

Chinese Occupation and Taiwanese Resistance:
Predicting Taiwanese Insurgency

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China(s) and the United States
Fall 2005

Introduction

China is rapidly developing the military capability to invade and conquer Taiwan. However, in light of recent world events in Afghanistan and Iraq, China must realize that successful invasion would only be the first step to reclaiming Taiwan. Even if China assumes control over Taiwan under peaceful circumstances, they would likely face a hostile Taiwanese populace and at least some armed resistance. A Taiwanese insurgency could continue long after the Chinese assume effective control over the island. For long-term sovereignty, China's ability to suppress such rebellions may be more important than its ability to invade.

A Taiwanese insurgency would only be the most recent in a long history of such conflicts in the region. The recent history of Southeast Asia is replete with such movements, such as those in Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. China dealt with insurgencies in its own provinces of Xinjiang and Tibet as well as nonviolent resistance in Tiananmen Square and in Hong Kong. Taiwan's own history is marked by armed rebellion to a succession of foreign occupation by the Dutch, the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese, and the Kuomintang.

The first part of this paper will discuss these historical Asian insurgencies. The second part of this paper will consider this history in light of recent occupations in the Middle East to assess the likelihood of a strong Taiwanese resistance and the capability of China to defeat that insurgency and successfully rule Taiwan.

HISTORICAL INSURGENCIES IN EAST ASIA

Since the colonial era, Asian nations have been invaded and occupied by a variety of foreign powers. The European colonial powers, as well as imperial China and Japan, all set their eyes on smaller Asian nations to expand their territory. Almost every invasion was met with armed resistance, and almost every occupation was met with a major insurgency. The invading countries usually prevailed in the end, but in the twentieth century, rebellious populations have had increasing success, and most former colonies are now independent. However, each nation has a unique history, and this section will discuss a few of those nations in depth.

Western Colonialism in Southeast Asia

There is a long and complex history of western colonialism in Asia. The experience of European and American invaders and occupiers may provide lessons for a Chinese occupation of Taiwan. The contemporary model for success must be the American occupation of Japan where, following a total surrender, United States forces faced no armed resistance and in seven years transformed Japan into a democratic ally.¹ Most other western military occupations in Asia have been far more complex, and in a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, it is likely that China would face a situation more like the Western occupations of Taiwan's neighbors in Southeast Asia.

Vietnam

French colonial occupation of Vietnam began in 1858 and lasted almost a century. Although there were Vietnamese uprisings throughout the occupation, the most

¹ ALAN T. WOOD, *ASIAN DEMOCRACY IN WORLD HISTORY* 41 (Routledge 2004).

significant and ultimately successful movement began during World War II. Ho Chi Minh, who had embraced communism while in Europe between the wars, organized the Indochina Communist Party in 1941. During four years of Vichy France administration, the Party organized a patriotic front called the Viet Minh. When the French Indochina administration was removed in March 1945, the Viet Minh spread out networks of “liberation committees” and built an army. After the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, the puppet emperor abdicated control to the Viet Minh, establishing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945.²

The French reasserted control over southern Vietnam and in 1946 began fighting with the Viet Minh in the north, forcing Ho Chi Minh from Hanoi. Guerrilla warfare continued while the French established their own puppet government in Saigon, recognizing an “independent” Vietnam in 1949. Intense fighting continued between French and Viet Minh forces until 1954, when the French were dealt a crippling defeat in the 57-day battle of Dien Bien Phu. The French Indochina War ended in July 1954, when the Geneva Conference divided Vietnam along the 17th parallel into a Communist North Vietnam and a pro-Western South Vietnam with a promise of elections to unify the country in 1956.

The promise never materialized, and civil war began in 1957, with a significant escalation in 1964 following a major commitment of U.S. forces. After a decade of bitter fighting and millions of casualties on both sides, the U.S. withdrew in 1973. Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese in 1975, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established in 1976.

² CLIVE CHRISTIE, *IDEOLOGY AND REVOLUTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA 1900-1980* 94 (Curzon Press 2001).

France's failure to secure Vietnam can be primarily attributed to the success of Ho Chi Minh. He had learned from the failed Indochina Communist Party revolution of 1931 that a purely Marxist movement would be unsuccessful. Thus, the Viet Minh focused not on communism but on patriotism, including all elements of Vietnamese society willing to oppose French colonialism and Japanese fascism. This nationalistic philosophy allowed the Viet Minh to gain the support of the populace, and unite them against the French occupiers.³

The Vietnamese resistance also had military experience from fighting the Japanese and political support from the Chinese. Geography also helped the Viet Minh, since they were able to take positions in the north near their Communist allies and away from the Western armies in the South. The hilly jungle environment was particularly amenable to guerrilla warfare, which was evident in the battle of Dien Bien Phu, where the Viet Minh surrounded French forces in a jungle valley. Public opinion in France and the United States were also major factors. The French were less enamored with fighting for Vietnam after uprisings began in other colonies such as Algeria, and American public support wavered as the war dragged on through several Presidential elections. Although both the French and American forces had superior military capabilities, the Vietnamese were able to prolong the wars and ultimately earn victory through attrition.

