

2. Challenges to Taiwan's Security

Taiwan exists in the shadow of threat. The people of Taiwan are among those in a handful of nations who live with a potentially hostile neighbor, one who explicitly asserts the right to use military force against them. The general outlines of Taiwan's security challenges are well known: the Republic of China (ROC) faces the growing military, economic and diplomatic strength of the People's Republic of China, which has vowed not to allow Taiwan to declare formal independence, or remain politically separate indefinitely.³ In the meanwhile, Taiwan faces international isolation, with a dwindling list of countries that officially recognize it, and only one major world power, the United States, willing to provide it substantive assistance.

There is a broad consensus that the challenges to Taiwan's security involve both external and internal components, namely, that the military threat from the PRC must be countered by improvement and reform within the ROC military, but also that this reform faces its own limiting factors. The *2004 National Defense Report* issued by the ROC Ministry of National Defense (MND) identifies "military pressure imposed by the PRC, the modernization and transformation of the ROC Armed Forces," and "the limitation of the defense resources" as defense challenge areas.⁴ Michael D. Swaine and James C. Mulvenon characterize Taiwan's security environment by three major factors: first, the "large and growing political and military threat to Taiwan's security posed by an increasingly capable Mainland Chinese regime, complicated by Taiwan's growing economic ties with the Mainland and a variety of strong ethnic and cultural connections." Second is "the relatively weak level of political and military assistance provided to Taiwan by foreign powers" and third is a "highly fluid domestic political and social situation, arising primarily from the ongoing democratization of Taiwan's political process, general turnover within society, and the growing prosperity of Taiwan's populace."⁵ Similarly, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs Peter Brookes identifies five challenges:

³ In this thesis, the terms "Republic of China" (ROC) and "Taiwan" will be used interchangeably, as will the terms "People's Republic of China" (PRC) and "China."

⁴ Ministry of National Defense (MND), *2004 National Defense Report*, (Republic of China, 2004), 60. The fourth challenge concerns terrorism, which although a common international concern at the moment, is not unique to Taiwan nor is it given much attention by scholars addressing Taiwan's security.

⁵ Michael D. Swaine and James C. Mulvenon, *Taiwan's Foreign and Defense Policies: Features and Determinants* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), ix.

“(1) an ambitious PRC force modernization program; (2) Taiwan’s continued international isolation; (3) elements resistant to reform within Taiwan’s defense establishment; (4) a stove-piped bureaucracy; and (5) a restrictive economic environment.”⁶ In other words, although some of the specifics differ, China’s growing power, Taiwan’s international isolation and the need for reforms within the boundaries set by external fiscal constraints are constant themes expounded by those analyzing Taiwan’s defense circumstances.

2.1 The Rise of China

The growing national power of the PRC is a major concern. The US Department of Defense (DOD), in its most recent report to the Congress on the PRC’s military power, notes “the cross-Strait military balance is shifting in the mainland’s favor as a result of Beijing’s sustained economic growth, increased diplomatic leverage, and improvements in military capabilities based within striking range of Taiwan.”⁷ The report notes that “China is pursuing long-term, comprehensive military modernization to improve its capabilities for power projection and access denial,” and that “China deploys its most advanced systems to the military regions directly opposite Taiwan.”⁸ China’s publicly declared spending continues to increase; in March 2006, China announced a 14.7 percent increase to approximately \$35 billion U.S. dollars. The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency estimates that the actual total of military-related spending is somewhere between \$70 billion and \$105 billion, and if China maintains a relatively constant proportion of its GDP for defense, these figures could rise three-fold or more by 2025.⁹ The DOD report points out that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is pursuing modernization at a size, scope and speed that has surprised observers:

The PLA’s transformation features new doctrine for modern warfare, reform of military institutions and personnel systems, improved exercise and training standards, and the acquisition of advanced foreign (especially Russian) and domestic weapon systems. Several aspects of China’s military development have surprised U.S. analysts, including the pace and scope of its strategic forces

⁶ Peter Brookes, “Preface: The challenges and imperatives in Taiwan’s defense,” in *Taiwan’s Security and Air Power*, ed. Martin Edmonds and Michael M. Tsai (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), xiii.

⁷ Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2006*, 6, <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/China%20Report%202006.pdf>.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

modernization. China's military expansion is already such as to alter regional military balances. Long-term trends in China's strategic nuclear forces modernization, land- and sea-based access denial capabilities, and emerging precision-strike weapons have the potential to pose credible threats to modern militaries operating in the region.¹⁰

The MND report likewise cites China's double-digit defense budget growth rate and its commitment to military buildup and reform as a major pressure on Taiwan:

The PRC refusal to renounce using military power against Taiwan, its current emphasis on "enhancing preparation for military struggle," its obvious intention of preparing a war against Taiwan reflected in operational deployment, readiness efforts, and annual military exercises in the Southeast China coastal region, and its progress in aerospace operations, information warfare, paralyzation warfare, and non-conventional warfare, all of these factors work together so that the ROC Armed Forces face an increasingly complicated and difficult situation in terms of self-defense and counterattack. These multiple daunting challenges are testing our defense security.¹¹

2.2 Diplomatic Isolation

The PRC's growing power is tied to another of Taiwan's problems: its relative isolation.

