

Taiwan's Call to Arms

By Richard D. Fisher Jr.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense issued its Quadrennial Defense Review Monday, which attempts to explain strategy, justify to legislators required future military force levels and gather support for all-important defense budgets. In doing so, Taiwan's generals are attempting to square the circle of Taiwan's tortured defense debate against the backdrop of China's growing military threat.

The ruling Kuomintang (KMT) government in Taipei has sent mixed signals about its defense intentions. When the KMT was in opposition earlier this decade, it opposed the defense programs of the Democratic Progressive Party government of former President Chen Shui-bian. But following the 2008 election that swept them back to power, the KMT came to support most of these same defense programs: patriot missile interceptors, conventional submarines and advanced F-16 jet fighters. For a while last year it appeared that a powerful faction in the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou might still oppose some of these programs, in favor of a "porcupine" strategy focused on strengthening the Army and building civil defenses to make Taiwan impossible for China's People's Liberation Army to swallow in a land invasion.

Mr. Ma has improved political relations with China. But the military threat is essentially unchanged. China's steady campaign of enticements, threats and deft use of its growing political power has proved effective. Beijing has formed its own coalition out of Taiwanese who are convinced that they cannot survive without greater economic access to China's markets and a relaxed political relationship. To this, Beijing has added a growing number of Americans who believe that China's cooperation is essential to U.S. interests from North Korea to the Persian Gulf. In each case, Beijing has persuaded

its new friends that reaching their goals requires diminishing support for Taiwan's defense.

China's strategy has had a tangible effect on U.S.-Taiwan relations. Former National Security Council East Asia Director Dennis Wilder, who served under George W. Bush, recently described the former President's policy on Taiwan arms sales as seeking to achieve "a golden mean—a robust package of arms sales that met Taiwan's immediate defense needs but was not perceived in Beijing as undermining the progress in cross-strait relations." From 2001 to 2008 this meant the sale of four air defense destroyers, 12 P-3 antisubmarine aircraft, upgrades for Patriot missiles and new

AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. It also meant a firm "no" to 66 new F-16 Block50 fighters—which are crucial to shifting the air power balance—and delays that could scupper the sale of eight conventional submarines that were promised in 2001. Washington did not even want Taiwan to develop its defenses by itself: The Bush administration reportedly tried to undermine Taiwan's fielding of a small force of indigenously developed land attack cruise missiles, intended solely to deter Chinese attack.

Meanwhile Chinese threats to Taiwan continue to grow. Since 2007 the number of ballistic and cruise missiles deployed against Taiwan has grown from about 1,000, according to a U.S. count, to about 1,500 in early 2009, according to an official at Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council. Massive missile strikes against Taiwan's air and naval bases would be intended to make the Taiwan Strait safe for the People's Liberation Army's air and naval forces.

Just this week several Web forums that track Chinese military issues have shown the first images of a new version of the Chengdu J-10 fighter that features new aerial combat optical systems and possibly an advanced radar, which would place this

fighter ahead of the comparable F-16A, Taiwan's most important fighter. Furthermore, the J-10 carries a missile that has a longer range than even the best missiles the U.S. has sold to Taiwan, and indeed the U.S. may not have a decisively superior missile itself. Should it secure air superiority the PLA may be tempted to invade Taiwan. As such, the continual upgrading of PLA amphibious army and marine units near Taiwan, and the construction of new large amphibious assault ships give the lie to China's oft-proclaimed peaceful intentions.

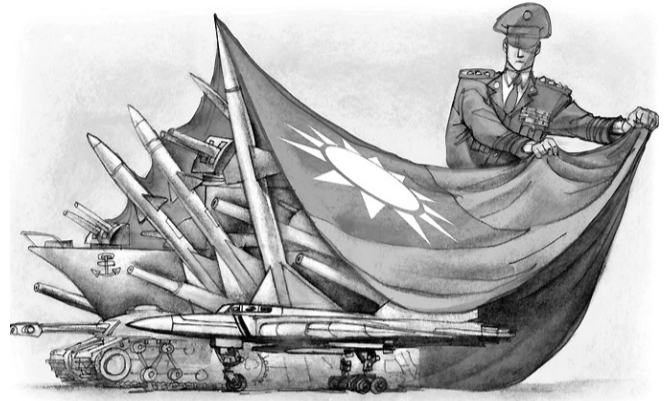
Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense, however, seems clear-eyed. It sees the growing military threats from China and the need for Taiwan to be able to handle them. Their defense review proposes a 60,000 cut in personnel, traded for improved firepower and a more politically attractive all-volunteer force. Both of these are expensive, and one will require continued willingness from Washington to meet Taiwan's needs. It puts to rest the army-centric "porcupine" debate by endorsing the need for more F-16s, a follow-on vertical take-off fifth generation fighter, and new submarines. And in a March 16 statement, one Taiwan General indicated continued support for their land attack cruise missile program.