Indonesia

Indonesia was actually the first of the Asian colonies to declare independence on August 17, 1945. This declaration resulted in several clashes with Japanese troops still on Java, but by September 1945, Allied troops constituted the bulk of the occupying force. The Indonesian resistance formed an army from the Indonesian soldiers professionally

³ *Id* at 96-98.

trained by the KNIL, the Dutch colonial army, and the Peta, guerrilla fighters trained under Japanese occupation. There were several skirmishes between this Indonesian Republican army and Allied forces, but this fighting stopped in November 1946 when the two sides reached a peace agreement guaranteeing Indonesian independence by 1949.⁴

This peace agreement allowed British and other Allied troops to withdraw from Indonesia, but the Dutch were not willing to abandon their former colony. In July 1947, the Dutch launched a large-scale military invasion that secured half of Java and the richest territories on Sumatra. The United Nations stepped in and forced negotiations in January 1948 in which the young Indonesian Republic ceded the lost territory to the Dutch in return for a promise of eventual independence. This weakness angered the more radical elements of the Indonesian resistance, and a leftist uprising in the East Java city in Madiun in 1948 led to a government crackdown. The Dutch, seeing this weakness, launched a second military attack in December of that year, which captured almost the entire territory of Indonesia but failed to defeat the Indonesian army, which prepared to wage a guerilla war.⁵

This war never materialized because American diplomatic pressure forced recognition of Indonesian independence in December 1949. Thus Indonesia became not only the first Asian nation to proclaim its independence, but also the first to successfully defend that independence against a former colonial power.⁶

There was no shortage of divisions within the Indonesian resistance, with Islamic and communist activists vying for power. However, like the Viet Minh, the Indonesians rallied around nationalism. This nationalistic spirit also characterized more peaceful

⁴ COLIN BROWN, A SHORT HISTORY OF INDONESIA 145-65 (Colin Brown 2003).

⁵ *Id.* at 165-69.

⁶ *Id.* at 169.

independence movements in the Philippines and Burma, as well as some more violent insurgencies across Southeast Asia. The success of Asian nations in achieving independence could be interpreted as a victory for Maoist insurgency or the inevitable triumph of self-governance, but as the history of Vietnam and Indonesia reveal, there were many tactical and political issues that made a difference. For China and Taiwan, questions of sovereignty and self-governance are far more complex, and the history is unique in its own right.

A History of Insurgency in Taiwan

The history of Taiwan is one of successive military occupation and nearly constant insurgency. Since the Dutch first arrived in Taiwan in 1622, the island has been a frequent target of colonial powers both Asian and European. Before that time, Taiwan was populated largely by Malayo-Polynesian aborigines, and outside visitors were typically Chinese pirates hiding from imperial authorities. Several Chinese dynasties had explored the island, but none claimed it as Chinese territory. In fact, when the Dutch arrived in the fifteenth century, the Ming dynasty explicitly forbade Chinese immigration to Taiwan.⁷

Dutch Occupation (1624-61)

In 1604, the Dutch occupied the Penghu islands off the coast of Taiwan, but the Ming navy forced their retreat. The Dutch returned in 1622 to fortify Penghu but were again defeated in an eight-month war with the Ming. However, the Chinese did not object when the Dutch retreated to Taiwan, which they would rule over for the next 40 years. The Dutch colony of Formosa was based primarily in southern Taiwan, with its

⁷ GARY MARVIN DAVISON, *A SHORT HISTORY OF TAIWAN: THE CASE FOR INDEPENDENCE* 4-5 (2003).

first settlement at Anping. The Spanish briefly occupied northern Taiwan, but in 1642 the Spaniards abandoned their colonies after constant attacks from the Dutch at sea and aborigines on land.⁸

The Dutch sought to expand their territory inland, and they built Fort Provintia near present-day Tainan. The aborigines resisted fiercely, with the most prominent battle occurring in 1635 during the Great Matou Resistance. However, the Dutch guns and artillery slaughtered hundreds of thousands of aborigines, and the entire southwestern plain was secured by the late 1630's. The Dutch used this land primarily for farming, and they established a lucrative trade with Japan and China in deer hides, venison, rice, and sugarcane.⁹

There was also significant Chinese immigration to Taiwan during this time, and in 1652, a Chinese trader living in Taiwan, Guo Huaiyi, led a 16,000-man army in rebellion against the Dutch. They successfully set Fort Provintia ablaze, but the Dutch quelled the rebellion with the help of tens of thousands of aborigine fighters who considered the Chinese immigrants as foreign invaders no different from the Dutch. Thousands of Chinese and aborigines died in the battle.¹⁰

Koxinga (1661-83)

The fall of the Ming dynasty in China precipitated the end of Dutch rule over Taiwan. The central character in this era was Koxinga, the son of a powerful Chinese pirate-trader in the Taiwan Strait and a prominent leader of Ming resistance against the invading Qing forces in southern China. In 1658, Koxinga's forces launched a major counteroffensive and surrounded the Qing in Nanjing. This siege was ultimately

⁸ *Id.* at 6.

