Reappraising the debate and practice of US strategic ambiguity/clarity in cross-strait relations

S. Philip Hsu

Abstract
The US strategic ambiguity versus clarity has been a centerpiece in maintaining cross-strait stability since the 1995–96 Taiwan Strait crisis. Dialogues and debates abound regarding the relative effectiveness of discrete US policy choices. The current thaw in cross-strait relations does not foretell decisively the resurgence in the long run of the cross-strait tensions during 2000–08, rendering the strategic ambiguity/clarity still a relevant issue. This article argues that the discussions on the issue are seriously plagued by the lack of a sufficiently rigorous and commonly shared conceptualization of strategic ambiguity/clarity, and an internal logical contradiction or an inadequate practical utility as a tool to aid policy-making. To address these problems, this article seeks to clarify and elaborate on the conceptual foundation of strategic ambiguity/clarity by differentiating between two distinct analytic levels thereof, and proposing a conceptual framework for a fuller understanding of the US policy along various dimensions. It also reappraises some major issues or problems found in the existing discussions and US practice, and suggests possible solutions.

Keywords
Strategic ambiguity; strategic clarity; cross-strait relations; Level I; Level II; conditional commitment.

Introduction
More than a decade has passed since the 1995–96 Taiwan Strait crisis, where US–Taiwan–China relations for the first time faced an escalation verging on military conflict in the post-Cold War era. The escalation began with

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Beijing’s saber rattling through military exercises and missile tests near Taiwan in March 1996, chiefly to respond to Washington’s issuance of an entry visa in 1995 for Taiwan’s President Li Teng-hui to visit the US, and to Taiwan’s first direct presidential election in the same month, both of which, in Beijing’s view, undermined its ‘one China’ principle. Washington reacted by deploying two carrier battle groups in the region. During 2000–08 when cross-strait tensions surged again, Washington nonetheless reversed its course by pressuring Taipei in order to contain what it conceived as the latter’s defiance to Beijing. Taipei’s provocative acts taken by President Chen Shui-bian and his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), such as attaching the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections with referenda that could pave the way for de jure Taiwan independence, and the ceased functioning of the National Unification Council and the ceased application of the National Unification Guidelines, prompted Washington’s condemnation and public statements that undercut the credibility of its security commitment to Taiwan.

The two diametrically opposite stances taken by the US, however, were both intended for the prevention of a cross-strait war and for the stability in the trilateral relations, as Washington saw it. Indeed, taking sides with a specific actor might be necessary as a reaction in the short run, but was never an overarching strategy in the long run. Lying at the heart of the US policy to maintain stability in general is a delicate balance between Taiwan and China, typified by the preeminence of both the three communiqués between the US and China, and the US Taiwan Relations Act, which successive US administrations vow to follow at the same time. For the US to minimize the chance of cross-strait military conflict specifically, the linchpin lies in the widely deliberated issue of embracing greater strategic ambiguity or strategic clarity toward the other two actors.

Generally speaking, the US strategic ambiguity/clarity in this context refers to how sure Taipei and Beijing are about what Washington will and will not do in a cross-strait military clash, as a result of Washington’s articulation ex ante of its intention and the ensuing reaction. It is in character a policy instrument for the US to prevent in a reactive fashion the decay of cross-strait stability in military terms, rather than to shape in a pro-active manner the overall contour of cross-strait relations that encompass political, economic, ideational, and cultural issues beyond the military ones. Scholarly and policy-oriented analyses abound to scrutinize the varying circumstances and the US application of this policy instrument during the 1995–96 and the post-2000 periods. The analyses, which this article seeks to reflect upon, can be divided into two phases. Those from the ending of the 1995–96 crisis until 2002 – denoted as Stage I in this article – concentrated on the occurrence, unfolding, and possibilities of prevention of that crisis. And those from 2003 until Taiwan’s Chen Shui-bian administration
stepped down in 2008 – denoted as Stage II – coped chiefly with the rising cross-strait tensions in the wake of Taipei’s provocative actions mentioned above. The analyses during the two phases differ from one another by entertaining different theoretical perspectives and arriving at competing conclusions that call for either more ambiguity or clarity, but for the same objective of preserving cross-strait stability.

Given the substantial influence of many contributors to this lasting dialogue and debate, the contending views and inferences found in the analyses have been often saliently reflected in Washington’s actual conduct in handling the trilateral relations during the two stages. However, this article argues that the dialogue as well as debate exercising crucial impacts on the US policy is seriously plagued by the lack of a sufficiently rigorous and commonly shared conceptualization of strategic ambiguity/clarity. Consequently, the seeming debate with regard to the substantive choice of ambiguity versus clarity can often be simply imputed to the fact the participants are not referring to exactly the same notion of ambiguity/clarity. This critical problem, not yet tackled systematically as of now in the burgeoning literature on the issue, warrants analysts’ alerts and remedies, in light of the immense policy impacts just mentioned. In addition, the discussion during each of the two stages is hampered by either an internal logical contradiction or an inadequate practical utility as a tool to aid policy-making. More importantly, the US practice on this issue has proved unable to curb the obvious escalation of cross-strait tensions during 2002–08.

This article thus seeks to clarify and elaborate on the conceptual foundation of strategic ambiguity/clarity by differentiating between two distinct analytic levels thereof, which are often conflated in the extant literature. Through conceptual reasoning derived from the historic background of each analytic level, this article will then propose a conceptual framework in order for a fuller understanding of the nature of the US strategic ambiguity/clarity in cross-strait relations. Based on this framework, this article finally offers a reappraisal of a number of major issues or problems emanating from the existing discussions and US practice, and puts forward possible solutions, where necessary, that may help in containing the risk of cross-strait militarized confrontation in the future. To be sure, the thawing cross-strait relations and booming economic and functional exchanges since Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeou was inaugurated in May 2008 have hedged off the risk of war substantially for the time being. Nevertheless, to the degree that all the thorny issues in cross-strait political dispute – such as Taiwan’s international space that breeds implications for sovereignty and China’s lingering missile deployment that poses security threat to Taiwan – remain unresolved, the bilateral tensions might escalate any time in the long run. This renders the US strategic ambiguity/clarity a continually relevant issue for cross-strait stability.
Strategic ambiguity rooted in dual deterrence as the US policy goal

