



The Reverberations of Vanquishment: Why Indo-Pacific Influence Depends on Taiwan

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Abstract

Irrespective of what practical approach the US follows, Taiwan's military value will place few dangers or exact similar costs. However, most Chinese submarines are poor-endurance diesel-electrical boats that might have difficulty functioning from that range. The US might probably, intend to increase its efforts to interrupt China's satellites. China's submarines can also take advantage of the more specific targeting information gathered by hydrophones as well as satellites, considerably enhancing their efficiency against US surface crafts. Beijing's increasing missile capabilities depict inland airplanes along with their regional bases as heightened vulnerable, compelling the US to depend more heavily on airplanes and missiles fired from the ships. Finally, Taiwan's exceptional military value constitutes challenges for all the three US grand approaches.

Nevertheless, once a battle is stated, Beijing's most refined means of surveillance-the large continental radars which enable it to "watch" beyond the horizon-are tend to be destroyed quickly. Indeed, Taiwan's military worth strengthens the debate about keeping Island away from China's grip. However, the matter is not only that Taiwan's considerable military importance presents challenges for any USA's global strategy.

Keywords: *China, US, Taiwan, Hydrophones, Nuclear power, Submarines.*

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I. Introduction

Of all the complex issues that might trigger an armed conflict between China and the US, Taiwan is at the top of the list. The possible geopolitical impacts of the war might be severe and intense. Taiwan-*'an unsinkable aircraft carrier and submarine tender,'* according to the US Army General Douglas MacArthur-has a significant, many times unrecognized military norm as a 'portal' to the Philippine's sea, an important arena for safeguarding the three significant countries, i.e., Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea from potential disturbance or attack from China. There is an unsurety that China might emerge triumphant from the war for Taiwan-or such disputes or clashes would end in a day or month; it might continue for years and devitalize China's economy, similarly to what happened to USSR after the Cold War. However, if China seizes Taiwan's control and sets up its military base there, China's military position could enhance considerably.

China's ocean surveillance mechanisms as well as submarines, particularly taking hold of Taiwan, might be a blessing to Chinese militaristic strength. Even in the absence of any primary technological or military advancements, the occupancy of Taiwan might enhance China's capacity to hinder US naval and air operations in the Philippine Sea and, therefore, restrict the US's capacity to protect its Asian allies. Moreover, if, in the coming years, China were to expand its nuclear strength by developing an enormous fleet of silent nuclear attacks along with guided missile submarines, stationing them on the Island might empower Beijing to intimidate and endanger Northeast Asian seaways along with empowering its sea-based nuclear warheads.

Indeed, Taiwan's military worth strengthens the debate about keeping Island away from China's grip. The strength of that case, although, relies on a number of components, in particular, whether one presupposes that Beijing might follow further increment and enlargement of the territory following the occupation of Taiwan along with establishing long-term military and technological installations needed to take advantage of Taiwan. It hinges on the broader advancement of the US-China policy too. Meanwhile, the US can continue its devotion to its present stance of restricting the advancement of Beijing's power and authority using a combined political obligation to US allies and partners in Asia and substantial advancement of military deployments. Alternatively,

it may follow a gentler approach which can help retain obligations to the core treaty allies and reduce earlier deployed armed forces. Alternatively, it may mitigate or minimize all such obligations and duties against a more controlled policy or approach. Despite which of these three approaches the US follows. However, Beijing's hold on the Island might restrict the US armed forces' capability to function in the Pacific and could endanger the US interests in that area.

However, the matter is not only that Taiwan's considerable military importance presents challenges for any USA's global strategy. Regardless of what the US does- whether it keeps Taiwan away from Beijing's grip or not- it will be compelled to take chances and bear the expenses in its stand-off with China. As the site where all the predicaments of US policy against Beijing collide, Taiwan exhibits among the most challenging and most threatening issues across the globe. In other words, the US has some good choices and numerous bad ones that may create disaster.