Beijing, however, seeks to paralyze Washington by holding substantive military-to-military dialogue hostage to the unrelated issue of Taiwan arms sales. On March 10, America's new Director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, said "preparations for a Taiwan conflict" continue to drive PLA modernization, but the administration of Barack Obama has not yet formulated its arms sales policy. Will Washington remain true to the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which states the U.S. will "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character" and "maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force" against Taiwan? Or will it continue the conflict-inviting Bush "golden mean" policy?

With reports that the Obama administration is preparing for major defense cuts, such as ending production of the F-22A, the only U.S. fighter clearly superior to any from China and Russia, and perhaps reducing U.S. aircraft carriers from 10 to nine, one might guess the new administration will have even less stomach for standing up to China. If so, then Taiwan may be facing a reprise of the Clinton years, when it was forced to rely on its own technologies and on brave allies in the U.S. Congress who understood the need to defend Taiwan, even in the face of Administration policy and defense cuts that undermined U.S. security commitments. With the new Taiwan defense review, now they have some strong ammunition from Taiwan's own generals and military analysts.

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David Klein



The military's clear-headed report sees the Chinese threat for what it is.

An Arab-Made Misery

By Nonie Darwish

International donors pledged almost \$4.5 billion in aid for Gaza earlier this month. It has been very painful for me to witness over the past few years the deteriorating humanitarian situation in that narrow strip where I lived as a child in the 1950s.

The media tend to attribute Gaza's decline solely to Israeli military and economic actions against Hamas. But such a myopic analysis ignores the problem's root cause: 60 years of Arab policy aimed at cementing the Palestinian people's status as stateless refugees in order to use their suffering as a weapon against Israel.

As a child in Gaza in the 1950s, I experienced the early results of this policy. Egypt, which then controlled the territory, conducted guerrilla-style operations against Israel from Gaza. My father commanded these operations, carried out by Palestinian *fedayeen*, Arabic for "self-sacrifice." Back then, Gaza was already the front line of the Arab jihad against Israel. My father was assassinated by Israeli forces in 1956.

It was in those years that the Arab League started its Palestinian refugee policy. Arab countries implemented special laws designed to make it impossible to integrate the Palestinian refugees from the 1948 Arab war against Israel. Even descendants of Palestinian refugees who are born in another Arab country and live there their entire lives can never gain that coun-

try's passport. Even if they marry a citizen of an Arab country, they cannot become citizens of their spouse's country. They must remain "Palestinian" even though they may have never set foot in the West Bank or Gaza.

This policy of forcing a Palestinian identity on these people for eternity and condemning them to a miserable life in a refugee camp was designed to perpetuate and exacerbate the Palestinian refugee crisis.

So was the Arab policy of overpopulating Gaza. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose main political support comes from Arab countries, encourages high birth rates by rewarding families with many children. Yasser Arafat said the Palestinian woman's womb was his best weapon.

Arab countries always push for classifying as many Palestinians as possible as "refugees." As a result, about one-third of the Palestinians in Gaza still live in refugee camps. For 60 years, Palestinians have been used and abused by Arab regimes and Palestinian terrorists in their fight against Israel.

Now it is Hamas, an Islamist terror organization supported by Iran, which is using and abusing Palestinians for this purpose. While Hamas leaders hid in the well-stocked bunkers and tunnels they prepared before they provoked Israel into attacking them, Palestinian civilians were exposed

and caught in the deadly crossfire between Hamas and Israeli soldiers.

As a result of 60 years of this Arab policy, Gaza has become a prison camp for 1.5 million Palestinians. Both Israel and Egypt are fearful of terrorist infiltration from Gaza—all the more so since Hamas took over—and have always maintained tight controls over their borders with Gaza. The Palestinians continue to endure hardships because Gaza continues to serve as the launching pad for terror attacks against Israeli citizens. Those attacks come in the form of Hamas missiles that indiscriminately target Israeli kindergartens, homes and businesses.

And Hamas continued these attacks more than two years after Israel withdrew from Gaza in the hope that this step would begin the process of building a Palestinian state, eventually leading to a peaceful, two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There was no "cycle of violence" then, no justification for anything other than peace and prosperity. But instead, Hamas chose Islamic jihad. Gazans' and Israelis' hopes have been met with misery for Palestinians and missiles for Israelis.

Hamas, an Iran proxy, has become a danger not only to Israel, but also to Palestinians as well as to neighboring Arab states, who fear the spread of radical Islam could destabilize their countries.

Arabs claim they love the Palestinian people, but they seem more interested in

sacrificing them. If they really loved their Palestinian brethren, they'd pressure Hamas to stop firing missiles at Israel. In the longer term, the Arab world must end the Palestinians' refugee status and thereby their desire to harm Israel. It's time for the 22 Arab countries to open their borders and absorb the Palestinians of Gaza who wish to start a new life. It is time for the Arab world to truly help the Palestinians, not use them.

Mrs. Darwish, who grew up in Gaza City and Cairo, is the author, most recently, of "Cruel and Usual Punishment," (Thomas Nelson, 2009).

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