A survey of a number of major studies in Stages I and II reveals that whereas most of them share a common understanding of the strategic calculus held by the US in managing cross-strait relations, they also diverge analytically in how strategic ambiguity/clarity is defined conceptually and interpreted in relation to US policy. This crucial aspect has remained relatively overlooked as of now. To maintain cross-strait peace and stability ever since 1949, the US has consistently pursued the dual goals of dissuading China from resolving its political dispute with Taiwan through military action, and simultaneously of preventing Taiwan from provoking China’s reaction by using force. The thorny task of fulfilling the two easily contradictory missions and seeking a balance, known as dual deterrence in the literature, saddles Washington with a fundamental strategic dilemma.1

The US policy choice of strategic ambiguity can be traced back to the Eisenhower administration, in accordance with the reasoning that greater ambiguity than clarity could better achieve the dual deterrence (Tucker 2005: 188–98). The theoretical justification for this reasoning is highlighted by a comparison between dual deterrence and extended deterrence. In the case of extended deterrence, the more unequivocal the protecting actor’s commitment that it will intervene if the protected actor is attacked, the more likely the actor to be deterred will exercise self restraint. For an actor to deter two other actors simultaneously from provoking each other, however, the more ambiguous this actor’s signal about how probable it will intervene in the event of a clash between the other two, the more effective the dual deterrence can be. This is primarily because the first actor’s firm and clear commitment to the second actor punishes by definition the third actor if it disrupts stability. Thus the second actor will perceive a much reduced risk of being attacked first or suffering a defeat, and thereby be encouraged to take destabilizing action (Benson and Niou 2000).

Distinguishing between two levels of strategic ambiguity/clarity

The conceptual foundation

What has been overshadowed by the literature’s consistent focus on dual deterrence is the fact that discussions in the two stages on US policy actually vary on two interrelated substantive issues, due to the particular circumstances in each stage. The first issue concerns which specific dimension in the broadly conceived US strategic calculation and planning one looks at, or, equivalently, the question of ‘strategic ambiguity/clarity about what?’ The second one has to do with the nature, which is reflected in the first issue, of the specific disruption of cross-strait stability to be deterred, or, equivalently, the question of ‘dual deterrence against what?’
On the first issue, two levels of strategic ambiguity/clarity stand out from the analyses during Stage I and Stage II respectively. Before 2002, the level of analysis had focused predominantly on the uncertainty inherent in the possible gap between the nebulous words in US declaratory policy and its actual deeds. Sensitive to the risk of another outbreak like the 1995–96 crisis, the debate during Stage I revolved around whether or not the US words and deeds ought to converge on a possible US intervention in an exigency bordering on or already involving military conflict. This level on the first issue, dubbed Level I in this article, means that the targeted outcome to be deterred on the second issue is essentially a worst-case scenario, i.e. a cross-strait war due to Taipei’s and Beijing’s dispute over unification/independence, which is a relatively static conception.

Nevertheless, as Taipei turned increasingly defiant step by step from 2002 to 2008 despite the US pressures to hold it back, the first issue came to outgrow the dichotomy between whether or not the US would intercede. Instead, the debate during Stage II underscores the vitality of identifying the myriad conditions that entail different degrees, manners, and probabilities for the US to intervene. That is, whether the US intent to buttress its professed security commitment to Taiwan with real action had been mostly clarified. The focal point in the debate of Stage II – the strategic ambiguity at Level II – is to what extent Washington will respond, along a continuum of escalation of tensions in the Taiwan Strait, to the predictably more aggressive actions by Taipei and Beijing. Accordingly, the US dual deterrence remains ultimately against the worst-case scenario, but it now also encompasses a much more dynamic aspect of containing the spiral that leads to such a scenario.

**Level I about US intention to intervene and the discussion during Stage I**

The US strategic ambiguity at Level I was essentially reminiscent of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), a principal legal foundation on which US policy toward Taiwan has rested since the end of bilateral diplomatic ties in 1979. The TRA laid out the core principle of US security commitment to Taiwan by stating that any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means would be of ‘grave concern’ to the US. Accordingly, the TRA obliged the US to make defensive weapons available to Taiwan, and to maintain its own capacity to fend off any coercion against the welfare of the Taiwan people. Nonetheless, there is no mention of any further US obligations, such as US Congress authorization of military action or the use of US armed forces, in response to non-peaceful or coercive circumstances. The actual US reaction beyond the legal injunction in such cases is virtually left to the decision by the executive branch, where the deployment of US forces is only an option, rather than a requirement.
Therefore, the vagueness exhibited in TRA regarding the use of force to aid Taiwan when necessary centers first and foremost on whether the US will do so in reality. That is, the ambiguity at Level I is about the fundamental US intention of whether or not – a dichotomy in nature – it will intervene if Taiwan is attacked by China. This became the focal point of Washington’s response to the 1995–96 Taiwan Strait crisis. For instance, Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye indicated in November 1995 to Chinese military officers that ‘nobody knows’ what the US would do in a cross-strait military conflict (Kan 2007: 32). James Sasser, US ambassador to China, purported similarly in January 1996 that neither he nor anyone else in the Clinton administration knew about the attitude or action that would be adopted by the US if China attacked Taiwan (China Post 1996). Even as the crisis aggravated steeply in February 1996, Secretary of Defense William Perry remained ambiguous about the possibility of US military involvement by suggesting that any US response to Chinese aggression towards Taiwan ‘would depend on circumstances’ (Constantine 1996).

Therefore, the US strategic ambiguity at Level I dominated the evaluations in retrospect of the crisis that sought to probe whether the crisis could have been averted. A sample of the views held by seven major participants in the discussion during Stage I, as shown in Table 1, discloses that six of them conceived US strategic ambiguity at Level I, which embodied a dichotomous thinking on whether or not to intervene. Their common conceptualization led five among the six to converge on the same policy prescription for less ambiguity and more clarity for fear of any similar catastrophe occurring again, while the sixth recommended no policy adjustment. By doing so, the five analysts literally argued that if the US had before 1995–96 pinned its security commitment to Taiwan down to concrete military action that was articulated explicitly *ex ante*, the crisis could

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<td>Christensen (2000, 2002)</td>
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have been much avoided. The only one of the seven analysts that adhered conceptually to Level II deduced a policy recommendation the other way around.

