



NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
INFRASTRUCTURE AND
TRANSPORTATION
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
LAW AND BUSINESS
NATIONAL SECURITY
POPULATION AND AGING
PUBLIC SAFETY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
TERRORISM AND
HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: [Jump to Page 1](#) ▼

Support RAND

[Purchase this document](#)

[Browse Reports & Bookstore](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore the [RAND National Defense Research Institute](#)

View [document details](#)

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see [RAND Permissions](#).

This product is part of the RAND Corporation conference proceedings series. RAND conference proceedings present a collection of papers delivered at a conference or a summary of the conference. The material herein has been vetted by the conference attendees and both the introduction and the post-conference material have been reviewed and approved for publication by the sponsoring research unit at RAND.

CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS

New Opportunities and Challenges for Taiwan's Security

Roger Cliff, Phillip C. Saunders, Scott Harold

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE



The research described in this report was conducted within the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community under Contract W74V8H-06-C-0002.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011924227

ISBN: 978-0-8330-5149-3

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2011 RAND Corporation

Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Copies may not be duplicated for commercial purposes. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please visit the RAND permissions page (<http://www.rand.org/publications/permissions.html>).

Published 2011 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org>
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: order@rand.org

Summary

On November 7, 2009, the RAND Corporation, the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at National Defense University, and the Council for Advanced Policy Studies (CAPS) in Taipei held the conference “Cross-Strait Relations: New Opportunities and Challenges for Taiwan’s Security” at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The goal of the conference was to consider how a range of political, economic, and military factors are likely to shape Taiwan’s security over the coming decade. Phillip Saunders took the lead in developing the agenda for the conference, and INSS took responsibility for the organizational and logistic arrangements after Typhoon Morakot forced a relocation from the conference’s traditional setting, in Taiwan.

The conference brought together leading experts on political and military issues from both the United States and Taiwan and featured four panels. The first grappled with the opportunities created by improved cross-Strait relations and assessed what the domestic politics on both sides of the Strait are likely to support in terms of the current agenda. The second panel considered the potential for confidence-building measures (CBMs) to play a role in managing or reducing cross-Strait tensions. The third panel assessed key aspects of the cross-Strait military balance, with a focus on important conceptual questions and the impact of changes in specific Chinese and Taiwanese military capabilities. The fourth panel examined two alternate futures: one in which positive trends in cross-Strait political relations continue and another in which improvements in relations are reversed. It then explored how and why these futures might or might not come about.

Given the speculative nature and topicality of the subject, the presenters were asked to write short (five to six pages, single-spaced) papers. After the conference, they were asked to revise their papers in response to comments provided by the panel discussants and the editors of this volume. This volume presents the revised papers. Roger Cliff, assisted by Phillip Saunders and Scott Harold, took the lead in editing the papers and arranging for their publication.

The first panel, on the implications of recent improvements in cross-Strait relations, featured two papers. The first, by Alan Romberg of the Stimson Center, describes Beijing’s perspective on the recent improvements in cross-Strait relations. Romberg finds that, at least in the medium term, cross-Strait tensions should remain low, possibly even resulting in a peace accord at some point. Until formal unification is achieved, however, Taiwan’s independence will remain a mainland concern, and Beijing will therefore continue to maintain the military capability to deal with it. In response, Taiwan will continue to improve its defensive capabilities, and the United States will continue to sell arms and provide other military assistance to Taiwan. Nonetheless, it is possible that the growth of China’s military power could cause growing alarm in Taiwan and undermine the formal structures of cross-Strait peace.

The second paper, by Scott Kastner of the University of Maryland, analyzes the security implications of increasing economic integration between Taiwan and mainland China. Kastner finds that the consequences of growing economic interdependence are far from straightforward. Although it is possible that closer economic links

will reduce the danger of military conflict in the Taiwan Strait, it is not a given that this will happen. Moreover, regardless of the objective truth, the perceived security implications of increased economic integration with the mainland are highly contentious in Taiwan. Thus, it is unlikely that a consensus can be achieved in Taiwan in support of policies to further increase this integration.

The second panel, on the potential role of CBMs in improving cross-Strait stability and security, included three papers. The first, by Bonnie Glaser of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, analyzes China's experience in implementing CBMs with its other neighbors and seeks insights into how China might approach CBMs with Taiwan, as proposed by Chinese president Hu Jintao in December 2008. Glaser finds that common elements are likely to include the importance Beijing attaches to agreement on principles, its reliance on creating high-level political understandings prior to negotiating CBMs, and its preference for reciprocal force adjustments and constraints as opposed to unilateral actions. Nonetheless, the special circumstances of the cross-Strait relationship limit the applicability of China's experiences with its other neighbors.