⁹ *Id.* at 10-11.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 11-12.

unsuccessful, and Koxinga was forced to retreat to the southeastern coast of China, taking positions on the islands of Jinmen and Xiamen.¹¹

Koxinga saw Taiwan as a temporary refuge from which he could launch a counterattack so in 1661, he led 25,000 troops across the Taiwan Strait. Koxinga's forces quickly seizing Penghu and landed on the Taiwanese mainland. They laid siege to the Dutch forces for seven months and forced their surrender. In early 1662, the Dutch evacuated Taiwan and Koxinga took control of the island. Koxinga died from malaria soon after his victory, but his son would rule the island for the next two decades, during which the population of Taiwan grew 40% as Chinese refugees fled the mainland. Although Ming loyalists in southern China continued to resist, the Qing armies eventually prevailed, and in 1683 the Qing naval captain Du Shi Lang attacked Penghu, which fell after seven days. The Taiwanese surrendered soon after and on August 22, 1683, Taiwan came to be governed by the Chinese mainland for the first time in its history.¹²

Qing Occupation (1684-1895)

In 1684, the population of Qing-controlled Taiwan was approximately 150,000. The Qing severely restricted immigration to Taiwan, but Chinese continued to brave the Strait in search of a better life, and within fifty years the Taiwanese population had nearly tripled to 415,000. By 1777, the population was almost 840,000; by the end of Qing rule in 1890 the population exceeded 2.5 million. This growth was fueled by a bustling agrarian economy in the expansive western plains of Taiwan.¹³

¹¹ *Id.* at 16.

¹² *Id.* at 17-20.

¹³ *Id.* at 25-30.

Qing rule over Taiwan was marked by constant insurgency manifested in over a hundred large and small rebellions. The most serious occurred in 1721 following an earthquake near Khaoshiung. The Qing prefect for the area showed little sympathy for the victims of the earthquake, and when Qing representatives meted out harsh punishments to those that could not pay their taxes, a duck farmer named Zhu Yigui led an armed rebellion. The Qing, like the Dutch before them, rallied aborigine forces to their side, but the Chinese immigrant community was much larger in the sixteenth century, and this only incited more people to rebel. Zhu's forces were joined by other the insurgent groups, and they formed the Anti-Qing People's Army, which captured the city of Tainan and moved up the coast, capturing almost all of Taiwan except for Danshui. On May 11, 1721, Zhu took the title of "Reviving King" and established a Ming-style administration. His reign was ultimately short-lived, as internal rivalries divided his army just as Qing reinforcements arrived from the mainland. On June 28, 1721, Qing forces captured Zhu and regained control of the island.¹⁴

In 1786, a less-expansive but longer-lasting rebellion arose out of central Taiwan. Qing officials sought to crack down against the associates of Lin Shuangwen, a longtime Ming loyalist in the village of Daliyi. Qing brutality against the local populace sparked an uprising on January 16, 1787, and Lin organized an army that quickly seized Taichung, Chungwa, and Hsinchu. Lin assumed the title of "King of the Ming" and established a capital in Chungwa. The rebels also gained control over Fengshan but were unable to capture Tainan. Qing reinforcements soon arrived from the mainland but the rebels were able to defend their holdings until Lin Cou, one of Lin Shuangwen's generals defected to

¹⁴ *Id.* at 31-33.

the Qing. On February 10, 1788, after effectively ruling central Taiwan for over a year, Lin Shuangwen was captured and later executed.¹⁵

Japanese Occupation (1895-1945)

When Qing China lost the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the April 17 Treaty of Shimonoseki gave several Chinese territories to Japan, including the Penghu islands and Taiwan. Upon hearing of this arrangement, Qing official Tang Jingsong declared himself the president of a new Republic of Taiwan. However, Tang had few allies when the Japanese arrived and by the 12th day of his republic, he had fled the island on a British ship bound for Xiamen. The vice-president left Taiwan soon after, but the leader of the Taiwanese army, Liu Yongfu, resisted the Japanese for nearly five months in southern Taiwan before he too fled to Xiamen on October 19, 1895.¹⁶

Armed resistance continued in the form of guerrilla warfare until 1902, with some 20,000 Taiwanese and more than 5,000 Japanese killed, but Japanese rule was secure within a decade. The Japanese maintained tight control of the island and embarked on a rapid modernization program. The agrarian economy became industrialized and a cross-island railroad was built. The Japanese also expanded educational opportunities for the Taiwanese populace, and many Taiwanese served in the colonial government. The population grew steadily to nearly 6 million in 1943. During World War II, more than 200,000 Taiwanese served in the Japanese Imperial Navy or the Imperial Army, and some 30,000 gave their lives for Japan.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Id.* at 34-35.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 50-52.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 54, 62-63, 75.