As far as crisis prevention is concerned, a key corollary emerges from the majority’s view in Table 1; so long as the US delivers unequivocal signal in advance about its resolve to intervene, which was not the case prior to the 1995–96 crisis, the likelihood for the crisis to recur can be at least minimized. In other words, the dichotomously conceived strategic clarity is putatively a strong necessary condition for the deterrence against the worst-case scenario, which is predictably triggered by a Chinese rather than a Taiwanese military invasion.

Nevertheless, this majority’s view calling for an adjustment in US policy toward greater clarity overlooked a simple key fact. The particular way, magnitude, and venue that the US naval force was deployed during the 1995–96 crisis literally made any remaining US strategic ambiguity at Level I evaporate altogether. That is, the act of US backing of Taiwan therein left its intention transparent to both Beijing and Taipei, which was itself a decisive policy shift in effect.3 This not only rendered it redundant to make any further clarifying proclamation about US intention, but also made it irrelevant to keep discussing the strategic ambiguity at Level I as did a number of analysts after 2002.

That the US military intervention had already fulfilled a policy change in effect was corroborated by Washington’s ‘Three No’s’ policy one year after the crisis. Given the reassurance to Taipei by exposing the US intention through the intervention, Washington had to balance it with a reassurance to Beijing, for the sake of dual deterrence. This approach to strategic clarity, however, turned out to impair the dual deterrence as Tucker points out, since Taipei and Beijing became trapped in a spiral of mutual provocation. As a continuation of this spiral fueled by US strategic clarity, the DPP government’s confrontational stance and acts after 2002 sparked the debate over US strategic ambiguity/clarity in Stage II and transition from Level I to Level II.

**The transition to Level II and the discussion during Stage II**

At his inauguration in May 2000, President Chen Shui-bian made the ‘Five No’s’ pledge to renounce those future actions that would be seen by Beijing and Washington as materializing or verging on *de jure* independence. Yet in August 2002 Chen turned around to trumpet ‘one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait’ (*yibian yiguo*), which set in motion successive waves of destabilizing behavior until the end of his tenure, introducing Stage II for the discussion on US policy. These included at least the pursuit of a new constitution of Taiwan through public referendum in 2003, the referendum attached to the presidential election in 2004, the renaming of state enterprises and foreign offices that bore the name ‘China’ or ‘Chinese’ in 2004,
the constitutional re-engineering initiative that kept open the possibility of altering provisions on national identity in 2005, the ceased functioning of the National Unification Council and the ceased application of the National Unification Guidelines in February 2006, and the pursuit of constitutional amendment by means of referendum attached to the presidential election in 2008.

The practical developments during Stage II above demonstrated two features, both of which informed the evolution of ambiguity/clarity from Level I to Level II. First, the destabilizing conditions had grown step by step to drive the trilateral relations progressively closer to the worst-case scenario, yet short of its actual occurrence as of now. That is, there was an additional dimension of dynamic and gradual transformation and of the ensuing uncertainty about when an irreversible crisis might break out. Unlike during Stage I, the US failure to deter the undesirable behaviors of Taipei and Beijing in Stage II was no longer associated with an immediate occurrence of the worst-case scenario. In this sense, the US dual deterrence was in effect adapted to place a priority on bucking such a deteriorating trend over time, instead of only on forestalling the ultimate outcome per se.

Second, and as a result of the first, the US dual deterrence turned out to hinge more on the prevention of destabilizing moves by Taiwan than by China, contrary to the case during Stage I. Taiwan’s moves could be regarded largely as a response to the evaporated US strategic ambiguity at Level I after the 1995–96 crisis. Thus one of the most salient and perhaps convenient policy tools still available to Washington for dual deterrence would be to add certain qualifications on the realization of its revealed intention, which was though plagued by questionable credibility owing to internal incoherence that will be explored afterwards.

The two features above – gradual upsurge of crisis-propelling conditions, and the irreversibility of a much ascertained US strategic clarity at Level I as well as the need for qualifying US intention – rendered Level I inadequate to capture the critical dynamics in Stage II, and thus demanded a replacement. It is the conceptualization at Level II, i.e. ambiguity/clarity about what conditions necessitate and justify what specific act of US intervention, that fits the reality of Stage II.

Indeed, the debate in Stage II was itself triggered by a modification of the US official definition of strategic ambiguity, in the wake of the Chen Shui-bian administration and DPP’s launch in 2003 of the referendum held together with the 2004 presidential election. Concurrent with President Bush’s condemnation that Chen attempted to change the status quo unilaterally during Bush’s meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, a senior US official reportedly raised the issue of strategic ambiguity. For the first time after the 1995–96 crisis Washington officially proclaimed that it was dropping strategic ambiguity for both Taipei and Beijing. The alleged change was made through the warning that the US could not afford to remain
‘agnostic toward moves toward Taiwan independence’, or to allow Beijing to ‘contemplate the use of force or coercion against Taiwan’ (Sanger 2003).

This telling statement carried obvious strategic clarity at Level I through the alleged dissuasion of China’s resort to force, which had been in effect communicated in 1996 with an irreversible expectation, as pointed out above. Yet more importantly, the statement also ushered in the notion at Level II, as it conceived the blocking of Taipei’s further actions to ‘push the envelope’ (Lam 2003), which appeared to Washington as a more immediate cause of escalating cross-strait tensions, to be an integral part of strategic clarity. For Taiwan and China, the uncertainty became less about whether or not the US would come to the aid of Taiwan in the first place. It turned out to be more about under what conditions the US may or may not honor its security commitment to Taiwan to the full in the worst-case scenario, or, equivalently, about the question of what qualifications would distinguish a justifiable from an unjustifiable US intervention.

The analytic primacy of ambiguity/clarity at Level II is prevalent in all of the major analyses in Stage II, as shown in Table 2. In congruence with the US government’s 2003 policy announcement above, the conceptualization of strategic ambiguity spanning across both Levels I and II is characteristic of some of the studies. But considered as a whole, the analyses in Table 2 do not display as much a clear-cut correlation between the choice of analytic level and the position on policy prescription as found in Table 1. Some of them incorporating Level II prefer a transition to more clarity, while some others cling to ambiguity, and still the others remain neutral. This indicates that the logic and relevant strategic as well political realities affecting US policy choice at Level II are apparently not the same with, and more complicated than, those at Level I, displaying the necessity to distinguish between the two.

