

China – Taiwan Crisis

Following a breakdown in the trade talks with the United States – in part because of the President being embroiled in the domestic impeachment crisis – and public statements of support for the mass protests in Hong Kong by the government of Taiwan, two days ago China launched large-scale military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, sending aircraft carriers, flying bombers around the island, and firing missiles within 35 miles off important Taiwanese ports. Taiwan commenced military demonstrations designed to showcase its ability to repel and invasion. These drills have included civilian-operated drones. The official news sources in China have ramped up rhetoric that Taiwan is sacred territory that China would never give up, and that it is only right and proper to use force to bring a renegade province under Beijing's control. Massive anti-Taiwanese protests have been organized across major cities in China supporting the government. Taiwan's government has responded by highlighting Beijing's duplicity and failure to abide by international agreements in its treatment of Hong Kong, and declaring that it will never allow itself to be subjugated in slow motion like that city. Several hours ago, a Chinese military aircraft flying close to the island was taken down by what appears to have been a drone, and Chinese missiles have destroyed a Taiwanese ship. The Taiwanese government has declared a state of emergency and is vowing to resist any invasion. You are directed to formulate United States policy. You are to analyze military and diplomatic options (or some combination, even possibly inaction), which may be unilateral or multilateral. You will assume that all present signs indicate that if left unchecked, the conflict will almost certainly escalate into a shooting war, which might activate certain provisions in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.

Research and Analysis

Your memo should begin with an introduction summarizing the few major points of your analysis that you want your busy readers to take away (Executive Summary). In the background section (Background of the Problem) frame the problem from your client's perspective (e.g., the President of the United States) by tracing its history up to the present. This section should be as concise as possible. Next, present your assumptions about the preferences of the players involved. Enumerate the options available to your client and predict their consequences (Options and Analysis). This section is the longest and most important: you should list options that you will not be recommending, and you should carefully evaluate possible consequences (good and bad) of each alternative, including an assessment of their relative likelihoods of success. You must make full use of the strategic tactics we have discussed in class. Finally, weigh the alternatives from your client's perspective, and recommend a course of action (Conclusions).

Mechanics

The memo should be typed, and at least 10 (but not more than 12) double-spaced pages long. You must endnote major sources of information and provide a bibliography.¹ These do not count toward the page limit. The memo must use a font size of 11 points, and margins of 1 inch all around. Submit a cleanly printed copy. It will be graded using the criteria on the course website.

¹ You may use Wikipedia in the course of your research but you must verify all information obtained there from other sources. You must scrupulously credit other people's ideas if you decide to use them in any way. You need not cite the lecture notes for the theoretical arguments.