As the DOD report points out:

China's foreign policy is now global. It engages in key issues in almost all international security and economic institutions, including the UN and the WTO ... China also continues to use its growing leverage to restrict Taiwan's international roles and convince Taiwan's remaining 25 diplomatic partners to shift diplomatic recognition to Beijing.¹²

Taiwan's international isolation exacerbates the PRC's threat to the island because of "the relatively low level of political and military support provided to Taipei by foreign power or

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ MND, 5-6.

¹² DOD, 3.

international bodies.”¹³ Without significant support from any other foreign entity, “[f]rom a political and military perspective, Taiwan remains heavily dependent on the support provided by the United States,” but despite the importance of this bilateral relationship, “American support and assistance for Taiwan are not founded on a security alliance or any unambiguous security guarantees, nor are they based on a formal diplomatic relationship.”¹⁴ Taiwan therefore faces a balancing act: it must maximize its relationship with the U.S. without engendering too negative of a reaction from China:

Taipei’s overriding foreign policy objective is to strengthen the U.S. commitment to Taiwan’s security and prosperity without provoking a major conflict or tension with Mainland China. This effort requires maintaining a strong U.S. fealty to the Taiwan Relations Act and to the so-called Six Assurances, which together provide the basis of U.S. political and military support for Taiwan. Thus Taiwan’s policy clearly implies a desire to expand the degree of support for Taiwan provided by U.S. political and economic elites, especially members of Congress and important business leaders. It also implies efforts to improve the level and type of U.S. military assistance provided to Taiwan, in order both to strengthen Taiwan’s military capabilities vis-à-vis the Mainland and to convey an impression of America’s heightened commitment to the security of Taiwan and to the peaceful resolution of the China-Taiwan imbroglio.¹⁵

As this points out, while improving U.S. military assistance and cooperation is a key component of Taiwan’s security, the effort is, in fact, three-fold: first, to improve current capabilities; second, to improve the capability to work with the U.S. and possibly other countries in the future; and third, to increase the probability that the U.S. will come to Taiwan’s aid in the future if needed, despite the lack of a formal defense treaty. As Swaine and Mulvenon put it:

Taiwan must augment its limited indigenous military systems by obtaining critical weapons, support infrastructure, and military technology and training from the outside. Perhaps even more important, as indicated above, Taipei’s political leaders must also strive to ensure the United States will provide direct military

¹³ Swaine and Mulvenon, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

assistance to Taiwan in the event of a serious threat from the Mainland. In support of these objectives, Taiwan's defense policy thus aims at increasing the size and scope of arms acquisitions and technical assistance obtained from the outside and the level and type of professional military interactions with foreign powers, especially the U.S. military.¹⁶

The first two aspects—improving current and future capabilities—are purely military, but the third, increasing the likelihood of active U.S. assistance in a crisis, is political. Dozens of other countries look to the U.S. for military hardware and training, but few, if any, others are as reliant on U.S. good will and its willingness to comply with a unilateral defense obligation imposed by domestic legislation rather than international treaty. This adds a political dimension to Taiwan's defense decisions insofar as its defense policies and actions must not only provide for its own defense, but must consider the opinions and reactions of its benefactor as well. At its root, though, interaction with foreign militaries remains crucial to Taiwan's defense, and at the risk of stating the obvious, “interactions” between militaries do not occur in the abstract or institutional level, but rather on the human level. “Interaction” relies on the quality and capabilities of individuals, and the benefits of interaction derive from communication. Effective communication of course demands not just a common tongue (although foreign language fluency is a key element), but also a common conceptual framework and a degree of cultural as well as linguistic fluency. As will be discussed further, foreign education provides one direct and effective method to develop officers with the skill sets to facilitate interaction and communication.

2.3 Taiwan's Defense Relations with the U.S.

Taiwan's defense relations with the U.S. have a long history, one complicated by the U.S. diplomatic shift from the ROC to the PRC. The abrogation of the Mutual Defense Treaty and the switch of diplomatic recognition from the ROC to the PRC reversed the long-standing military-to-military contacts between the U.S. and Taiwan. U.S. forces withdrew from the island, and substantive military contacts were halted, although “[t]he Taiwan Relations Act compensated, to some degree, for these losses by providing a basis for both the provision by

¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

the United States of continued defensive-oriented military assistance to Taiwan (in the form of arms sales and technology transfers), and the possible future intervention of the U.S. military in the event of an attack from the Mainland.”¹⁷

In the years between normalization of U.S.-PRC relations in 1979 and the 1995-96 crisis in the Taiwan Strait, U.S. military and civilian defense officials had relatively little contact with their Taiwan counterparts.¹⁸ Moreover, as analyst Michael S. Chase notes, the contact that did occur “centered on the annual arms sales talks, rather than a qualitative exchange or strategic discussion.”¹⁹

During this period, security cooperation was centered primarily on arms sales, and the arms sales themselves became a symbolic demonstration of political will rather than military readiness. Chase asserts that for Taiwan, “the deterrent effect was the primary reason for most arms purchase,” so that Taipei could demonstrate to the PRC the depth of Taiwan’s relationship with the U.S.²⁰ One result of focusing on symbolism was the lack of a coherent strategy to guide the process, which instead devolved into a competition for resources and prestige between the ROC Army, Navy and Air Force. The problem was deeply rooted, as Swaine explains:

For decades, Taiwan’s national security approach and military strategy were largely determined by the legacy of the [Kuo Ming Tang (KMT)]’s experience on the mainland, the army’s dominance over the ROC military, the personal views of President Chiang Kai-shek and the CGS [Chief of the General Staff]-dominated military system, and—before American’s de-recognition of the ROC government and resulting abrogation of the U.S.-Taiwan security treaty in 1979—the priorities of the overall U.S. security strategy in the Western Pacific.²¹

During the nearly two-decade lull in military-to-military relations, “not only was the U.S.-Taiwan defense relationship focused largely on arms sales, it was also ‘highly ritualized’

¹⁷ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸ Michael S. Chase, “U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Enhancing an Unofficial Relationship,” in *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis*, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 166.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Swaine and Mulvenon, 138.

according to U.S. officials.”²² Chase notes that official visits to Taiwan by U.S. officers were restricted to colonel or naval captain and below, and only visits that were related to the arms sales process were permitted.²³

The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, wherein China launched missiles into waters near the north and south of Taiwan in an attempt to sway the electorate against voting for President Lee Teng-hui, proved a critical juncture in U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation, leading “to the recognition for widespread defense reform and a reexamination of the U.S.-Taiwan defense relationship.”²⁴ Chase notes that first, “the crisis revealed the United States knew very little about the Taiwan armed forces” and second, “made clear that for Taiwan and the U.S. ‘poor channels of communication and a high degree of unfamiliarity would pose serious problems if fighting were to break out.’”²⁵

The relative lack of interaction between the U.S. and Taiwan militaries had left the United States with a limited understanding of the problems faced by Taiwan’s armed forces. At the same time it was becoming increasingly clear that the rising generation of Taiwan military officers had little exposure to the United States.²⁶

Chase points out that the “isolation of the Taiwan military was so severe, it was as if the Taiwan military ‘was stuck in a time warp,’ according to a former U.S. government official,” and coupled with “growing worries about PRC military modernization,” Washington grew more concerned “about the lack of coordination between the U.S. and Taiwan militaries.”²⁷

The crisis led to the realization that “selling hardware to Taiwan was not enough, particularly if Taiwan was unable effectively to integrate and employ the arms it purchased from the United States.”²⁸ Throughout much of the 1990s, U.S. thinking about a potential Taiwan Strait conflict continued to be “based on little knowledge of Taiwan defense planning and no significant pre-crisis interaction between the two militaries.”²⁹ In other words, the U.S. realized it might be drawn into a military conflict in which it had a severe deficit of practical experience with its purported partner, in which it didn’t have insight into Taiwanese military

²² Chase, 165.

²³ Ibid., 165.

²⁴ Ibid., 166.

²⁵ Ibid., 166.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 167.

²⁹ Ibid., 166.

practices, skills or thinking, and in which it would face numerous practical problems if it had to interact and coordinate with a foreign military.

2.4 The Reform Consensus

The missile crisis was a punctuating wake-up call, but the Lee Teng-Hui era as a whole saw a concerted attempt by the ROC government to address needed structural reforms in the military. These reforms “aimed at simplifying and strengthening the civilian command structure over the military and constructing a smaller, more streamlined, and a robust military force capable of responding quickly and powerfully” to a Mainland attack. In addition, Taiwan “increased efforts ... to acquire more advanced weapons systems from the West, both to augment Taiwan’s warfighting capabilities and to strengthen political-military relations with powers such as the United States.”³⁰

Again, the emphasis on military capabilities was accompanied by a focus on the development of “more substantive political relations with the United States.”

This has included increases in the status of U.S. officials visiting Taiwan, a steady expansion in the number of congressional visits, sister state agreements, and state trade offices, established, growing social and cultural bonds, and the passage of both binding and non-binding congressional legislation designed to express support for Taiwan.³¹

In other words, the Lee Teng-Hui era reforms aimed at improving Taiwan’s “software” (in the form of reorganization), “hardware” (in the form of new weapons) and political standing. Swaine and Mulvenon assess that efforts to acquire new weapons and technical assistance “all enjoyed significant success” especially in the “quality and quantity of weapons” sold by the U.S. and in the increase in “the level and type of contacts between the Taiwan and American militaries.”³² Taiwan was aided by Chinese military deployments along the Taiwan Straits, which “further encouraged U.S. military support for Taiwan and facilitated initial efforts to upgrade and improve the ROC military.”³³

However, other aspects of the reforms were not as successful, setting the stage for the ongoing efforts today, which will be examined in greater detail below. In short, large-scale

³⁰ Swaine and Mulvenon, 29.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30–31.

³² *Ibid.*, 31.

³³ *Ibid.*

restructuring and streamlining of the military and the improvement of civilian and military command-and-control are lengthy processes, and even improving basic fighting capabilities encountered difficulties because of “budgetary and manpower limitations, technical constraints, leadership preferences, the hesitancy of most foreign suppliers to provide specific weapon systems, limitations on the development of adequate skill levels as a result of Taiwan’s short, two-year conscription system, and the lack of a professional, non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps.”³⁴ In other words, there are numerous obstacles to change.

Nevertheless, outside observers and Taiwan’s government organs accord reform a high degree of importance in how they frame the ROC’s defense policy. The MND specifically admits that reforms and improvements are vital to the national defense, as evidenced by the identification of “modernization and transformation” as one of its national defense challenge areas.