Kuomintang Occupation (1945-2000)

At the end of World War II, the island of Taiwan passed to the Chinese Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang Party. The transition from Japanese rule displaced many Taiwanese officials, and the first Kuomintang (KMT) representatives to arrive from the mainland were corrupt and unsympathetic to their constituents. This led to many early protests that culminated in a confrontation that came to be known as the February 28th Incident.¹⁸

On the evening of February 27, 1947, a middle-aged woman selling black market cigarettes was roughly handled by KMT police outside the Taipei railroad station. A crowd gathered to defend the woman, and the police opened fire, killing several and wounding others. Word of this confrontation spread quickly, and soon the streets of Taipei were filled with protesters. Angry mobs seized the main police station and took control of a number of government offices. This civil unrest spread throughout Taiwan and Taiwanese intellectuals issued a forceful demand for self-government.¹⁹

The KMT were not able to regain control until military reinforcements arrived on March 8, and they did so with force. Chen Yi, the chief administrator of Taiwan Province, declared martial law and the KMT army began indiscriminate shooting in Taipei. On March 13, the authorities began an operation to exterminate traitors throughout Taiwan, beating and killing more than 40,000 Taiwanese. Memories of the February 28th Incident would serve to fuel the Taiwanese resistance throughout the KMT occupation.²⁰

¹⁸ *Id.* at 74-79.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 79.

²⁰ *Id.* at 80-81

Taiwan's status changed dramatically in 1949 when Chiang Kai-Shek lost the Chinese Civil War. Nearly two million refugees fled the mainland with retreating KMT forces, and after the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. Navy prevented the Communists from crossing the Taiwan Strait. The KMT established a provisional capital for the Republic of China in Taipei and martial law, briefly lifted after the February 28th Incident, was reestablished in May 1948 and backed by the full force of the KMT army. Chiang Kai-Shek served as the President of the Republic of China and the Legislative Yuan was populated by representatives from each province of China, who like Chiang had come to Taipei from Nanking. These government officials served indefinite terms awaiting elections to take place after the conquest of mainland China.²¹

With the aid of substantial U.S. investment, Taiwan's economy boomed through the 1950's and 1960's. By the 1970's a substantial middle class began to demand political representation. Chiang Kai-Shek passed away in 1975 and his son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, assumed the Presidency. Chiang Ching-Kuo began a process of replacing aging Chinese bureaucrats from Nanking with qualified Taiwanese officials. More radical elements of the Taiwanese populace agitated for direct representation through a "Tangwei" or "outside the party" movement. In local elections, the Tangwei candidates began to win seats in the provincial legislature and executive positions in towns and counties.²²

In 1980, the KMT arrested several prominent Tangwei activists in Kaohsiung, but the political tide had already turned. On September 28, 1986, activists formed a new political party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). On October 15, 1986, the KMT

²¹ *Id.* at 83-85.

²² *Id.* at 98-100.

announced that martial law would be lifted by the summer of 1987. Chiang Ching-Kuo lived just long enough to see the end of martial law, and after his death in January of 1988, he was succeeded by the first Taiwanese-born President of the Republic of China.²³

That man was Lee Teng-hui, and he led a rapid democratization of both the KMT and the Taiwanese government. The legislative branch became more representative of the people of Taiwan, and the government distanced itself from the fiction that it governed all of China. President Lee was re-elected as President of Taiwan in the first direct election in 1996. In 2000, Chen Shui-Bian, the DPP candidate, won the Presidency, effectively ending the KMT's 55-year reign over Taiwan.²⁴

Chinese Territories

Taiwan is not the only Chinese territory with disputed sovereignty. China's two far western territories, Tibet and Xinjiang, are under Chinese control through successful military occupation. There are also other territories, Hong Kong and Macau, which acceded to Chinese control peacefully after being former European colonies. Both these examples may serve as a model for the annexation of Taiwan.

Tibet

Immediately prior to 1950, Tibet was outside the effective governance of modern China, although various Chinese dynasties had claimed it throughout history. On October 7, 1950, Chinese forces occupied Tibet and formal annexation was announced on May 23, 1951. A treaty was signed that allowed the Tibetan authorities to share governance, but this arrangement did not last long. In 1956, open rebellion broke out in

²³ *Id.* at 100-104.

²⁴ *Id.* at 106-113.

Amdo and Kham. The Tibetan resistance seized much of southern Tibet, but they were defeated in 1959, when the Dalai Lama was forced to flee into Nepal.²⁵

Resistance forces continued a guerrilla war for another decade, but unlike in the Southeast Asian nations, they were unsuccessful in repelling their invaders. The Tibetan government still operates in exile, with over 100,000 citizens in India and Nepal and others scattered around the world. However, the territory of Tibet has been under China's control for several decades and there is no foreseeable change in circumstances.