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The need for greater strategic clarity on three dimensions at Level II

By integrating the divergent views from the analyses in Table 2 and the realities of the trilateral relations, this article proffers a framework for Level II, which includes three principal dimensions, for a more complete understanding and evaluation of how US strategic ambiguity/clarity can bring down cross-strait escalation.

Will the US defense of Taiwan be conditioned on why the military conflict occurs?

First, the most fundamental issue is whether or not the US decision about a military intervention, when necessary, will eventually turn out contingent upon the conditions generated jointly by Taiwan’s and China’s actions or reactions that bring about the worst-case scenario. That is, Level II is first and foremost about, in Thomas Christensen’s words, whether the US makes a credible ‘conditional commitment’. Under this guiding principle, Washington will carry out its security commitment to Taiwan through military intervention in a cross-strait armed clash only if the clash is not caused chiefly by Taipei’s moves, as seen by Beijing and Washington, to amount to de jure independence (Christensen 2002: 14–20).

To be sure, the US security commitment to Taiwan had been by no means completely unconditional during Stage I, since the US had long managed to ward off the risk of being dragged into a cross-strait conflict under the overarching goal of dual deterrence. Yet the possibility of attaching specific conditions to determine US reaction at that point was at most implicit. In fact, the US reaction in the 1995–96 crisis could hardly be regarded as manifesting a conditional commitment to Taiwan. The US was forced to craft a response under heavy time constraint largely in a situation of surprise, due to Beijing’s unexpectedly drastic backlash against President Li Teng-hui’s US visit.4

Yet during Stage II, all the confrontational moves by Taipei, despite repeated US objections, made it increasingly tempting for Washington to distinguish between different pathways leading to a possible cross-strait clash. Specifically, the preconditions regarding whether Taipei was responsible for the outbreak of a conflict seemed necessary to underlie Washington’s decision to intervene militarily. As the US war on terror after 9/11 and the North Korean crisis rendered China’s cooperation increasingly crucial for the US (Lampton 2003: 37–48), Taipei’s continual confrontation came to be deemed as ‘rocking the boat’ as it enfeebled US–China mutual trust rudimentary for the bilateral cooperation and thereby impaired US vital interest (Council on Foreign Relations 2003). Thus in December 2003 during the press conference after his meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, US President George W. Bush criticized Chen Shui-bian for trying to change
the cross-strait status quo unilaterally through the referendum plan. On the other hand, he reportedly reiterated to Wen in private that the US would get involved if China uses force or coercion against Taiwan (*Taipei Times* 2003). By perhaps balancing the needs to discourage Taipei and Beijing from provoking at the same time under dual deterrence, Bush also balanced in effect the strategic ambiguity at Levels I and II, in that Bush articulated to Wen the US resolve already made clear in the past, but subjugated it to the condition that Taipei refrain from shattering the status quo.

Yet as Chen heightened his defiance in the latter half of 2004, the US responded with an even more explicit signal about the preconditions to its security commitment. In December 2004, the US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage publicly delineated the mission of the US force in the Pacific primarily as to deter attack on Taiwan, rather than to defend it (*Reuters* 2004). By linking the US abstention from military involvement to Taipei’s crisis-propelling conduct, Armitage typified the drifting in US official stance toward further clarity in favor of particular conditions to differentiate between justifiable and unjustifiable military intervention.

**What conditions causing the outbreak shape the US decision to intervene or not?**

The second dimension of Level II since 2002, as a premise that will heavily shape the US decision on the first one, has been the lingering uncertainty about what precisely are in Taipei’s destabilizing moves along the ladder of escalation that distinguish between the conditions for a justifiable and for an unjustifiable US military intervention. That is, Washington has to delimit, by taking into account Beijing’s demarcation, what conduct by Taipei sufficiently constitutes the realization of *de jure* Taiwan independence, which by definition alters the status quo irreversibly. This issue highlights the uncertainty over what cross-strait status quo means exactly as a common ground among Washington, Taipei, and Beijing for maintaining peace and stability. Kurt Campbell, former US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asia and the Pacific during the 1995–96 crisis, had alluded in 2003 to the rising prominence of this dimension at Level II in the trilateral relations, when Chen Shui-bian launched the campaign for referendum but asserted that it did not depart from his pro-status quo pledge of ‘Five No’s’. Campbell suggested that Washington had restructured its cross-strait policy from the emphasis on peaceful means of resolving disputes to the preference on securing the status quo (Sanger 2003). And the US government has consistently considered the cross-strait status quo to be ‘as we define it’.5 Nevertheless, such a stance has been challenged by Taipei and Beijing repeatedly, because the US government in fact never really defines it in concrete terms (Feldman 2007). Taipei and Washington literally disagreed over whether all the former’s confrontational moves in Stage II made up a unilateral change of the
status quo. Similarly, Beijing blasted in June 2004 James Kelly’s statement of ‘as we define it’ for interfering with China’s domestic affairs.\textsuperscript{6} Given the tripartite divergence over this issue, the linchpin of cross-strait (in)stability since 2002, therefore, can be reasonably boiled down to the second dimension at Level II.\textsuperscript{7}

What specific military action by Beijing may justify a US military intervention?

Finally, there is the third dimension, albeit seeming to bear not as much ambiguity, with respect to what specific action by Beijing to use force renders US military involvement necessary. Unlike the deliberate ambiguity over the fundamental US intention about use of force, a lucid description is provided in TRA about the general types of China’s possible action considered by the US as non-peaceful. In addition to the obvious resort to violence through military means, hostile acts of economic nature, including boycotts and embargoes, are pinpointed in TRA as well. Yet amidst the full spectrum of military actions, together with variations in a host of parameters such as the magnitude, geographic location, and duration of the actions, it is not totally clear what level of activities aimed at Taiwan undertaken by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) warrants what level of response by US troops in the Asia-Pacific. Intuitively, this could seem to be an overstatement, given that even a PLA operation at a relatively low intensity level, such as a blockade of either Kinmen or Matsu, Taiwan’s offshore islands, may not proceed completely free from a US reactive troop buildup nearby (Cole 2006: 134–9). Nonetheless, unexpected mutual responses between the two are not altogether impossible as a result of misperception or miscalculation.