Under the rapid development of modern military technologies, the ROC Armed Forces face a changing and challenging military environment. In the future, if we want to take the initiative and defeat a stronger enemy with comparatively smaller forces our military forces must be adept at the operational pattern of the information age, fully comprehend the characteristics of the digitized battlefield, and manage to strengthen critical fighting components ... The immediate tasks for the ROC Armed Forces are to seize the opportunities of reform to accelerate the transformation pace of critical fighting components, dominate a new comparative advantage of quantity and quality, prevent the military imbalance in the Taiwan Strait, and safeguard our national security.³⁵

The widespread consensus for reform and change points to something larger: the importance of change—whether called democratization in the political sphere, or reform and transformation in the military—to Taiwan’s national defense in recent years. The debate over the need for, and extent of, reform in the ROC military resonates with the larger changes in Taiwan’s politics and society over much the same time period. In the end, many of these changes were or are enabled by changing individual conceptions or the common consensus,

³⁴ Ibid., 32.

³⁵ MND, 61.

and when one speaks of changing how people think, education is a key component.

2.5 The United States and “Software” Reform

“Software” reform has been a significant part of the reforms in the U.S. and Taiwan defense relations since the mid-1990s. Observers agree that many of the reforms center on defense “software” rather than the traditional focus on the hardware of military equipment. As Chase notes, “as the U.S.-Taiwan security relationship has evolved over the past five years, the focus of cooperation has shifted increasingly to ‘software’ issues, such as training and education, defense policy dialogue, the reform of Taiwan’s defense bureaucracy, and assessments that are designed to help the island enhance the capabilities of its military, improve its procurement procedures, and better integrate the weapons it purchases from the United States.”³⁶ In one sense, the U.S.-based training and education for Taiwanese officers this thesis discusses is not a discrete, incremental reform, but a seeding source intended to spread across the other “software” issues that Chase notes. When Swaine and Mulvenon, above, write about the need to increase the “level and type of professional military interactions with foreign powers,” they include “both formal and informal military dialogues with foreign senior military officers and strategists, Taiwan’s participation in foreign military education programs, direct contacts between military operations (through training exchanges, etc.) and whenever possible, combined unit exercises of various types.”³⁷ Thus, participating in foreign military education is a key part of an overall defense strategy, especially in two ways: first, it can facilitate all of the above military interactions listed (in terms of fostering and normalizing dialogues with foreign officers, and building the contacts and skills needed for more direct operational interaction), and second, considering that the major foreign defense partner is the United States, it helps deepen the defense relation with the U.S.

It’s worth recalling that the U.S. pursues a defense relationship with Taiwan despite the tension it brings to the U.S.-China relationship. As Chase puts it, “America’s unofficial relationship with the island, especially U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation, is peculiarly

³⁶ Chase, 163.

³⁷ Swaine and Mulvenon, 13.

controversial and divisive for Washington and Beijing.”³⁸ Nevertheless, the cooperation has reached its deepest level in decades:

The view of observers in Washington, Taipei, and Beijing is that the U.S.-Taiwan security relationship is closer today than it has been at any time since 1979. Taiwan’s status as the largest recipient of U.S. foreign military sales and training in the Pacific Command’s area of responsibility underscores this point.³⁹

Swaine notes the same point; in all, “there are reportedly now more ongoing U.S. military programs with Taiwan than with any major U.S. ally,” and the MND has established a dedicated organization, the U.S.-Taiwan Military Cooperation Group, in 2002 to manage the disparate projects that fall under the relationship.⁴⁰

In this context, it is useful to examine more closely the substance of the reforms urged by the U.S. and the degree of progress made. Dr. Michael Pillsbury, in a 2004 talk to the Institute for Taiwan Defense and Security Studies, outlined the steps of the growing U.S.-Taiwan defense cooperation and the role of reform in that relationship. Beginning in 1997 with the initial round of the “Monterey Talks” between the U.S. and Taiwan militaries, the two governments began to restructure and update the relationship through practical assessment rather than the older “shopping list” approach, wherein Taiwan would present its armament “wish list” for U.S. consideration. The second major step was the U.S. introduction, in 1998 and at Taiwan’s invitation, of the concepts of “Net Assessment and strategic planning,” followed by the first, in 1999, of what grew to be over a dozen U.S. survey teams to visit Taiwan. The survey teams, which grew from an idea to have U.S. military “operators” (i.e. officers directly involved in warfighting, such as pilots or combat arms officers) come to the field in Taiwan and discuss requirements with Taiwanese officers in an environment “free of policy constraints or prejudices about Taiwan’s capabilities to master new systems,” relied on direct military-to-military contact in the field, rather than in conference rooms and filtered by higher echelons. These three steps, Pillsbury argues, “required much closer and more frequent consultations” between the two militaries than had driven the previous, faulty arms talks.⁴¹ In

³⁸ Chase, 162.

³⁹ Ibid., 163.

⁴⁰ Michael D. Swaine, “Taiwan’s Defense Reforms and Military Modernization Program: Objectives, Achievements, and Obstacles,” in *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis*, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 144.

⁴¹ Michael Pillsbury, “The US Role in Taiwan’s Defense Reforms,” remarks presented to the Institute for Taiwan

this newly energized bilateral environment, officers who comfortably speak a common language, whether actual (i.e. English) or metaphorical (i.e. the language of American military warfighting), would clearly seem to be assets.

