

# Taiwan Strait Talk

One hundred years ago, the most critical relationship on earth was between the world power and naval power Great Britain and the dominant power in Europe, the

Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The blazing issue was the decision by the kaiser and Admiral Tirpitz to build a High Seas Fleet to rival the Royal Navy.

With a vast overseas trade, colonies in Africa and Asia, and a hostile France and Russia with big navies, the kaiser's desire for a great fleet was understandable. But so, too, was Britain's alarm at the appearance of dreadnoughts in Kiel.

In 2007, perhaps the most important relationship is between the world power and naval power America and China, the Asian giant that aspires to be a world power.

America, by throwing open her \$13 trillion market and letting China run an annual trade surplus of \$233 billion, nearly 10 percent of China's GDP, has adopted engagement as a national policy. But there are now hard questions that need answering.

One was asked in Singapore in 2005 by Donald Rumsfeld. Noting China's deployment of 700 rockets opposite Taiwan, he asked, "If everyone agrees the question of Taiwan is going to be settled in a peaceful way, why this increase in ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan?"

Comes now the 2007 Pentagon report that makes for riveting reading. Beijing is building a road-mobile ICBM and has plans for five Jin-class submarines, which will each carry a dozen JL-2 ballistic missiles that have a range of 5,000 miles.

In January, China tested a satellite-killer ASAT by firing a missile into space and crashing a dead weather satellite. This capability puts at risk America's

eyes in the sky. Bill Gertz of the *Washington Times* reports, "China is also training large numbers of military computer hackers to deliver crippling electronic attacks on U.S. military and civilian computer networks." Beijing is said to be seeking to build an aircraft carrier to complement its submarine fleet and is developing long-range, precision-guided, anti-ship missiles.

Now one need not be a Clausewitz to see that China seems to be pursuing the theater dominance in the Taiwan Strait that JFK had in the Caribbean in the missile crisis, plus a strategic missile force to deter any American president from coming to the aid of Taiwan.

Why is China building up forces designed to fight the U.S. Navy when the United States is opposed to the independence of Taiwan and committed to a peaceful resolution of the issue?

Nor is this America's only complaint. Though China has decisive leverage with Pyongyang, she refused to use it to persuade Kim Jong-il not to test a nuclear device. And in the latest Strategic Economic Dialogue, we walked away with another bag of stale fortune cookies.

Now, behind America's grant of PNTR, permanent normal trading relations, lies a belief that China, though a one-party dictatorship, will develop a middle class and evolve into a responsible world power. And we will avoid what Britain and Germany failed to avoid a century ago.

But if China shares this vision, it makes no sense to risk a trade relation-

ship from which it benefits so immensely to throttle Taiwan, which would rupture ties to America, cause massive capital flight, and bring an end to China's economic miracle. And it would surely make no sense to try something like this before the Olympic Games of 2008, in which Beijing has invested so much to impress the world.

Perhaps China has concluded that America simply will not run the risk of war to save Taiwan from the fate of Hong Kong. Yet it would seem a mistake to think America could stand idle if China collared Taiwan and dragged her back to the embrace of the Motherland.

For their part, the Taiwanese appear to have decided to rely on us to maintain their independence. For they are engaged in business as usual with the mainland, thickening ties while maintaining but a modest defense effort.

With Nixon having conceded in 1972 that Taiwan is "a part of China," and Carter having abrogated the U.S. security treaty in 1979, while recognizing Beijing, the United States appeared to have accepted Taiwan's eventual return. But in 1979, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, warning China against any use of force, and Bush said in 2001 that he would do "whatever it takes" to keep Taiwan free.

Hence, we have the kind of ambiguity that led the kaiser to think Britain would not intervene to stop a German invasion of France.

Ambiguity needs to give way to clarity. For neither of us can want a war in the Taiwan Strait or beyond.

After the Berlin Olympics of 1936, return of the Sudetenland was suddenly on the table. After the Beijing Olympics of 2008, return of Taiwan to China is likely to be back on the front burner. ■

# Lone Star

Maverick Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul finds that being right is the one thing his party won't forgive.

**By Michael Brendan Dougherty**

AT FIRST GLANCE, he looks like every other congressman in the Canon Building. His suit is dark. His tie is striped. He is convivial with his colleagues, who genuinely like him. But there is something different about Ron Paul.

You can hear congressmen when they walk down the hall, strutting their own importance. After all, there are regulations to be implemented, special interests to serve, a teetering American Empire that would collapse without their management. They wear black or cordovan leather shoes—captoes, wingtips, and brogues—clacking down the hall, their bellies full of medium-rare steak from Capital Grille. They are surrounded by ambitious interns and legislative aides. They fiddle with their BlackBerries. You can't miss them tromping out of the elevators.

Ron Paul is easy to overlook. He takes the stairs; he does not have an entourage. You can't hear him coming because he's wearing plain black tennis shoes. In a bag he carries a can of soup that he will heat for himself in the microwave in his office. Beneath pictures of Austrian economists Frederick Von Hayek and Ludwig Von Mises, he will eat his lunch alone and in peace.

What is the purpose of Ron Paul's candidacy for the presidency of the United States? Some longshots run because their egos demand it. Others want to raise their lecture fees. Some run because they have plenty of money and nothing better to do. Following a

flood of viewer requests, the Texas congressman recently appeared on Fox News to explain himself. His answer was buoyant though laconic: "I want to be president because I have this dream. I'd like to reinstate the Constitution and restore the Republic." His answer was also revolutionary.

Paul's doggedness in advancing the causes of individual responsibility and limited government could intimidate almost anyone who clings to the label "conservative" or "libertarian." Perhaps that is why he avoids those abused designations and calls himself a "constitutionalist." His philosophy is simple: "no government intervention, not in personal life, not in economic life, not in affairs of other nations."

Naturally he opposes almost everything Congress does. The physician cum congressman earned the nickname "Dr. No" early on. His opposition to what he considers unconstitutional spending even earned the grudging respect of GOP leaders. When Newt Gingrich cracked the whip on party members to support a messy budget compromise, he excused Paul from the duty to support the budget, and the "Ron Paul exemption" entered the congressional vocabulary. What did it take for other members to earn this privilege to buck the party? A voting record that opposed all unnecessary federal spending, even in their home district. No one else has been granted the exemption.

When Paul does propose legislation, it is simple, direct, and radical. He's compiled an impressive list of bills that remain ignored to this day. H.R.1146: To end membership of the United States in the United Nations. H.R.776: To provide that human life shall be deemed to exist from conception. H.R.1658: To ensure that the courts interpret the Constitution in the manner that the Framers intended.

His cheerful consistency doesn't end there. Paul not only votes against nearly all government spending, he has refused to be the beneficiary of it as well. As a physician specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, he has delivered over 4,000 babies. He accepted no money from Medicare or Medicaid, often working for free for needy patients. With his support, his five children finished school without subsidized federal student loans. He has refused a congressional pension.

Monetary policy is the issue that brought Paul into politics in the '70s. Having read deeply in the Austrian school of economics, he was incensed at Nixon for going off the gold standard and ran in a special House election in the 22nd district of Texas.

It still preoccupies him. Paul gave a thrill to surviving goldbugs in the first GOP debate this year when he referred to "sound money." Since bimetallism and William Jennings Bryan shuffled off the political stage, widespread passion about monetary policy has been in short supply. But for Paul, the issue is still one