The 1995–96 crisis was a prime example of the misperception. For the mainstream view in Beijing, while the US intervention was not totally unanticipated, the rapidity, forcefulness, and decisiveness of the specific US actions throughout the crisis did turn out to be a surprise. Notably, this was a surprise precisely because Beijing believed that it had come to grips with Washington’s intention through all the foregoing high-level interactions in 1995 (Garver 1997: 111–17). In particular, Beijing was convinced that Washington should have fully understood China’s attempt to be limited at best, short of any territorial gain or an escalation of tensions. The limited punishment on Taiwan, to Beijing’s belief, should not have incurred a disproportionately vehement reaction from the US. Hence even after the US aircraft carrier \textit{Nimitz} had made a highly symbolic navigation through the Taiwan Strait in December 1995 after the outbreak, showing that Washington could make further intervention, Beijing was still stunned three months later by the US deployment level of two carrier groups (Tucker 2005: 195–6).
Reappraising the rival arguments and implications for the US policy

A number of findings or assessments can be derived from the foregoing dissection of the two levels and the integrated framework of the US strategic ambiguity/clarity. By re-examining the nature of the discussions in the two stages or challenging the logic of the pro-ambiguity or pro-clarity view, they provide new avenues for dialogue and debate in the future, and for seeking possible solutions to lingering problems in the US policy choice on cross-strait relations.

Determining the reversal from strategic ambiguity to clarity at Level I

First, the analytic and substantive consensus emerging from the discussion in Stage I was essentially hindsight. The hindsight held that if there had been sufficient clarity about US intention communicated with China, the 1995–96 crisis might well have been averted. By inferring in such an *ex post* manner, the consensus failed to explicate how at a certain point of time *before* the crisis, the embrace of clarity could have occurred both logically and practically in a compatible fashion with the long-standing espousal of ambiguity that had yielded *ex ante* consequence of stabilization since 1958, thanks to successful dual deterrence. In other words, the consensus was plagued by a contradiction where the US strategic ambiguity had prevented another military clash from happening since 1958, but suddenly became a key factor contributing to crisis outbreak in 1995–96.

One obvious way to resolve this contradiction is to highlight how varying circumstances at different points of time could lead to disparate policy choice. Richard Bush (2006: 47) argues similarly that each US administration selects its own location along a continuum of clarity and ambiguity, depending on all the circumstances it faces, where no complete ambiguity or complete clarity is possible in actual policy choice. This view, however, cannot be readily applied to Level I and the 1995–96 crisis. Simply, the dichotomous character of whether the US would intercede is not amenable to the anatomy of how to mix ambiguity and clarity with different weights on a continuum. On the other hand, the more fundamental problem lies in how to differentiate between sufficiently varying circumstances that require different policies. Translated into the contradiction above, the core issue was about ‘deterrence against what?’ pinpointed earlier. To deter the worst-case scenario from taking place, the Clinton administration had to determine at what point all the circumstances at hand foreboded an *imminent* scenario as such and thus necessitated an *immediate* reversal from relative ambiguity to relative clarity. It is precisely the deliberation of the criteria to inform this decision that are indispensable for any policy prescription at Level I to be practically relevant. The paucity of attention paid to the criteria, however,
debilitates the literature during Stage I from tackling the contradiction and breeding concrete utility.

**The need for more specific criteria at Level II**

Second, in comparison with those in Stage I, the analyses in Stage II has been relatively free from internal contradiction, but similarly suffered, albeit to a lesser extent, a dearth of concrete criteria on the second dimension at Level II for practical policy effectiveness. This problem in fact mirrors the virtual powerlessness of Washington to inhibit Chen Shui-bian from progressively escalating the spiral through provocative moves since 2002, a prime source of cross-strait instability. In spite of all the admonitions, alerts, and punitive measures toward Taipei, Washington had undeniably failed to deter Chen during successive rounds of interaction, exposing a need for policy adjustment particularly with respect to the first and second dimensions of Level II. The trigger of escalation during these rounds was invariably Taiwan’s unilateral change of its domestic institutional, legal, cultural, or symbolic foundations that triangulate its position of national identity along the continuum of a unified China and a completely independent Taiwan. Washington’s typical response to such moves in light of Level II was passively reminding Chen of honoring his ‘Five No’s’ pledge, which was though not inclusive of all the contingencies, especially at operational level, that were deemed as impinging on the status quo. Or, Washington had to define, after Taipei initiated a new controversial move with ample uncertainty about whether it deviated from status quo, this particular move as drifting dangerously close to a full-fledged *de jure* independence, such as in the cases of the 2004 referendum and the 2008 referendum on UN entry in the name of Taiwan.

The implication of this recurrent pattern is obvious: unless Washington is able to inject into its policy more clarity than it is now about at least all four of the foundations mentioned above, by linking specifics to principles and linking formality to substance, it will continue to be put on the defense and accomplish little in dual deterrence at Level II. Though recognizing this need, those analyses in favor of more strategic clarity during Stage II are preoccupied with their objection to ambiguity in principle, but hardly spell out how to address the need concretely. To the degree that the containment of deteriorating conditions at Level II now hinge more on specifics than on principles, a re-orientation of the discussion seems strongly warranted. On the other hand, defining the specific conditions regarding *de jure* independence is admittedly not without its problems (Tucker 2005: 205–11, Katsner 2006: 660–1), among which the most crucial one is perhaps the technical difficulty in exhausting in advance all the contingencies that may be deemed as bordering on independence. However, without defining them more concretely than now, the likelihood for the US to continue being on the defensive will be apparently greater than otherwise. More importantly, in the
absence of sufficient US clarity on this dimension, the discrepancy between Beijing’s and Taipei’s guessing about the conditions under which Washington will or will not intervene where, for instance, Beijing does not expect Washington to intervene under some condition but Taipei does, will elevate the chance of war.

**Differentiation between the two analytic levels vital to shape substantive position**

Third, a close look at the substantive disagreement during Stage II reveals that the disagreement can be in large part attributed to a conflation between Level I and Level II, exemplifying the significance of distinguishing between the two analytic levels. While the pro-clarity analyses literally provide two sets of logic that address Level I and Level II respectively, the pro-ambiguity ones do not. Tucker, for instance, elaborates on the strategic ambiguity inherent in the TRA, an origin at Level I as expounded earlier. Likewise, she mentions the debate about whether the US deployment in 1996 of two battle carrier groups without enunciating their concrete mission reflected more ambiguity or clarity. Analytically speaking, this debate in fact still revolves around Level I, where the ultimate US intention in the deployment was not regarded by everyone as transparent. Furthermore, Tucker’s detailed account of President Bush’s turn to more clarity characterized by tilting in favor of Taipei instead of Beijing after 2000, including influential analysts’ advocacy of a firm and decided US avowal to defend Taiwan against any Chinese attack, is also all about Level I (Tucker 2005: 188–205).