The U.S. role in Taiwan's military reform has continued. In his updated analysis from 2004, Swaine outlines Taiwan's continuing focus on four main military reform areas, namely: civil-military relations; military modernization; improvements in national security and military strategy; and weapons and technology procurement.⁴² These four are all areas where the United States either cooperates with or serves as a model for, Taiwan's government, "to correct significant deficiencies ... to develop a more professional, capable, and transparent military that is more responsive to Taiwan's democratic leadership and more capable of meeting the growing challenge posed by the Chinese military."⁴³ These reforms also all have a large "software" component, in that they rely on changing attitudes or conceptions, and are therefore directly or indirectly affected by leadership and education. Because the influence of the U.S. is so great, there must be a method and medium of transmission, such that the recipients in Taiwan can accept the U.S. proposals, and the rationales and concepts behind them. As will be shown later in the paper, foreign-educated officers, especially if they studied in the U.S., can be prime conduits and advocates for these reforms.

2.6 Organizational Reform: Depoliticization and Civilian Control

Depoliticizing the ROC military and placing it more clearly under the control of the democratically elected government is one relatively successful reform urged both domestically and by the U.S. Prior to reform, the military had been "a highly insulated and secretive institution, under the direct and virtually exclusive control of the president and his immediate subordinates" in which "a very small number of professional military officers or former senior officers in very high political posts made all the significant military-related decisions."⁴⁴ Because in previous eras "the ROC military had functioned ... as a party-

Defense and Security Studies, February 29, 2004,
http://www.uscc.gov/researchpapers/2004/04_05_24_dr_pspeechintaipei_finall1.htm.

⁴² Michael D. Swaine, "Deterring Conflict in the Taiwan Strait: The Successes and Failures of Taiwan's Defense Reform and Modernization Program," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Carnegie Paper Number 46, July 2004, 3, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1573>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

controlled army in service to the Chinese Nationalist Party,” one result of the opposition Democratic People’s Party (DPP) coming to power was the impetus to institutionalize “democratic, civilian control of the military” in order to ensure “that the military would obey any non-KMT-led government that might win election in the future.”⁴⁵ Two major pieces of legislation, the National Defense Law and Ministry of National Defense Organization Law, had three overlapping aims: 1) depoliticization of the military; 2) the creation of a single civilian chain of command that gave the Legislative Yuan the authority to question the military on operational matters; and 3) the development of civilian expertise within the MND.⁴⁶ Swaine notes that “U.S. assistance was critical in this effort to increase civilian control.”⁴⁷ Pillsbury notes that at a private meeting in 2001, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and ROC Defense Minister Tang Yaoming, reportedly discussed civilian control of the military.⁴⁸ In 2004 James Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in Congressional testimony to the House International Relations Committee, praised Taiwan’s implementation of these two laws as “a signal achievement long sought by the US.” He continued by urging “the full implementation of civilian control over the military and the development of civilian expertise on security and military affairs.”⁴⁹

Although the first two of these three aims of the legislation have been relatively successful, the third is still a work-in-progress. Insular military culture is one barrier, because of the “lack of civilian expertise on military issues” due to, among other reasons, “the simple fact that the teaching of military-related matters has been carried out exclusively within the professional military system.”⁵⁰ Even though the MND met the 2003 target of one-third staffing by civilians, the majority of these civilians were retired military officers.⁵¹

2.7 Institutional Reform: Jointness, Professionalization and Planning

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁸ Pillsbury..

⁴⁹ U.S. House, International Relations Committee, *Taiwan* Hearing, “Statement of Assistant Secretary James Kelly,” April 21, 2004, http://wwwa.house.gov/international_relations/108/Kel042104.htm.

⁵⁰ Swaine 2004, 5.

⁵¹ Ibid., 6.

Internal reforms, reorganization, streamlining and modernization are another focus of military reform. Reducing the overall influence of the ground forces, reducing the “stove-piped” nature of Taiwan’s largely separate services by emphasizing “joint” warfighting instead of single-service approaches, moving to an all-volunteer force, and the establishment of a more professional noncommissioned officer corps in order to improve training and give more opportunities to junior officers, have all been discussed.⁵² U.S. influence is apparent in all of these suggestions, as they mirror the lessons learned by the U.S. military in the last thirty years. For instance, writing in *Taiwan Defense Affairs*, Kun-Yi Wang, Yu-Ming Cai and Wen-Chung Chai call for learning from U.S. experience with joint operations, suggesting that Taiwan establish a “Center for Joint Operations,” to fulfill the same role in joint doctrine and concept development that the U.S. Joint Forces Command has played.⁵³

In addition to the in-depth surveys already mentioned, the U.S. has provided mobile training teams and assistance in areas such as battle management, joint air defense doctrine, missile defense, logistics, information warfare, defense-related modeling and simulation, and since 2001, has sent observers to Taiwan’s annual military exercises.⁵⁴ Although Swaine assesses that some progress has been made, progress remains slow and serious problems in “coordination, communication, integration, and planning among Taiwan’s fighting units” remain.⁵⁵ Moreover, what Swaine finds to be perhaps most troubling “is that Taiwan depends on the [U.S.] for the momentum behind its effort to carry out improvements in both hardware capabilities and supporting ‘software.’”⁵⁶

At the same time, Swaine acknowledges that it may be more important “for Taiwan to strengthen its strategic planning process than simply to acquire various new weapons and weapons systems, streamline the military structure, or more effectively coordinate military operations.”⁵⁷ This effort is perhaps the most fundamental of all, because the “software” it seeks to change is the thought process behind national security decision-making:

⁵² Ibid., 7.