While control is undisputed, China has granted Tibet the status of an "autonomous region," which guarantees an ethnic Tibetan head of government. This policy borrows from Soviet practice, and it ostensibly allows some degree of self-rule for the residents of Tibet. However, the Tibetan leaders are still appointed by Communist Party leaders in Beijing, and true autonomy is relatively limited.

Xinjiang

Just north of Tibet in China's western frontier is another autonomous region populated primarily by Muslim Uyghurs. Like Tibet, Xinjiang has a long history of limited Chinese control. After the fall of the Qing dynasty, local warlords asserted control over the territory, and an Islamic Republic of Turkestan was briefly established in 1933. Both the Soviet Union and the Nationalist government of China attempted to claim the area prior to World War II, but the Chinese Communists quickly asserted control after 1949. Although there were negotiations with the warlords of Xinjiang, many of the Uyghur leaders were mysteriously killed in a plane crash in August 1949. The Kazakh

²⁵ THE TERRITORIES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA 240-42, Tara Boland-Crewe & David Lea, eds. (Europa 2002).

chieftain Osman Batur continued a guerrilla campaign, but he was eventually captured and executed in February 1951.²⁶

The Uyghur resistance in Xinjiang has never been fully suppressed, and violence has erupted in several incidents over the years. In the Kazakh Exodus of 1962, 60,000 refugees fled into the Soviet Union. The Baren Township riot on April 5, 1990 resulted in more than 50 deaths. 200 died in the Ghulja riot of February 5, 1997, where over 1000 Uyghurs clashed with military police. Urumqi bus bombs on February 25, 1997 killed 9 and injured 68. Although the occupation of Xinjiang has been more difficult than that of Tibet, the Chinese have certainly been able to assert effective control, and with the immigration of some 7 million ethnic Chinese into the province since 1949, there is no foreseeable end to Chinese rule.²⁷

Hong Kong and Macau

China governs the territories of Hong Kong and Macau as “Special Administrative Regions” (SAR’s), which are conferred a higher degree of autonomy than “autonomous regions.” Under a policy set forth by Deng Xiaoping, these SAR’s operate a separate political system and a capitalist economy under the policy of “one country, two systems.” Hong Kong and Macau have their own judiciaries, immigration policies, and currencies, and Chinese national laws do not generally apply.²⁸

This peculiar arrangement has its history in European colonialism. Hong Kong was established as a British colony in 1842 after the end of the Opium War. In 1898, the Qing Dynasty granted the British a 99-year lease to Hong Kong, and the city developed into a center of commerce in Southeast Asia. In 1982, the British premier visited Beijing

²⁶ *Id.* at 234-36.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.* at 261.

to discuss the expiration of the lease, and both parties agreed to a “one country, two systems” framework for the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. The Chinese guaranteed that Hong Kong’s capitalist economy, legal institutions and education system would remain unaltered for at least 50 years.²⁹

Macau was conceded by the Qing to the Portuguese in 1887, and it was the only Asian colony not to be occupied by Japan during World War II. As Hong Kong flourished as a trading port, Macau became a center for more dubious activities, such as smuggling, gambling, and organized crime. In the 1950’s and 60’s, Macau was a province of Portugal with its own representation in the national legislature, but it reverted to territorial status in 1976 to appease the Chinese. In March 1980, a governor of Macau visited Beijing for the first time. After the British successfully negotiated the transfer of Hong Kong, Portugal agreed to the same arrangement in 1987, and Macau returned to Chinese control in 1999.³⁰

Both Hong Kong and Macau elect their Chief Executives through Election Committees and their Legislative Councils through direct election. The Chinese administration of Hong Kong has been marked by numerous protests but no armed resistance. A peaceful demonstration of about 500,000 citizens defeated an anti-subversion law in 2003. A smaller demonstration in 2005 protested the lack of a formal timetable for transition to direct election of the Chief Executive. The smaller and poorer population of Macau has been generally quieter during Chinese rule.

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.* at 265-66.

PREDICTING THE SUCCESS OF OCCUPATION

The history of East Asia in the twentieth century is filled with military occupations and rebellious insurgencies, and these examples may help to predict the course of future conflicts. Every single military occupation of Taiwan over 400 years has been met with armed resistance. The question is not whether China will face such a resistance but whether it will be able to defeat it. Some Taiwanese insurgencies have lasted over several years with many thousands of deaths, but each one was eventually quelled by the occupying force. However, more recent insurgencies have been successful in Vietnam and Indonesia, and political movements have successfully thwarted authoritarian rule in many other countries, including KMT-ruled Taiwan. Identifying the factors that contribute to successful occupation can help China determine its own likelihood of success in Taiwan.