When it comes to the logical reasoning of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned US behaviors since 1995 manifesting varying degrees of ambiguity or clarity, however, Tucker slips into Level II, but at the same time interposes arguments at Level I. According to Tucker, the major problems of strategic clarity include the difficulties in defining clearly all the conditions under which the US will intervene, Taipei’s and Beijing’s continued probing about whether the US really acts in consistency with the declared conditions, the likely inability of the US to stick to the declared conditions when facing changing international and domestic circumstances, etc. (Tucker 2005: 205–6). Whereas these potential problems, all at Level II, could take place theoretically, they are not so much verified by the foregoing account at Level I empirically. Similarly, in pointing out how strategic clarity at Level II may cause unnecessary restrictions on the flexibility of US policy, Tucker alludes to the possibility for Beijing to be convinced, for reasons unrelated to Taiwan, of the underlying intention of the US to contain China on all issues of vital security interest, a notion at Level I (Tucker 2005: 207). To synthesize all the indications of conflation above, if participants in the debate do not exactly refer to the same concept all the time, when they think they do, by invoking the term of strategic ambiguity or
clarity, we have to be at least alerted where the mismatch may occur. As a result, the implications emanating from the debate for policy choice in the real world ought to be evaluated more carefully as well.

**Incorporating the factor of path dependence**

Fourth, both of the contending perspectives in the debate since 1996 have overlooked the effect of path dependence, a consequential fact in the context of the ongoing evolution of US policy until now. In this context, US policy-making does not occur in a vacuum of its per-existing practice and behavior. Previous policy choices made by an administration inevitably bring about significant constraints on the range of options for all the administrations coming in afterwards. Yet the arguments from both perspectives often seem to rest on a situation of ground zero where no such constraining effect exists. The perceived need for a further US policy adjustment toward greater clarity during Stage I, as illustrated earlier, was a good example. Likewise, Tucker called for a reversal of the growing trend toward clarity after 1996 – without differentiating between Levels I and II, as mentioned above – in order to re-embrace ambiguity. As far as Level I is concerned, the underlying presumption that a return to ambiguity is possible also ignores the irreversibility of a formerly publicized intention that will set the limit for subsequent decisions.

For the pro-clarity view on the first dimension at Level II, this irreversibility also poses a quite fundamental challenge in light of path dependence. If the previously revealed US intention, seen as the major interpretation of US obligation stated in the TRA, has been to intervene when China attacks Taiwan, then how credible can a US conditional commitment be, where the US must convince Beijing and Taipei that the US will do so when Taiwan does not provoke Beijing so as to safeguard certain US national interests, but will not do so if Taiwan provokes Beijing when the same US national interests remain at stake?

**Tackling the dilemma between Level I and Level II**

Fifth, the questionable credibility of a conditional commitment just mentioned actually reflects an intrinsic dilemma between Level I and the first dimension of Level II. It thus demonstrates again the necessity to distinguish between the two analytic levels, since under an undifferentiated concept of strategic ambiguity/clarity, the pro-clarity view will be self-contradictory by supporting at the same time a clearly articulated US intention to intervene and a clearly stated set of conditions where the US will not intervene under certain circumstances.

Attempting to solve this dilemma and bolster the credibility of conditional commitment, Thomas Christensen proposes an explanatory logic to be communicated to Beijing and Taiwan. The US ought to make it clear,
according to him, that it is Taiwan’s democracy and, more importantly, its long-term role to catalyze China’s democratization, which stands as a leading US policy goal and national interest. This is the case because China has an incentive to pursue democratization to lure Taiwan into unification. But unless Taiwan refrains from de jure independence and keeps open the possibility of future unification, China would lack this potent incentive, which dampens the US interest in nurturing a democratized China and thus undermines the justification to defend Taiwan (Christensen 2002: 19–20; 2000). This argument is, in short, based upon the logic of ‘peaceful evolution’, and links Taiwan’s instrumentality – which justifies the US conditional commitment – to such a US grand strategy. This argument seems both creative and appealing to tackle the credibility problem, because it requires Washington to spell out what it otherwise would not trumpet but for vital US interest at stake, which happens to be what Beijing has long suspected as Washington’s real purpose toward the Chinese Communist regime.

This argument, however, is not without any flaw. For one thing, it is economic rather than political appeal that Beijing has increasingly resorted to in recent years as a more relevant tool both to prevent Taiwan independence in the short run and to facilitate unification in the long run. This is particularly evident after 2000. Taiwan underwent the changeover of the ruling party in 2000, taking a crucial step to complete its democratization, which literally widened the political gap with China, where authoritarianism has persisted. Meanwhile, the steadfast growth in cross-strait human, capital, and technological interflows, which has in fact expedited since 2000, draws Taiwan into deeper economic interdependence, characterized by an outstanding asymmetry that disadvantages Taiwan, with China.9 The tempting China market keeps draining out investments and production resources from Taiwan, which makes China the largest outlet for Taiwan’s exports and thus the decisive factor to keep Taiwan’s trade balance in surplus.10 The widely perceived rising confidence on the part of Beijing, exhibited in its Taiwan policy after Hu Jintao took over in 2002, has been understood as stemming from such economic leverage instead of China’s domestic political liberalization.11 This reality is in nature, to borrow a game-theoretic term, common knowledge shared by the US, Taiwan, and China to roughly the same extent. Thus a US claim that it will not defend Taiwan if the latter accomplishes de jure independence because the act significantly diminishes the chance for China to pursue democratization does not appear sufficiently plausible in the eyes of both Beijing and Taipei.