⁵³ Kun-Yi Wang, Yu-Ming Cai and Wen-Chung Chai, “Joint Operations and Taiwan’s Armed Forces Transformation,” *Taiwan Defense Affairs*, vol. 5, no.1 (Autumn 2004), 119.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 8-9.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Without a comprehensive, integrated national security and strategic planning system, it becomes extremely difficult to link threat perceptions to strategic priorities, military missions, operational doctrine, and force structure requirements in a way that maximizes the ability of Taiwan's scarce military resources to protect vital national interests.⁵⁸

Because of their decades of isolation from the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs," senior ROC military officers "hold a very parochial attitude toward military strategy and doctrine," and in the "absence of a more sophisticated, comprehensive, and integrated defense strategy," major decisions on arms purchases, doctrine, and force structure and the like "become prey to the political and personal motivations and biases of senior political leaders ... the vagaries of interservice rivalries ... and the opportunities and pressures presented by the [U.S.] as Taiwan's sole security partner and source of its major military weapons systems."⁵⁹ A more transparent and systematic planning system would "provide a much more credible and convincing set of standards for determining the critical elements of Taiwan's overall military modernization and reform effort" and would "permit Taiwan's military to make a better case to the [U.S.], the LY, and other interested and influential players regarding its weapon requirements."⁶⁰

To these ends, Taiwan has studied and to some extent adopted "the integrated and robust national security and military strategic planning system used by the U.S. executive branch and the [DOD]." The MND has adopted a Strategic Planning Directorate and an Integrated Assessment Office, both modeled after similar U.S. DOD offices, and is using defense modeling and simulation techniques developed by the U.S. Pacific Command.⁶¹

Several themes emerge from the above description of ROC reform efforts. First, clearly, interaction with the U.S. is a driving factor in Taiwan defense reform. In 2003, the U.S. took the unprecedented step of publicly recommending to Taiwan priorities in defense spending. The U.S. DOD urged Taiwan's continuing acquisition of command-and-control systems, in order to bring about a new benefit: "the ability of Taiwan to begin to cooperate with the US

⁵⁸ Ibid., 11-12.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 13.

forces and other potential security partners if necessary in wartime.”⁶² Given that the tools and methods above are being adopted from U.S. models and sources, it stands to reason that officers fluent in English would benefit this substantial interaction.

Second, however, is the multifaceted emphasis on abstracts like doctrine, training, analysis, modeling, planning, simulation and the like, rather than discussing hardware issues such which weapon systems to purchase. The adoption of foreign military concepts and practices, even if adapted for local conditions, would seem to require interlocutors who can understand the concepts fully enough in their original form in order to apply and adapt them in Taiwan. Foreign-educated officers would seem to be ideal candidates for this role. Moreover, officers conversant or fluent in the language and culture of their country’s largest defense supporter can fulfill a more prosaic but no-less-vital role in facilitating the military-to-military exchanges and discussions that Dr. Kurt Campbell, in 1999 Congressional testimony stated, “enhance [U.S.] ability to assess Taiwan’s longer term defense needs and develop well-founded security assistance policies” and which “also enhance Taiwan’s capacity for making operationally sound and cost effective acquisition decisions.”⁶³ However, while it is true that many foreign-educated officers do fulfill such a role, the reality is that the overall reform effort, and both these officers themselves and their role in it, face obstacles.

2.8 Reforming Military Culture

Observers often cite Taiwan’s military culture itself as ripe for reform. Swaine assesses that many of the above problems are compounded by a military culture that is “highly cautious, conservative, and risk averse.”⁶⁴

In this culture, subordinate officers and soldiers hesitate to make even minor decisions without the approval of higher ups. Innovation and initiative are not highly prized at any level of the system, and the existing NCO corps is not given the responsibility and authority appropriate to their position as critical intermediaries between the senior officer corps and ordinary soldiers. As a result,

⁶² Pillsbury.

⁶³ U.S. House, International Relations Committee, *Taiwan, the PRC, and the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act* Hearing, “Statement of Dr. Kurt Campbell,” 15 September 1999, <http://www.hongkong.usconsulate.gov/uscn/others/1999/0915.htm>.

⁶⁴ Swaine 2004, 21.

many structural and procedural reforms, as well as acquired military systems, do not realize their intended potential.⁶⁵

Chien Chung, writing a critique specifically of ROC Air Force culture, points to several aspects of military culture needing transparency and liberalization to improve, including the need for officers “to serve and listen to [their] men more” in order “to manage and lead [their] men more effectively,” to abandon the attitude of “[h]iding the evil and promoting the good” and embrace a transparent approach to wrongdoing and scandal, and to encourage risk-taking by remembering that “the carrot should accompany the stick at all times.” In addition, he also advocates for the system “to be transformed to serve Taiwan and not pursue the parochial interests” of the ROCAF only.⁶⁶ Chung also advocates that there should be “more encouragement and less compulsion within the service” and that “ROCAF commanders should encourage their men to be more creative.”⁶⁷ As will be shown by their comments, some U.S.-trained officers adopt similar attitudes from their time abroad, and are willing to put their ideas into practice. Some of them also speak on the conservatism of military culture and its impediments to change.