Taiwan-in the balance

China's invasion of Taiwan might change the balance of power in terms of the military in the Asia region in numerous ways. Suppose Beijing were to take control of Taiwan quickly and smoothly. In that case, the large number of military personnel directed toward the island campaign could be released to follow other military aims and objectives. Beijing may also be positioned to take hold of the Island's strategic means, including military assets and semi-conductor industries, which will strengthen China's military muscle. Nevertheless, if Beijing were to find itself bamboozled or stuck in a lingering victory or triumph over the Island, the effort at involuntary or forced alliance could be transformed into a considerable pull-on China's power.

Nevertheless, any campaign that brings Taiwan under the control of Beijing may enable China to position significant military assets on the Island- underwater surveillance systems, submarines, and linked air and coastal defense systems. China is currently the major international military competitor to the US, with a total of 31,34,000 military personnel, 17,764 land forces, including Tanks, Armoured vehicles, Rocket Projectors, etc., and 3566 aircraft (including 281 Attack Helicopters).ⁱⁱ

If these were positioned on the Island, such assets would do much more than merely expand Beijing's reach towards the east at the length of the Taiwan Strait, which is a 180 wide detaching the Island and continental Asia, as could be the case if China positions aircraft, missiles, UAVs, other advance weapon assets in Taiwan. Underwater Surveillance and submarines, on the contrary, would enhance China's capability to hinder US activities in the Philippine Sea. This area can be crucial in future conflict scenarios involving China.

The most seeming scenarios are based on the US protecting its alliesⁱⁱⁱ besides the alleged primary island chain off the Asian continent, which originates in North Japan and goes Southwest *via* Taiwan as well as the Philippines before bending towards Vietnam. For instance, US naval exercises in these waters might be necessary to safeguard Japan against possible Beijing's coercion in the East China Sea along with the Southern border of Ryukyu Island (a chain of Japanese islands stretching southwest from Kyushu to Taiwan).^{iv} These types of US operations might be essential in most situations and circumstances for protecting the Philippines, as well as for any situation that could result in a US attack on China, particularly major armed conflict on the Korean mainland. US marine exercises in the Philippine Sea would turn into further significance. Beijing's increasing missile capabilities depict inland airplanes along with their regional bases as heightened vulnerable, compelling the US to depend more heavily on airplanes and missiles fired from the ships.

Suppose a conflict in the Pacific erupts at present. In that case, Beijing's capability of conducting powerful and efficient long-range strikes- that is, strikes aiming at the US navy at a distance that exceeds the 'field of vision' or horizon might be more restricted than what is generally presumed. Beijing might be capable of targeting forward-deployed US aircraft carriers as well as other ships in an initial attack. Nevertheless, once a battle is stated, Beijing's most refined means of surveillance- the large continental radars which enable it to "watch" beyond the horizon- are tend to be destroyed quickly. The similar goes for Chinese surveillance planes or ships near US naval forces.

Chinese satellites would probably not compensate for such damages. Employing methods honed by the United States during the Cold War, US naval forces would likely be capable of controlling their radar and communications signatures, avoiding detection by Chinese satellites that listen for electronic emissions. Without the intel from these specialized signal-gathering facilities, Chinese imaging satellites would have to hunt indiscriminately across the massive belt of the ocean for US troops.

In these circumstances, US military functioning in the Philippine Sea would face a genuine but tolerable risk of long-range strikes, as well as US officials would likely feel no instant pressure to aggravate the conflict by striking Chinese satellites.

If Beijing were to snatch the control of Taiwan, although the situation would look completely different. It might place underwater microphones, known as hydrophones, in the waters of Taiwan's east coast, which are much deeper than the waters China controls, at present, within the first island chain.^v Positioned at the proper depth, such specialized sensors might hear outward and track down the low-frequency sounds of US surface

craft thousands of miles away, allowing Beijing to pinpoint their location more accurately with satellites and target them with missiles.^{vi} These abilities may compel the US to limit its surface crafts to places beyond the hydrophones' capacity; otherwise, they perform dangerously, and escalators strike on Chinese satellites. Neither of these alternatives is pleasing.