Instead of leaving the US conditional commitment to be premised on Taiwan’s utility for influencing China’s future political development, this article proposes an alternative logic that would be more credible and convincing in terms of relevant actors’ practical calculation. The proposed logic rests on the US interest in retaining its control over the definitive foundations for East Asian regional order, and its credibility of security
commitment to its regional allies. Chief among such foundations is the principle that interstate disputes are to be resolved in ways other than the use of force, a principle backed by, *inter alia*, the continued US military presence in the region, especially in the post-Cold War era. The resulting peace and stability in East Asia is in effect an international public good, typically provided by a dominant power in view of the theory of hegemonic stability, which all countries in the region benefit from. One of the most salient beneficiaries is perhaps China, in that its phenomenal economic growth in the reform era has been substantially facilitated by a peaceful regional surrounding, and by the fact that Beijing does not have to divert prohibitively enormous resources to military ends. The US troops in Japan, for instance, are central to precluding Tokyo from seeking massive rearmament or even developing nuclear weaponry, and thus rendering an arms race between China and Japan unlikely. By the same token, they discourage both Tokyo and Beijing to resort to force in their major disputes, be they over the Diaoyutai-Sensaku Islands or the Chunxiao gas and oil field in the East China Sea. The concrete benefits have been a key factor to account for why Beijing has long refrained from the aggressive rhetoric of driving the US military presence out of the region, despite its acute awareness of the latter’s constraining effect on China’s expansion in the region. Any particular action in the region that ferments turmoil leading to militarized conflict or actually uses force for coercive purposes will be thus regarded internationally as wrecking the regional public good, and defying the US-dominated norms in which the regional order is grounded. Taipei’s destabilizing moves and Beijing’s flexing of its military muscles are, of course, to be included as well.

For Washington to explicitly condition its commitment on the claim that Taipei’s moves to change the status quo constitute a challenge to the regional order sanctioned by the US implies, of course, a grave consequence. Taipei will be expected, for example in the event of a *de jure* independence, to go to combat against China’s attack without US military intervention. This is in character a *penalty* spelled out *ex ante*.

Admittedly, to threaten with firm resolve to impose such a penalty on Taiwan may be entangled with an array of fundamental issues related to US global and regional grand strategy, making the delivery of such a signal in reality thornier than designing it in theory. One leading issue is the nature of US credibility viewed by its regional allies, an integral part of the logic for the conditional commitment just proposed. Robert Ross (2000: 88) asserts this consideration to be the primary US strategic objective during the 1995–96 crisis. Yet the nature of the credibility under the proposed logic here will be actually somewhat different from that back then. To retain the credibility, the US back then had to deter and punish whichever country that used force first, but would now not stop China from attacking Taiwan if Taiwan generates the conditions, unlikely to involve the use of force, that prod the war. This dramatically reformulated character of US credibility in
cross-strait conflict expands the US role from sanctioning the actor using force to punishing the actor that precipitates others’ use of force, marking a quite unique case as opposed to the other interstate disputes in East Asia. On the other hand, given the fact that all the other countries in the region have long practiced a one-China policy, where Taiwan is regarded as one part of China, they may be ready to incorporate this unique case into the US credibility as they delimit, together with Washington, its scope and nature.

To be sure, given that dual deterrence will remain the core objective in the case of conditional commitment, a credible US threat of imposing a penalty will apply to China as well. Without such a threat, the commitment to Taiwan’s security will be hollow. This requires Washington to specify *ex ante* the penalty on China’s use of force to be a US reaction through force, *and* be fully determined and ready to carry it out if it so happens. That is, the conditional commitment based upon regional stability entails the US not only to deter, but also to defeat the actor after it first uses force in the absence of any other actor’s sabotage of stability, so that stability can be restored. This is worth noting because it aims to remedy a misunderstanding of US interest in East Asian regional stability – that once China attacks Taiwan, the US objective of maintaining the regional peace and stability will be entirely jeopardized, making any further US intervention meaningless in terms of this objective (Katsner 2006: 661). Apparently, this misunderstanding results from confusion between successful US deterrence and successful US domination to shape regional order. The former does not permit the inhibited outcome to occur, yet the latter does, as long as such an outcome can be rectified into a new equilibrium in the long run. To put it alternatively, the former is a significant, but by no means the only instrument to achieve the latter.

**Conclusion**

Because of the changing historic context and the diverging dynamics in distinct stages of the US–Taiwan–China relations since 1996, the dialogue as well as debate on US strategic ambiguity/clarity has undergone a transition of analytic focus, which, though, remains largely overlooked. This article attempts to sketch out such a transition and to distinguish the two analytic levels of ambiguity/clarity. Given the nature of ambiguity/clarity as a means to the end of dual deterrence, the concept at Level I concerns the deterrence of a particular outcome – cross-strait war as the worst-case scenario, and focuses on whether or not the US intends in the first place to intervene in such a case. In contrast, the concept at Level II is far more about how to roll back an ongoing process – the steadfast escalation of cross-strait tensions during 2002–08, and thus explores the myriad conditions spawned by Beijing and Taipei that work to qualify the US intention and to shape varying possibilities for US intervention. The two analytic levels employed
in the literature are discovered to correspond largely to the two distinct historic stages. The studies emerging during Stage I subscribe predominantly to Level I, and thereby deduce strategic ambiguity as more desirable. Those emerging during Stage II all incorporate Level II, while some of them blend the two levels conceptually. Their substantive policy recommendations do not, however, demonstrate a sweeping convergence as a result of embracing Level II, highlighting the far more complex set of factors and the ensuing logic at Level II than those at Level I, and therefore the need to differentiate between them.

Given the complexity at Level II above, this article proposes a conceptual framework to map out a fuller spectrum of the conditions shaping the US ambiguity/clarity in the near future. Three dimensions as follows make up the framework: whether the US will link its security commitment to Taiwan with certain conditions, what specific criteria set by the US to varying degrees of clarity with regard to such conditions will contain the ongoing decay of cross-strait relations, and what particular military action by China will render US intervention justified.

All the conceptual reformulations above facilitate this article’s reassessment of the logical validity and practical utility of the existing debate and dialogue, by raising problems and proposing solutions hardly scrutinized in the relevant literature. The reassessment attempts to supplement the literature and the rival arguments by highlighting the pro-clarity view’s unaccounted about-face during Stage I from strategic ambiguity to clarity at Level I, calling for more specific criteria to make the pro-clarity view more useful during Stage II, problematizing the pro-ambiguity view’s failure to distinguish between the two levels, identifying the crucial role of path dependence in future analysis, and solving the dilemma between Level I and Level II impinging on the credibility of US conditional commitment.