Swaine and Mulvenon suggested that success of the reform movement would “require deeper conceptual, attitudinal, and structural changes in the system” and that strong political and military support from top leadership would be necessary to overcome the “deeply rooted interests that resist such changes.”⁶⁸ At the same time, U.S. proponents of increased defense aid have seen education as one key to improvement, and by extension, changing the military culture. In 2003, Heritage Foundation analyst John Tkacik called on the U.S. to “help Taiwan improve military education and training.”⁶⁹ A few years earlier, Congress proposed in the 1999 Taiwan Security Enhancement Act to require that the “Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the military departments shall make every effort to reserve additional positions for Taiwan military officers at the National Defense University and other professional military education schools ... and for prospective Taiwan military officers at the United States

⁶⁵ Chien Chung, “Military culture and air force restructuring,” in *Taiwan’s Security and Air Power: Taiwan’s defense against the air threat from Mainland China*, ed. Martin Edmonds and Michael M. Tsai (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 157.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁶⁸ Swaine and Mulvenon, 149.

⁶⁹ John J. Tkacik, “Asian Security: Taiwan and China,” Heritage Foundation, 121, http://www.heritage.org/Research/Features/agenda_asian.cfm.

Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy.”⁷⁰ Similarly, the Act called for the Secretary of Defense to implement a plan for the enhancement of programs and arrangements for operational training and exchanges of senior officers between the U.S. and Taiwanese militaries, “for work in threat analysis, doctrine, force planning, operational methods, and other areas.”⁷¹ Although this act was never adopted, U.S. military academies did begin accepting Taiwanese cadets, as will be discussed further. Officers from Taiwan also continue to participate in US PME programs, and the operational training and exchanges between the two militaries continue to mature.

Such assistance has had to walk a fine line as well. As Chase states, “[t]he overriding policy objective for the United States is preventing conflict in the Taiwan Strait.”⁷² Assisting Taiwan poses a challenge to the U.S. to help Taiwan “to improve its capabilities without exceeding the boundaries of its understandings with Beijing in a way that could spark the very crisis it was trying to prevent.”⁷³ Education and improvements to “software” in the form of doctrine, jointness and the like are arguably less visible to the PRC than the large-scale transfer of advanced weapons. Likewise, the concepts behind the Revolution in Military Affairs and recent U.S. prosecution of campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq are available to study, even if not all the hardware that enabled them is.

2.9 Pragmatic Diplomacy

In addition to its core military relationship with the U.S., Taiwan has tried to cope with its diplomatic isolation in other ways. In foreign policy, Taiwan has a stake in maintaining and expanding contact with as many other states and international bodies as possible in whatever ways possible given the international constraints, in order to enhance “Taiwan’s political-diplomatic-economic presence in and value to the international community.”⁷⁴ Contact can include “a wide range of both official and unofficial, nondiplomatic ‘substantive’

⁷⁰ Introduced in 1999, the final action of this bill was to be placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar after passage in the House on February 1, 2000. This citation references its final form. U.S. House, 106th Congress, 2nd Session, H.R. 1838, Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, April 12, 2000, available via search at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/multicongress/multicongress.html>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Chase, 164.

⁷³ Ibid., 167.

⁷⁴ Swaine and Mulvenon, 9.

political, cultural, and economic ties with other states and international bodies, using a variety of formulations and mechanisms.”⁷⁵

The “pragmatic diplomacy” of the Lee Deng-Hui era, which set aside the zero-sum direct diplomatic competition with Beijing, accepted many different types of representation, ties and contacts with foreign governments, “from full and formal diplomatic representation ... to extremely informal and unofficial contacts and relations.”⁷⁶ Insofar as these types of relationships continue today, pragmatic diplomacy “bolsters the ROC’s position that it is a political entity, undermines the PRC’s claim of sovereignty over the island, dampens sentiment for Taiwanese independence, and promotes Taiwan’s economic prosperity and social stability.”⁷⁷ Taiwanese officers participating in foreign education effectively reinforce the model of pragmatic diplomacy in that they are employees of the ROC government participating in an unofficial activity that nevertheless has the potential to influence a niche influential target group.

2.10 Democratization

The role of democratization, like pragmatic diplomacy, is another external legacy of the Lee era that also relates to the foreign education of Taiwanese officers. The relationships and parallels between Taiwan’s democratization and the foreign education of its officers are worth examining. For instance, U.S. officials such as Chas Freedman point out that the defense cooperation between the U.S. and Taiwan has been strengthened by, and is currently predicated upon, Taiwan’s democratization, who said “[a]s Taiwan’s economic prosperity has advanced and its democratization has proceeded, it has had an easier and easier task of selling itself in the United States, since it has, in fact, become increasingly admirable as a society, and its natural affinities with Americans have grown, rather than diminished.”⁷⁸ Swaine and Mulvenon point out that since Chen Shui-bian’s 2000 election, Taiwan has increased its emphasis on promoting democracy and increasing participation in non-governmental organizations, in order to “to increase further international respect for Taiwan among liberal

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁷⁷ Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, *Taiwan’s Security in the Changing International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), 128.