Analyzing Asian Insurgencies

The failed western occupations of Southeast Asia can serve as a lesson to China in a potential occupation of Taiwan. Military superiority is only one factor in successful occupation, and it may be the least important factor. The geography, military experience, and nationalistic spirit of the occupied territory may be able to form an almost invincible insurgency. These factors helped the Indonesians score diplomatic points while losing the military battle, and it allowed the Vietnamese to hold out for three decades while engaged with superior military forces. The critical factor for successful occupation may be the political willpower of the occupying country, which may include both domestic political support and international pressure. It was not until France and the United States

relented that Vietnam finally won its full independence. It was not until the Netherlands capitulated to UN pressure that Indonesia expelled its occupiers. China could not likely occupy Taiwan without firm resolve and international support.

Table I. Twentieth Century Military Occupations in East Asia

Occupied Territory	Occupying Force	Dates	Resistance		Outcome
			Dates	Description	
Malaysia	British	1824-1942			
	Japanese	1942-1945			
	British	1945-1957	1948-1960 1957	MRLA Peaceful	Defeat <i>Independence</i>
Myanmar	British	1886-1942			
	Japanese	1942-1945	1944-1945	AFO	<i>Independence</i>
	British	1945-1947	1947	Peaceful	<i>Independence</i>
Philippines	American	1898-1941	1899-1913	Aguinaldo	Defeat
	Japanese	1941-1944			
	American	1944-1946	1946	Peaceful	<i>Independence</i>
Indonesia	Dutch	1602-1940			
	Japanese	1941-1945			
	Dutch	1945-1949	1945-1949	Sukarno	<i>Independence</i>
Laos	French	1858-1940			
	Japanese	1940-1945			
	French	1945-1954	1946-1954	Indochina	<i>Independence</i>
Cambodia	French	1858-1940			
	Japanese	1940-1945			
	French	1945-1954	1946-1954	Indochina	<i>Independence</i>
Vietnam	French	1858-1940			
	Japanese	1940-1945			
	French	1945-1954	1946-1954	Indochina	<i>Independence</i>
	American		1964-1975	Viet. War	<i>Independence</i>
Korea	Japanese	1895-1945			
	American	1945-1948	1948	Peaceful	<i>Independence</i>
	Russian	1945-1948	1948	Peaceful	<i>Independence</i>
Japan	American	1945-1952	1952	Peaceful	<i>Independence</i>

Table I lists every military occupation in East and Southeast Asia during the twentieth century and identifies major resistance movements and their results. The most prominent insurgent success was French Indochina, where Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

earned their independence. Like the Indonesian insurgency, this movement benefited greatly from the interruption in European power that occurred during Japanese occupation, which allowed local activists to seize power. After World War II, many European colonial powers were also far less willing to engage in protracted warfare. The political climate of the Cold War led many Western powers to grant independence as a contrast to Soviet tactics, and Asian nations were the beneficiaries.

Table II lists the occupations of Chinese territories, including Taiwan, where no armed resistance has been successful. Unlike western powers, China has not had much of a problem with domestic political will. Their persistence has earned them sovereignty over Tibet and Xinjiang, and diplomacy has earned them Hong Kong and Macau. In Taiwan, the successful resistance was a political one.

Table II. Chinese and Taiwanese Occupations

Occupied Territory	Occupying Force	Dates	Resistance		Outcome
Tibet	British	1904-1907			
	Chinese	1907-1911			
	Chinese	1951-Present	1956-1959	Lama	Exile
Xinjiang	Chinese	1884-Present	1933	Turkistan	Defeat
			1945-1949	East Turk.	Defeat
			1949-1951	Batur	Defeat
			1997	Urumqi	Isolated
Hong Kong	British	1842-1941			
	Japanese	1941-1945			
	British	1945-1997			
	Chinese	1997-Present			
Macau	Portuguese	1553-1999			
	Chinese	1999-Present			
Taiwan	Japanese	1895-1945	1895-1902	Liu	Defeated
	Chinese (KMT)	1945-2000	1947	2/28 Incid.	Defeated
			1986-Pres.	DPP	<i>Election</i>

Although political factors have been a significant factor in most conflicts, the military success of insurgents in Vietnam should not be underestimated. The Viet Minh

survived for three decades against determined and militarily superior enemies. This success was not merely a product of Western capitulation. The Vietnamese enjoyed a strong geographic base in northern Vietnam that came with local political support. The Viet Minh was also well-armed and had military experience resisting the Vichy French occupation. They also had the support of Communist allies such as the Soviet Union and China. Vietnam is only one example of failed Western occupations since World War II, which include French Algeria, Portuguese Guinea-Bissau, and Soviet Afghanistan. Military occupation in the modern world has become an increasingly difficult task.

Modern Insurgencies

In the present day, there are very few military invasions and almost none with the intention of occupying a sovereign territory. With international norms emphasizing self-government, the colonial era has long been over. The Soviet Union continued in this model for many decades, but even former Soviet territories have now all reverted to self-governance. A Chinese occupation of Taiwan would find few direct analogues in the present-day world, but there are certainly similar circumstances.