Beijing's hydrophones off Taiwan might be challenging for the US to vandalize or destroy. Just highly specialized submarines or automated underwater vehicles might incapacitate them, and China might be in a position to defend itself in several ways, particularly mines. Even if the US did accomplish in damaging China's hydrophone cables, its repair ships might repair them beneath the lid of air defenses China might place on the Island.

A better opportunity for hampering the Chinese hydrophone surveillance system would be to attack the defenseless processing facilities where the information comes on land through fiber-optic cables. Nevertheless, those facilities might be challenging to locate. The cables could be hidden on land or beneath the sea, and nothing differentiates the structures and buildings where data handling is done from identical indescribable military buildings. The series of possible US targets might contain hundreds of individual buildings within numerous well-protected military sites around Taiwan.

The grip on Taiwan can do more than strengthening Beijing's Ocean surveillance capabilities. It would also provide Beijing with an upper hand in an underwater fight. With Taiwan on the friendly side, the US can safeguard against Beijing's submarine assault by positioning marine sensors strategically to pick up the noise submarine's discharge. The US will possibly station these upward-facing hydrophones-for hearing at shorter distances^{vii} at the base of a "small bottleneck" at the entry points of the Philippine Sea, along with gaps among the Philippines, Ryukyu Islands, as well as Taiwan. At such a short distance, such mechanisms can quickly identify even the most noiseless submarines, enabling the US air force as well as military personnel to track them. At times of crisis, that might hinder Chinese submarines from getting a "clear shot" at US submarines at the beginning of the conflict, when forward deployed^{viii} US submarines or navy would be highly exposed and would be an easy target.

If Beijing were to take control of Taiwan, although it might be able to position submarines and assist air as well as coastal defenses on the Island. Beijing's submarines might then be capable of slipping from their pens in Taiwan's eastern deep-water ports^{ix} right into the Philippine Sea, evading the contraction points where the US has deployed its hydrophones. China's defenses on Taiwan might also impede the US and its supporters from utilizing their best instrument for tracking submarines-naval patrol aircraft along with helicopters-equipped ships-around the Island, making it a whole lot easier for Chinese submarines to make the first move in a battle and lessening their casualty rate in a conflict. Chinese hold on Taiwan might have the additional benefit of lessening the distance between its submarines and their patrolling zones at an average of 670 nautical miles to zero, allowing China to control more submarines at any moment and launch further strikes on US forces. China's submarines can also take advantage of the more specific targeting information gathered by hydrophones as well as satellites, considerably enhancing their efficiency against US surface crafts.

Bottom of the Ocean

Eventually, uniting with Taiwan can enable Beijing even more substantial military advantages if it were to make an investment in a fleet of much more peaceful enhanced nuclear strikes and guided missile submarines.^x Guided from Taiwan's east coast, these submarines might empower Chinese nuclear impediment and enable it to jeopardize Northeast Asian shipping and naval routes in a conflict.

Presently, the Chinese submarine force is poorly prepared for combat against US allies' oil and maritime trade. International shipping has primarily tested against such dangers since it is sure to divert and redirect ships beyond the capacity of hostile forces. Even the closing of the Suez Canal between 1967 and 1975, which provided the shortest sea route between Asia and Europe^{xi}, did not immobilize world trade because ships could alternatively go around the Cape of Good Hope,^{xii} although at extra charges. This flexibility shows that China might need to target maritime lanes and routes as they migrated north or west around the Pacific Ocean, possibly nearby seaports in Northeast Asia. However, most Chinese submarines are poor-endurance diesel-electrical boats that might have difficulty functioning from that range. At the same time, its several greater endurance nuclear-powered subs are noisy and therefore easily detectable by the US hydrophones, which might be positioned along the alleged 'second island chain,'^{xiii} formed by Japan's Bonin Islands and Volcano Islands, in addition to the Mariana Islands (most notably Guam, an unincorporated American overseas territory with a heavily fortified military base), western Caroline Islands (Yap and Palau), and extends to Western New Guinea.^{xiv}

Likewise, Beijing's presently developed guided missile submarines do little to empower the Chinese nuclear deterrent. The guided missiles they contain can at best target Alaska along with the northwest corner of the US when launched from the first island chain.^{xv} Furthermore, since the submarines are defenseless against detection, they might struggle to reach open ocean areas where they might threaten the rest of the US.