⁷⁸ Chase, 165.

democracies and thereby hopefully strengthen the commitment of the United States, Japan, and other Asian and Western democratic states to the security and prosperity of the island.”⁷⁹ In recent years, U.S. officials have repeatedly and publicly cited Taiwan’s democratization as laudatory, a model for other Asian nations, and a source of common values between the two countries. Speaking on U.S.-Taiwan relations in his testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Asst. Secretary Kelly said:

Taiwan is a success story for democracy in Asia and around the world. We feel strongly that others can benefit from knowing more about Taiwan’s achievements. We will explore with our friends in Taiwan how they may be able to promote their story to a global audience, and how we can help to make Taiwan’s instructive example available to all countries that are attempting to institute democratic reforms.⁸⁰

This language of shared values also permeates the expression of U.S. military support for Taiwan. In the 2005 “sail away” ceremony for Taiwan’s newly acquired Kidd-class destroyers held in South Carolina, an American brigadier general stated that:

Our long relationship is based upon shared values and common principles. We are both peace loving peoples, nurturing our respective democracies, dedicated to the rule of law, and fully committed to human rights ... we gather here today to say farewell to these two warships and their crews as they journey home to Taiwan proud emblems of the commitment of the democratic society of Taiwan to defend itself.⁸¹

Again, in the proposed (but never enacted) “Taiwan Security Enhancement Act,” the U.S. Congress cited Taiwan’s “major political transformation” and “true multiparty democracy with a political system separate from and totally unlike that of the People’s Republic of China” among the reasons behind the legislation.⁸² Likewise, the Heritage Foundation’s

⁷⁹ As quoted by Swaine and Mulvenon, 37.

⁸⁰ U.S. House, International Relations Committee, *Taiwan* Hearing, “Statement of Assistant Secretary James Kelly,” April 21, 2004, http://wwwa.house.gov/international_relations/108/Kel042104.htm.

⁸¹ John R. Allen, “Remarks for Taiwan Kidd-class Destroyer Sail Away Ceremony,” Charleston, South Carolina, October 29, 2005, <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/news/officialtext/viewer.asp?ID=2005110201&GROUP=BG>.

⁸² U.S. House, 106th Congress, 2nd Session, H.R. 1838, Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, April 12, 2000, available via search at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/multicongress/multicongress.html>.

Tkacik also argued in 2003 that U.S. should “treat Taiwanese officials and diplomatic institutions with the dignity befitting Asia’s most vibrant democracy.”⁸³

In other words, democracy strengthens Taiwan’s ties to Western countries, and as this thesis will show, democracy has traditionally and deliberately been part of the curriculum provided to foreign officers by the U.S. Democratization increases the moral weight of Taiwan’s call for defense aid, and strengthens the similarities and bonds between ROC and foreign country military professionals.

Foreign education has already proven important for Taiwan’s development, and the potential similarities between development in the political sphere and development in the military are intriguing. The gradual “changing of the guard” from a KMT- and Mainlander-refugee-led government to a more pluralistic political system reflected, in part, the influence of overseas education on a new generation:

Over time, younger, better educated, more pragmatic and specialized civilian leaders and bureaucrats who were more oriented toward the local affairs of Taiwan and the requirements for economic and social development largely replaced the traditional Mainlander elite of ideologues, party professionals, and military men. A large number of these leaders held advanced college degrees—many from the United States—in the natural sciences, engineering, and especially the social sciences, humanities, and the law, and few had any meaningful experience in the armed forces.⁸⁴

This phenomenon in the civil sector demonstrates the importance of foreign education to Taiwan’s development as a whole, and buttresses the argument that overseas education can effect change in the military as well.

In the political arena, Swaine and Mulvenon claim that the two major parties share many basic similarities in defense policies, such that “[f]irst, and perhaps foremost, all ROC leaders are clearly committed to the development and maintenance of an effective military.”⁸⁵ Consecutive ROC leaders have sought to “strengthen Taiwan’s security from attack or coercion by acquiring or developing the weapons and support systems of a more efficient, modern military, and by developing closer military ties with the United States through arms

⁸³ Tkacik, 122.

⁸⁴ Swaine and Mulvenon, 55.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

sales and defense dialogues.”⁸⁶ The Chen regime has continued Lee Teng-hui-era policies “including the restructuring, downsizing, and streamlining of the military, [and] efforts to place the armed forces more clearly under the jurisdiction of the civilian government.”⁸⁷

In other areas of convergence, the two major parties, the KMT and the DPP, have also encouraged “increased people-to-people contacts and greater efforts by Taiwan to communicate its message to the international community, to gain the support and understanding of ordinary people around the world.”⁸⁸ Both parties have also proposed “the substantial exchange of military intelligence with countries such as the United States and Japan and the establishment of direct and secure communications with their forces.”⁸⁹ Obviously, the foreign education of military officers helps to achieve both of these goals, whether by officers making people-to-people contacts or by being more able to cooperate and communicate both basically (through common languages) or conceptually (through a shared conceptual vocabulary).

To sum up, Taiwan’s national security relies both directly on its military component and indirectly on difficult-to-measure, intangible assets such as its democratization and the political and military will to continue reform. Reform, strongly urged and influenced by the U.S., is widely seen as one key to improving the ROC Armed Forces in order to deter the PRC military threat, but reform efforts face limiting factors, such as limited resources and cultural resistance to change. Reforms focus on changing “software” issues, including improvements in planning, analysis, and joint warfighting. As will be shown, foreign-educated officers can serve as an important component of these reforms, but will themselves face some of the constraints that challenge reform overall.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 40.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 58.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 61.