China has made a concerted effort to increase the cultural exchanges across the Strait. If we reference Appendix 1, the frequency and scope of cross-Strait interactions becomes evident. Potentially, leading any cross-Strait relations observer to believe the likelihood of future reunification is more than just a possibility.

This brings me to the crux of this paper. At the outset of this paper I hypothesized: As opposed to Jiang Zemin’s hard power strategy which had a negative influence on Taiwanese public opinion of China, Hu Jintao’s soft power strategy will have a positive influence on Taiwanese public opinion of China, thus increasing the likelihood of eventual reunification. If we reference Appendix 2, examining the Taiwanese public’s attitude towards China, we can see a clear difference between the Taiwanese public’s opinion of China at the end of Jiang Zemin’s era in 2004 and the beginning of Hu Jintao’s era in 2005. Immediately after Hu Jintao took full control of power and had the ability to fully implement his soft power strategy against Taiwan, the Taiwanese public’s opinion of China dramatically improved. But, this improvement of Taiwanese public opinion has not lead to reunification. If we reference Appendix 3, we see the vast majority of Taiwanese (84.7%) still wish to maintain the status quo. This does not necessarily mean Hu Jintao’s strategy is a complete failure. As mentioned previously, his new Taiwan policy is more pragmatic, realizing each side of the Strait does not possess the capability to change the status quo, Hu Jintao can accept the status of cross-Strait relations, just as long as Taiwan does not declare independence.

Throughout the last fifteen years we have seen a dramatic shift in China’s Taiwan strategy. We have seen the entire spectrum of behaviors from coercion and inducement to agenda setting and attraction. At the gathering to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the January 1979 “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan,” Hu Jintao gave an important

speech potentially foreshadowing the cross-Strait relationship for the years to come. In his “six point” speech he stressed the “peaceful development of cross-Strait relations,” where both sides would focus on economic, cultural and educational, and personal exchanges.¹⁷⁴

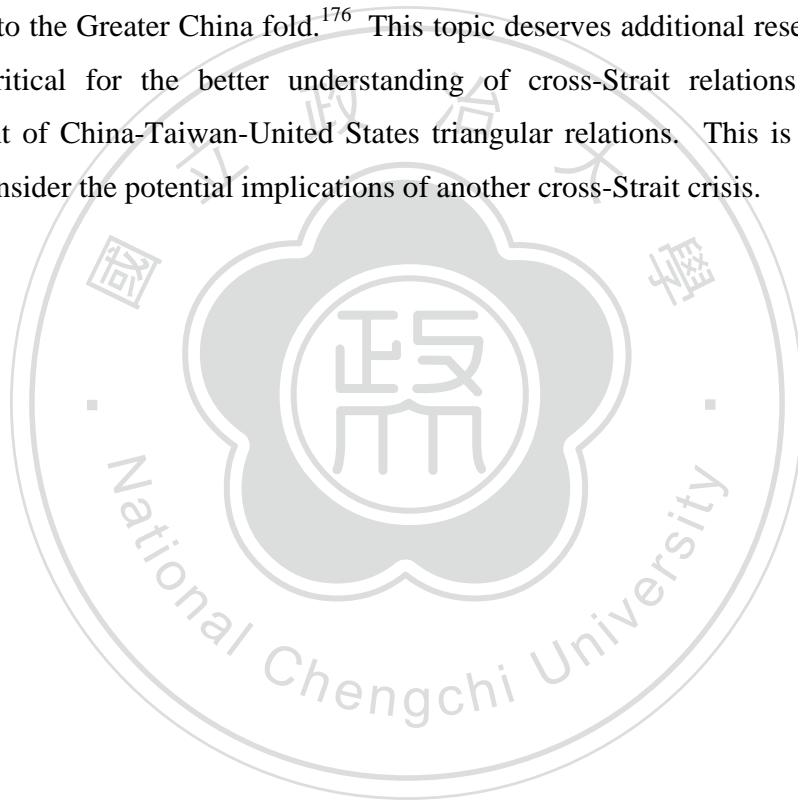
Generally, Beijing is satisfied with Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou’s reciprocal responses to Beijing’s goodwill gestures. Therefore, fearing the worse from any independence-minded DPP candidate, Beijing will continue to maintain a peaceful bi-lateral relationship providing a politically sound domestic environment in which President Ma could get re-elected and further promote the bi-lateral dialogues. I project the goodwill gestures will continue through 2012. At that time, after serving two terms, Hu Jintao is expected to step down from power. His successor will require some time before he consolidates his power and truly formulates his Taiwan policy. Therefore, at that time we shouldn’t expect any major deviations from China’s current Taiwan policy. From the Taiwanese perspective, China’s goodwill gestures of cute, cuddly panda bears and friendship will continue to be welcomed over the alternative of missiles and hostile rhetoric. In the meantime, the vast majority of Taiwanese will continue to wish to maintain the status quo.

Unfortunately, I encountered many limitations when writing about this beckoning topic in international relations. First, my time was limited to fully research and write about this topic. The cross-Strait relationship is one of the most dynamic bi-lateral relationships in international relations today. This relationship is constantly evolving and requires daily scanning of newspapers, government websites, academic journals and books. Furthermore, my ability to read Chinese is insufficient for scientific materials. Therefore, I had to rely on sources written English. To further complicate the problem, the reliability of Chinese government websites, especially those in English, are always questionable. Numerous times throughout my study, I encountered facts which contradicted others, thus this study requires a very discerning eye. Nevertheless, I attempted to utilize articles authored not only by western researchers, but also by Asian scholars who often summarize their own or other’s findings which had been previously

¹⁷⁴ Alan D. Romberg, “Cross-Strait Relations: First the Easy, Now the Hard,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 27 (Winter 2009): 1-6.

written in Chinese. Unfortunately, I did not have the resources to conduct my own personal public opinion poll, which could have provided more in depth responses specific to my individual study.

Nonetheless, the cross-Strait relationship, when looked at through the prism of Joseph Nye's soft power theory, is relatively new to the field of international relations. Admittedly, China's soft power strategy is still in its embryonic phase.¹⁷⁵ Yet, the cross-Strait relationship, is an ideal starting point for China's soft power strategy. According to Samuel P. Huntington's theory, Taiwan, of whom shares the same culture as China will be pulled into the Greater China fold.¹⁷⁶ This topic deserves additional research, for it is not only critical for the better understanding of cross-Strait relations but for the advancement of China-Taiwan-United States triangular relations. This is especially so when we consider the potential implications of another cross-Strait crisis.



¹⁷⁵ Li Mingjiang, "Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect," 2.

¹⁷⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order*, 125.