Even a future Chinese submarine of much noiseless nuclear strike or cruise or guided missile installed submarines competent in dodging upward facing hydrophones along the second island chain would still have to bypass the outward facing hydrophones positioned at the exit gates of the first island chain. Such impediments and obstacles may empower the US to inflict casualties of China's enhanced nuclear-installed submarines leaving or coming to North Asian maritime routes and can considerably hamper the tasks entrusted to the Chinese Ballistic Missile Submarines, of which there would almost certainly be fewer.^{xvi}

However, suppose it were to take hold of Taiwan. In that case, Beijing might be capable of avoiding the US hydrophones installed on the first island chain, unleashing the potential of calmer and soundless submarines. Such submarines might immediately approach the Philippine Sea and be shielded by China's air and naval forces. A fleet of silent nuclear attack vessels positioned from Taiwan might also be capable of challenging the Northeast Asian seaways. Along with a fleet of silent cruise missile submarines, open access to the ocean might allow China to threaten the US with an attack from a sea more reliably.

Certainly, it is still to be determined whether Beijing can develop more enhanced silencing technologies or decipher numerous issues which can create trouble for nuclear-powered submarines. The significance of the anti-shipping as well as sea-based nuclear facilities is a matter of discussion, as their comparative effect will rely on what other facilities and abilities Beijing does or does not formulate as well as on what strategic objectives China will pursue eventually. Still, the approach of former major powers is enlightening. Nazi Germany, as well as the USSR, invested considerably in submarines, and the Soviet Union invested in ballistic missile submarines. The democratic rivals of these states sensed the danger of these underwater capabilities and massive beefed-up efforts to neutralize them. China's confiscation or capture of Taiwan might therefore provide Beijing with a variety of military advantages which, in the past, the USSR and Nazi Germany considered extremely valuable.

Absence of ample choices

A more comprehensive picture of Taiwan's military worth undoubtedly strengthens the discussion and debate on maintaining friendly relations with the Island. Moreover, how crucial that discussion should partially depend on what general approach US follows in Asia. Furthermore, whatever policy the US adopts, it will have to cope with difficulties and problems caused by the military advantages, which Taiwan can likely bestow on the country that controls it.

If the US continues its current approach of containing China, maintaining its relations with alliances^{xvii} along with advancing military deployments in Asia, protecting Taiwan can be excessively expensive. Nevertheless, the Island's military worth can provide China with a compelling reason for seeking incorporation and unification over the nationalistic impulses most frequently quoted. Thus, dissuading China might demand renouncing the long-standing US policy of strategic ambiguity about whether Washington would come to the Island's^{xviii} defense in favor of a crystal-clear obligation of military assistance.

However, terminating strategic ambiguity might incite the notable crunch the policy is intended to stop. It might intensify pressures for an arms race between the US and China in preparation for a war or conflict, heightening the pre-existing lethal competition between the two world powers. Moreover, even if the strategic policy were effective in hindering Beijing's effort to hold control of Taiwan, it could probably push China to make up for its military drawbacks in any other way, further intensifying tensions.

Alternately, the US could follow more compliant 'safety envelopes' which removes its obligation to Taiwan while maintaining its treaty alliances along with few forward-positioned armed forces in Asia. A strategy might lessen the risk of clash and conflict over Taiwan; however, it might bear other military expenses, again because of Taiwan's military value. US military might require carrying out their missions in a domain created even more hazardous by Beijing's submarines and hydrophones positioned on the Island's east coast. Therefore, the US should design decoys to mislead China's sensory machines, formulate *modus operandi* beyond their usual range, or plan to cut the wire connecting these machines to onshore processing facilities in the conflict situation. The US might probably, intend to increase its efforts to interrupt China's satellites.