To be sure, there are still other critical issues on US strategic ambiguity/clarity, addressed or unexamined by the extant literature, which are not covered in this article but worth exploring in the future. Some of them are principally driven by theoretical insight, such as the ways to enhance the effectiveness of interstate signaling in the trilateral relations, of which the US strategic/ambiguity is a prime variation. Some of the others would result from major transformations in the realities and dynamics of the trilateral relations, such as those after the 2008 presidential elections in Taiwan and the US, where a leadership change in either case is likely to create new parameters for Washington’s adjustment along the ambiguity-clarity continuum. Future studies on any of these issues will undoubtedly build upon the existing literature as part of an ongoing dialogue and debate. But the continuation of the debate would be analytically more rigorous and practically more instrumental only if the conceptual, logical, and substantive issues raised in this article are no longer neglected entirely.
Notes

1 The literature focusing on US strategic ambiguity/clarity discussed in this article includes the following: John W. Garver (1997); Dennis Van Vranken Hickey (1999); Washington Post Editorial (1999); Benson and Niou (2000); Christensen (2000); Ross (2000); O’Hanlon (2001); Christensen (2002); Sanger (2003); Pan (2003); Tucker (2005); Bush (2006); Carpenter (2006); Katsner (2006: 651–69); China Post Editorial (2007).

2 This reference to the worst-case scenario is a moderate adaptation of the notion from Wu (2004: 614–25).

3 Among the seven analysts, only Ross took heed of this fact by propounding that after the crisis, Beijing came to grips with the US intention to intervene. This explains why there was no need for Ross to recommend any policy adjustment. Notably, according to Ross, Beijing’s expectation would hold true regardless of the cause of a future military conflict, including Taiwan’s unilateral destabilizing behavior. See Ross (2000: 119).

4 The US could be seen more as caught by surprise than as anticipating much of China’s reaction and subsequent moves to escalate tensions, at least for two reasons. Considering its issuance of visa to President Lee Teng-hui to signify no change in its one-China policy, Washington indicated to Beijing that the visa issuance was entirely consistent with the three communiqués, and that it was at most a ‘tactical change’. Washington’s belief as such should not have led it to prepare for a crisis-generating consequence from the very beginning. In addition, Beijing’s escalation of its military exercises during 1995–96 took place amidst repeated warnings from Washington, and Washington did not arrive at the decision of dispatching carrier battle groups after the debate among competing views within the administration, until the final moment of diplomatic communication. See Ross (2000: 93–5, 102–12).

5 See, for example, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly’s testimony before the House International Relations Committee in April 2004. Kelly spoke of the second core principle of the US policy toward Taiwan as ‘The U.S. does not support independence for Taiwan or unilateral moves that would change the status quo as we define it’; accessed at http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2004/31649.htm, 3 December 2008.


7 A growing number of US analysts on the trilateral relations come to view such a divergence as among the most consequential factors leading to instability. See, for instance, the consensus expressed by Richard C. Bush, Michael D. Swaine, Alan D. Romberg, and Bonnie Glaser, during a symposium held by the Brookings Institution in June 2004, ‘The second Chen administration: a crisis in the making?’ See also Glaser (2004).

8 For a detailed account of the interactions, see Romberg (2006); Swaine (2005).

9 According to the estimate by Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, the percentage of Taiwan’s exports to China in Taiwan’s total exports was between 16.46 per cent to 18.08 per cent during 1996–2000, and 20.27 per cent to 28.36 per cent during 2001–06; accessed at http://www.mac.gov.tw/big5/statistic/em/176/8/pdf. According to the same estimates, the percentage of China’s exports to Taiwan in China’s total exports was between 2.03 per cent to 2.50 per cent during 1996–2000, and 2.22 per cent to 2.83 per cent during 2001–06; accessed at http://www.mac.gov.tw/big5/statistic/em/176/9.pdf. These figures marked a salient asymmetric interdependence.
According to the estimates by Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, ever since 1992 Taiwan’s trade surplus with China primarily through exports via Hong Kong has exceeded Taiwan’s total trade surplus. The percentage of the former to the latter was between 100.32 per cent and 120.53 per cent during 1992–96, between 133.87 per cent and 213.52 per cent during 1997–2000, and between 107.42 per cent and 236.09 per cent during 2001–06; accessed at http://www.mac.gov.tw/big5/statistic/em/176/7.pdf.

For Beijing’s confidence associated with its economic leverage with Taiwan, see Lin (2006: 24–9).

The US military presence props up the regional stability not only by inhibiting other countries’ use of force when disputes arise, but also by forestalling the escalation of arms race and the emergence of contending alliances during ordinary period of time. See Betts (1993: 34–77); Buzan and Segal (1994: 3–21).

The hegemonic stability theory posits that international institutions conducive to interstate cooperation in various issue areas, and regional and global stability as well as order sustained by such cooperation, are in nature international public goods given that all nation-states benefit from them but have meager incentive to contribute to their production. Therefore, a hegemon willing and able to shoulder the bulk of the responsibility of providing the international public goods and to induce or coerce other states to follow suit is a key precondition for fostering cooperation and stability among the states. For a classic account of the theory, see Keohane (1980).

For the impact of the US military presence in Japan helping to curtail Japan’s rearment, see Green and Cronin (1999: 19–23).

The application of signaling can be found in Katsner (2006).

Cross-strait relations since Republic of China (ROC) President Ma Ying-jeou took office in May 2008 have undergone a dramatic reversal of what it was when Chen Shui-bian was in power. Taipei and Beijing have together restored the political common ground of the ‘1992 Consensus’, opening up direct air and sea transport links, forging a host of official agreements conducive to enhanced functional exchanges and cooperation, suspending the zero-sum diplomatic competition that had stifled Taiwan’s international space, exploring the possibility of moderating military rivalry through mechanisms such as cross-strait military confidence building, etc. Underlying these improvements is both sides’ preference of cooperation to conflict, rooted in their shared belief that a cross-strait military confrontation is not in the interest of either side. This belief, in turn, reflects directly the lingering binding power of US dual deterrence through fine-tuning along the strategic ambiguity/clarity continuum, rendering the issue still relevant even in the absence of an immediate danger of war. The theoretical reformulations and policy recommendations proffered here, on the other hand, are more relevant to a resurgence of cross-strait tensions that might still occur in the future.

References