The present-day occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan are the two most prominent examples, and Chinese officials are undoubtedly aware of U.S. difficulties in these two fronts of the War on Terror. Despite achieving swift and decisive military victory over Iraq in less than a month, the U.S.-led coalition has been fighting Iraqi insurgents for over two years. Major Taliban insurgency did not subside for a similar length of time in Afghanistan.

The difficulty of securing Iraq and Afghanistan is exacerbated by the complex nature of modern insurgencies. Even moreso than the Maoist insurgencies of twentieth century Asia, these new insurgencies are almost impossible to identify and isolate.³¹ This is primarily because they are only loosely connected, with numerous cells working independently.³² This is partly a product of a shared religious ideology among Islamic radicals, but the new technology of the internet has also changed the way such insurgencies are able to operate. Information can now travel more quickly and connections can be formed across wide distances.³³ New weapons technology has also greatly aided insurgents over the past half-century. Where a single insurgent could cause only limited damage in the nineteenth century, the advent of improvised explosive devices, automatic weapons, and small concealable weapons have allowed modern insurgencies to inflict damage in disproportion to their size while evading capture.

Many military analysts have argued that fighting against this new breed of insurgent requires new tactics different from a classical counter-guerrilla campaign.³⁴ A strategy of overwhelming force is not enough to defeat the modern complex insurgency. The most important fronts of counter-insurgency efforts may not be on the battlefield but in the strategic populations of both the occupying and occupied countries.³⁵ To defeat a complex insurgency, countries must maintain popular support at home as well as in the occupied territory.³⁶

³¹ JOHN MACKINLAY, *DEFEATING COMPLEX INSURGENCY* 19 (Whitehall Paper Series 2005).

³² *Id.* at 24.

³³ *Id.* at 38.

³⁴ *Id.* at 21 *citing* David Kilcullen, *Countering Global Insurgency*, Washington and Canberra (November 2004).

³⁵ *Id.* at 55-56.

³⁶ *Id.* at 60.

China has dealt with similar issues in its occupations of Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, and the insurgency in Xinjiang even has Islamist ties. The Chinese have had little success turning the tide of public opinion in Tibet, and recent protests in Hong Kong demonstrate trouble there as well.³⁷ However, China has had great success in controlling public opinion within its own population with an unwavering assertion of sovereignty over its disputed territories.³⁸ Although major resistance movements still exist, Chinese efforts in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong must be considered a success in comparison to Iraq. However, Taiwan is likely to present a far greater challenge.

Taiwanese Insurgency

This paper has attempted to identify the major factors that predict the outcome when an occupation encounters an insurgency, and this final section will apply that analysis to a potential Chinese occupation of Taiwan. The most obvious factor is the military capability of the occupying force, and in particular, its counter-insurgency capability. The next most important question to ask is the nature and strength of the insurgency, which is a combination of social, political, and military factors. Public opinion in both the occupying and occupied territories become important in the long-term, as does foreign influence. With the rapid economic and political change in both China and Taiwan today, all these factors are in flux, so there is no simple answer to this question. This section will not consider the circumstances leading to military occupation, which may occur through successful invasion, capitulation following a blockade,

³⁷ ALLEN CARLSON, UNIFYING CHINA, INTEGRATING WITH THE WORLD 105 (Stanford University Press 2005).

³⁸ *Id.* at 95.

peaceful transfer of power, or through some unforeseen circumstance. The analysis will be limited to the simple question of the success or failure of a military occupation.

Most observers agree that China does not yet have the military capability to invade and conquer Taiwan.³⁹ However, the Chinese army is already well-suited for a military occupation, and it has experience with such operations in Tibet and Xinjiang. The shortcomings of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) are primarily in naval forces and these are far less important during an occupation. The PLA's overwhelming numbers could cover a lot of ground and could likely defeat any large military resistance after a successful invasion. The PLA has its origins in Mao's guerrilla army that fought the Japanese and was victorious over the KMT during the Chinese Civil War, so it should be well-heelled for such a conflict with Taiwan. In strict military terms, China would appear to be well-positioned to combat a Taiwanese insurgency.

However, Taiwan also appears well-positioned to mount a formidable resistance. The DPP, the current ruling party on the island, has its roots in rebellious activities as part of the Tangwai movement against the KMT. The current President, Chen Shui-bian, was once arrested in 1986 for pro-independence political activities.⁴⁰ Supporters of the DPP are no longer a small radical population of Taiwanese; they are a slim majority. Not all pro-DPP voters would be willing to take up arms, but many would be sympathetic towards an armed insurgency. It is almost inevitable that some of these individuals will take the fight to invading Chinese forces. Every occupation of Taiwan has been met with armed resistance, and there is no reason to believe that the future would yield anything different.

³⁹ See, e.g. Michael O'Hanlon, *Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan*, 25 INTERNATIONAL SECURITY 51-86 (Fall 2000).