The second paper of the panel, by Kwei-Bo Huang of National Chengchi University in Taiwan, describes Taiwan's view of the opportunities, obstacles, and challenges presented by cross-Strait CBMs. Huang finds that cross-Strait CBMs will help Taiwan achieve its strategic objectives of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, economic development and prosperity, enhanced relations with major powers, and participation in international organizations. Such developments will likely occur at a slow and cautious pace, however, due to the delicacy of the Taipei-Beijing relationship.

The final paper of the panel, by Steven Goldstein of Smith College, assesses the feasibility and utility of CBMs. Goldstein examines whether CBMs have historically played a constructive role in the reduction of tensions between international actors and analyzes the principal elements of Beijing's approach to cross-Strait confidence building. He concludes that formal CBMs are currently not only unlikely but also unnecessary and possibly even harmful to cross-Strait peace and stability.

The third panel examined the effect of changes in the military balance on cross-Strait relations. The first paper, by Christopher Twomey of the Naval Postgraduate School, analyzes the effects of China's increased military capabilities on politics and policy in Taiwan, as well as on U.S. policy toward Taiwan. Twomey first assesses the current balance of power among China, Taiwan, and the United States, then analyzes how successful each has been in achieving its goals in the Taiwan Strait. He concludes that the "substantial military capability enhancements by the [People's Republic of China] have not led to commensurate gains" in pursuit of its goals.

The second paper of the panel, by Bernard Cole of the National War College, reviews improvements in mainland China's naval capabilities from 2000 to 2010 and compares them to changes in Taiwanese and U.S. naval capabilities and posture over the same period. Cole finds that the Chinese navy's relative ability to execute a range of maritime missions has significantly improved over the past ten years and will very likely continue to improve in the years ahead. He concludes that Taipei must therefore resume making significant investments in

improving its defensive maritime posture and that Washington must also increase its emphasis on Asia if it is to ensure that it retains the capability to intervene decisively in a Taiwan scenario.

The third paper of the panel, by David Shlapak of RAND, examines the potential impact of Chinese conventional strike capabilities in a cross-Strait battle. Shlapak finds that these capabilities pose a serious and growing threat to the Taiwanese and U.S. air bases that would be needed to defend Taiwan. However, he identifies three promising means by which Taiwan and the United States might ameliorate this threat: ballistic missile defense systems, greater reliance on passive defenses, and dispersing Taiwan's fighter force across a large number of smaller air bases and highway strips.

The final paper of the panel, by Albert Willner of CNA, looks at the problem from the opposite perspective of the previous two papers and assesses the implications of recent and planned changes in Taiwan's defense posture. Willner finds that, while these changes are intended to make Taiwan's military more streamlined, efficient, and responsive to the people it defends, for political and budgetary reasons, many of the planned changes are unlikely to be implemented in the way that was originally envisioned. He recommends that the proposed changes to the defense posture be augmented by a vigorous and persuasive campaign to inform the Taiwanese public about continued threats to Taiwan.

The fourth and final panel of the conference explored longer-term (five to ten or more years in the future) challenges to security in the Taiwan Strait and possible responses to those challenges. The first paper, by Fu-Kuo Liu of National Chengchi University's Institute of International Relations, evaluates Taiwan's security challenges, strategic preparedness, and prospects for U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation. Liu finds that cross-Strait tensions have diminished significantly since 2008 but that Taiwan still faces three challenges: the potential effect of political transition in either Taiwan or mainland China, questions as to whether Beijing can be convinced to give up the option to use force against Taiwan, and challenges to Taiwan's ability to foster a closer political and security relationship with the United States.

The second paper of the panel, by Michael McDevitt of CNA, analyzes the implications for the United States of different development paths for the China-Taiwan relationship. He assesses that developments that reduce the possibility of a U.S.-China conflict over Taiwan are in the interest of the United States and, thus, expresses concern that a combination of impatience and overconfidence by Beijing could result in conflict. For this reason, he believes that the United States must continue to maintain the military advantage over China, even if it leads to greater tensions than might otherwise be the case.

The third paper of the panel, by Michael Glosny of the Naval Postgraduate School, examines the potential implications of deepened cross-Strait rapprochement for China's relations with the rest of Asia and the United States. Glosny argues that deeper rapprochement across the Strait will produce new uncertainties and apprehension in Asia and the United States over how an unconstrained China will use its increased power. The subsequent direction of PLA modernization, however, can either help alleviate these concerns or further exacerbate them, triggering strong countervailing balancing responses from the United States and within the region.

The final paper of the panel, by Michael Lostumbo of RAND, describes potential changes to Taiwan's defense program that would help deter an attack by exploiting operational challenges that mainland China's military would face in executing such an attack. Lostumbo identifies anti-ship cruise missiles, anti-armor munitions, and mines carried by missiles, rockets, or fired from artillery guns as promising defense acquisition candidates. He also recommends a strategy in which Taiwan uses its surface-to-air missiles for only brief periods, to protect its other forces when they are conducting offensive operations against mainland forces. He asserts that such changes can serve as powerful deterrents to Beijing belief that it can achieve an easy victory over Taiwan.