Shall the US carry out this strategy, encouraging the US supporters and allies would become a far more challenging task? Specifically, because a grip on Taiwan might ensure Beijing's essential military benefits and advantages, Japan, the Philippines, as well as South Korea may demand convincing evidence of an ongoing US obligation. Japan may be worried that a weakened US capability to act on the Philippine Sea surface may give rise to advanced Chinese ferocity or attack abilities, particularly considering the vicinity of Japan's southernmost Island to Taiwan.

From a long-term perspective, US allies within the area may also be afraid of increasing China's incursion to shipping lanes, as well as fear that a powerful sea-based Beijing nuclear warning might lessen the reliability of US obligations to protect them from attacks. Foreknowledge of these threats might probably push US allies to request better comfort and reassurance from the US through rigorous defense agreements, further military assistance, along with more significant apparent US force deployments in the area, comprising nuclear weapons on or near the territories of its allies and maybe leagued with their regimes on nuclear planning. East

Asia might looklike what Europe did in the final phases of the Cold War, with US allies demanding displays of US obligations regardless of doubts and suspicions regarding the military balance of power. If the Cold War is any conduct, these measures may increase the threats of a nuclear upsurge in a conflict or war.

Lastly, the US may follow an approach that concludes its obligation to Taiwan along with reducing its military presence in Asia as well as other associations and alliance obligations within the region. Such a strategy might restrict immediate US military assistance to the protection of Japan or even decompress all US obligations and commitments in East Asia. However, even in the latter case, Taiwan's possible military value to Beijing could still have the possibility to develop hazardous regional movements. Anxious that a few of its islands could be next, Japan could fight to protect Taiwan, even though the US did not. The outcome could be a superpower conflict in Asia involving the US, with or without its consent. Such a conflict could be catastrophic. Moreover, disturbing the present sensitive equilibrium by yielding this militarily valuable Island can make such a war more seemingly, strengthening a center controversy and debate for the sake of present US's primary approach: that US alliance obligations as well as forward military presence exercise a dissuading and restricting impact on war in the region.

Finally, Taiwan's exceptional military value constitutes challenges for all the three US grand approaches. Whether the US hardens its obligation to Taiwan along with its allies in Asia or walks them back, completely or partly, Taiwan's prospects for altering the region's military flexibility and operability within the zone or further jeopardizing an arms race or even a direct conflict with Beijing. Such is the vicious attribute of the difficulty raised by Taiwan, which sits at the juncture of US-China relations, geopolitics, along with the military balance in Asia. Irrespective of what practical approach the US follows, Taiwan's military value will place few dangers or exact similar costs.

ⁱ(Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large 1950)

ⁱⁱ Information extracted from https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=china

ⁱⁱⁱ(Doshi 2021)

^{iv}(Ryukyu Island 2022)

^v(B. R. Talmadge, *The Consequences of Conquest* 2022)

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii}(B. R. Talmadge, *The Consequences of Conquest: Why Indo-Pacific Power Hinges on Taiwan July/August*)

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x(A. D. Talmadge 2021)

^{xi}(Fayrer 2021)

^{xii}(B. R. Talmadge, *The Consequences of Conquest: Why Indo-Pacific Power Hinges on Taiwan July/August*)

^{xiii} Ibid.

^{xiv}(*Island Chain Strategy* 2022)

^{xv}(B. R. Talmadge, *The Consequences of Conquest* 2022)

^{xvi} Ibid.

^{xvii}(Kausikan 2022)

^{xviii}(B. R. Talmadge, *The Consequences of Conquest: Why Indo-Pacific Power Hinges on Taiwan July/August*)

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