⁴⁰ DAVIDSON at 102.

There is mandatory military service for all adult males in Taiwan, so there would be an ample reserve of qualified fighters for the insurgency. This may be dampened somewhat by the substantial middle-class wealth in Taiwan, since people may not be willing to give up their comfortable lives to fight for independence. It was this promise of economic prosperity that suppressed Taiwanese resistance for so long under KMT rule, and this attitude may carry over in a Chinese occupation. There are few analogous situations in other military occupations, because invaded countries are rarely as well-developed as Taiwan. This effect may be limited however, because the individuals most likely to be sympathetic to the insurgency, voters for the DPP, are also among the younger and poorer residents of Taiwan. This demographic group of poor young male DPP supporters would be a fertile recruiting ground for a Taiwanese insurgency.

The high technology of Taiwan may also contribute to a successful insurgency. Like the modern Islamist insurgencies, the Taiwanese would likely be adept at communicating through the internet and engineering improvised explosive devices. Taiwanese weaponry is also relatively advanced, and the insurgents would be well-armed. Geography could also play a large role in insurgent success, because parts of Taiwan are similar to the terrain of Vietnam or Indonesia where other insurgencies have had success. There is a natural location for insurgents to hide in the central mountain ranges, and there may also be a natural geographic split as was the case in Vietnam. The invading Chinese army would likely take the capital of Taipei, which would allow the Taiwanese to organize in the south. The DPP enjoys large majorities in southern Taiwan, and international support would most likely come from that area through the port of

Khaoshiung. Geography may also work against the Taiwanese however, since all aid would have to come by sea.

The strengths on both sides of the Strait would likely result in a protracted insurgency. If the resistance is relatively small, the Chinese could likely maintain sovereignty as they have in Tibet in Xinjiang. However, a larger insurgency could greatly disrupt both the Taiwanese and Chinese economies, and such a conflict would test public opinion both on the island and in the Chinese mainland. China could likely control its own populous through state propaganda, but with each passing year, this becomes more difficult as China becomes wealthier and more open to the outside world. Modest success by a Taiwanese insurgency may also have a ripple effect on the mainland, encouraging resistance elements in Tibet and Xinjiang to be more aggressive. Latent political unrest may also see such a conflict as an opportunity to take action, and China may find itself fighting a battle on multiple fronts.

Public opinion on Taiwan would likely strongly favor the insurgency. Most Taiwanese favor eventual independence, although there is a strong bias towards the status quo, and there are substantial numbers that favor eventual reunification. The population would likely remain split in the event of Chinese occupation, and this could vary substantially depending on the circumstances that led to Chinese control. However, insurgents do not necessarily require overwhelming public support to be successful, and they will at least have a strong base in the DPP-strongholds of southern Taiwan. Unless China could make credible its promises of autonomy, it would be very difficult to win the opinion battle on the island. As shown by Chinese experience in Tibet and Xinjiang, convincing a local populace to give up sovereignty is no easy task.

Like the latent conflict between Taiwan and China in the present day, an occupation and insurgency would not likely be resolved without the capitulation of one side or the other. Given foreseeable political circumstances, neither side seems likely to fold if they were to find themselves in a situation of occupation and insurgency. A Chinese withdrawal from Taiwan after a failed military occupation would effectively concede the island, while a Taiwanese surrender would abandon the self-governing autonomy many Taiwanese activists have fought for their entire lives. This battle of wills would not likely be resolved without some foreign intervention.

With the Cold War over, western nations have far less at stake in the outcome of a China-Taiwan conflict. However, many nations may sympathize with Taiwan as a self-governing democratic nation, and if the conflict continues for a significant length of time, western nations would suffer economically due to trade disruptions from two major exporting nations. The international community would not tolerate a protracted conflict, and the United Nations would put immense pressure on the Chinese to quickly resolve the issue, as they once did with the Dutch in Indonesia. If an international solution is required, China would certainly wield substantial influence in contrast to Taiwan, but there would likely be a bias towards Taiwanese independence, which comports with the established international principle of self-determination.

There is no way to truly unequivocally predict the success of a Taiwanese insurgency, and the U.S. experience in Iraq and Afghanistan underscores this uncertainty. However, the factors are trending towards the Taiwanese side. As China democratizes, it will begin to encounter the same problems that prevented western nations from successfully occupying their colonies. As the Taiwanese populace becomes more and

Chinese Occupation and Taiwanese Resistance

more amenable to independence, the potential strength of an insurgency grows. If a Chinese occupation is unable to secure control over Taiwan within a reasonable period of time, it will be very difficult to keep other countries out of the conflict because the two countries are such integral players in world trade. Foreign countries, especially the powerful western democracies, could find it politically unfeasible to abandon Taiwan over to the Chinese. The result would likely be the same the Southeast Asian insurgencies of the twentieth century. A Chinese military occupation, if met with a robust Taiwanese insurgency, would lead to an international solution granting Taiwanese independence.