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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this bachelor thesis is to further specify the conditions of qualification of a situation as being one of compellence or deterrence. As is illustrated by the debate over the qualification of the Cuban missile crisis, this task should not be taken lightly. While some authors have determined this situation to be one of deterrence (George and Smoke, 1974; Huth and Russet, 1984), other authors have determined it to be one of compellence (Lebow, 1990; Garthoff, 1989). This debate should be extended to other crises, to further construct a solid distinction between deterrence situations and situations of compellence. This thesis will focus in particular on two of the five crises in Asia in which the United States was involved (Huth and Russet, 1984). The first (1954-1955) and second crisis (1958) in the Taiwanese Strait represent not only a large portion of all the crises in Asia it also involves two important states; the United States and China now controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). These two nations were, next to the US-Soviet relations, the most important blocs in the cold war. The U.S. even went as far as establishing the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) as the biggest threat in Asia (Chang, 1990). Like the Cuban missile crisis the qualification of these crises are also disputed (Lebow and Stein, 1990; George and Smoke, 1974; Huth and Russet, 1984).

The debate between Lebow and Stein (1990) and Huth and Russet (1990), which will be further examined below, is the main source of argument. This debate is mainly focused on the classification of the crises as either a situation of deterrence or compellence, in basic terms the difference between the two is a matter of initiative. In a deterrence situation, an actor attempts to block a certain action by another state which would change the current situation (status quo). By blocking this course of action, the deterrent state attempts to maintain the status quo. In a situation of compellence, an actor attempts to coerce another actor to adopt a certain course of action that would change the status quo. The coercing actor is therefore attempting to change the status quo. A further elaboration on these differences is provided in an upcoming section.

It is explicitly not the aim of this study to determine a causal relationship, rather to provide suggestions for the improvement of the methods of determining the nature of a crisis. Neither is this thesis concerned with determining the causes of success or

failure of either strategy, once each crisis is properly classified. The research-question is therefore as follows; Are the two crises in the Taiwanese Strait cases of deterrence or compellence?

As discussed above the main claim on which this thesis is built comes from the work of Lebow and Stein (1990). These authors claim that the crises can both be classified as a situation of compellence as well as a situation of deterrence, this is entirely dependent on the perspective of each actor. From the perspective of the United States (U.S.) the situation is determined to be one of deterrence, as they saw Communist China as a threat to the Republic of China (R.O.C.), which resided on the island of Taiwan (harboring the Nationalist Kuomintang (K.M.T.) government). The U.S. had increased interest in this island as they believed it was crucial to protect, as the fall of the islands would have massive symbolic impact on both the reputation of the United States and the morale in the rest of Asia (Chang, 1990). From the Chinese perspective the situation can be classified as a situation of compellence, as the U.S. used threats to coerce the Chinese Communists into accepting an unnatural division of their country (Lebow, 1990). The main argument for a qualification of the two crises as a compellence situation is therefore that, from the Chinese perspective, the situation can be seen as a compellence-based strategy on part of the U.S..

On the opposing side, the main argument is formulated by Huth and Russett (1990) in response to the claims made by Lebow and Stein (1990). They argue that their initial qualification of these crises as being a situation of deterrence (Huth and Russett, 1984) was objectively justified. They assert that the claims of the U.S. did not focus on forcing Beijing to accept a division of their country, but on deterring a possible invasion. This means that the situation was simply of a defensive nature. Furthermore, all the signs of a possible communist invasion of Taiwan were present. Because of these and other factors, the situation can be classified as one of deterrence.

This discussion forms the major basis of this thesis. To properly define the distinction between the two situation we must use the conditions which are formulated by Schelling (1966). Schelling (1966), who coined the term compellence, describes the difference between the two as a matter of control over the coercive threat.

The distinction between a situation of deterrence and one of compellence is highly dependent on the timing of threats and the control over the threat. In basic terms this can be translated to one simple difference, deterrence is a situation in which the coercing actor draws a line which is not to be crossed. In a situation of compellence the compellent actor already takes initiative to coerce the other actor into a certain action (Schelling, 1966). An analogy provided by Schelling (1966) himself is one that involves vehicles. If actor A uses his vehicle to block the projected path of the vehicle of actor B, this is considered a situation of deterrence. A situation of compellence is different. Here, actor A increases the velocity of its vehicle to the point that a collision is inevitable unless actor B moves from his current path. A graphical representation of each of the different situations is given in figure one and figure two. These graphs are taken from the sheets of Pellikaan (2019) in order to further clarify the difference between deterrence and compellence.

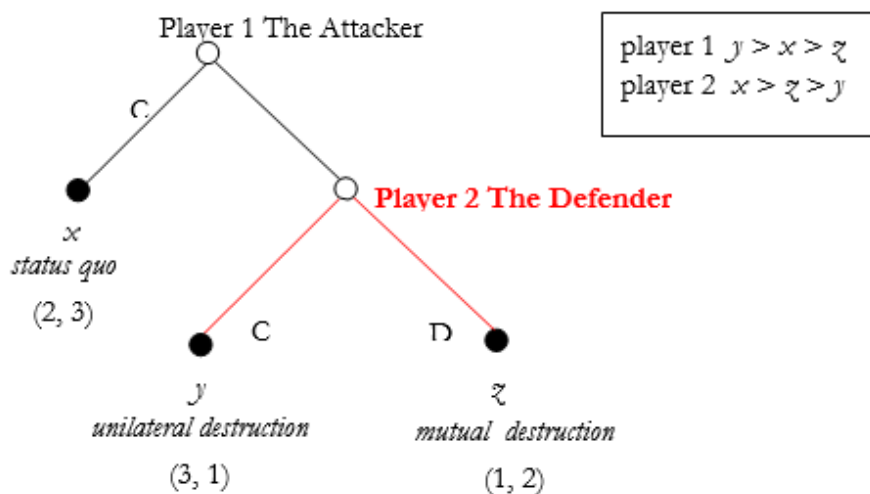


Fig. 1: A deterrence game (Pellikaan, 2019)

In figure 1 a deterrence game is illustrated. The graph presented above is a deterrence game in the context of nuclear deterrence. In the graph, the first player is contemplating attacking a certain state using nuclear capabilities. The second player responds to this potential action by issuing a threat which would ensure mutual destruction if the first player decides to act. “The threat” is therefore defined as retaliation in case of an attack by player 1, ensuring mutual destruction. The second

player has blocked the option of unilateral destruction (which means that only the second player would be destroyed). The second player has therefore increased the potential costs of an attack by the first player, and has therefore deterred the first player from acting. In this situation the control over the threat is in the hands of the second player, as he decides whether or not to actually follow through with his threat. The second player draws a line that the first player is not able to cross, unless he is prepared to suffer the consequences of the threat of the second player (in this case, multilateral destruction). As Schelling (1966) states, the coercion is rather passive, the second player only has to wait for the first player to cross that line.

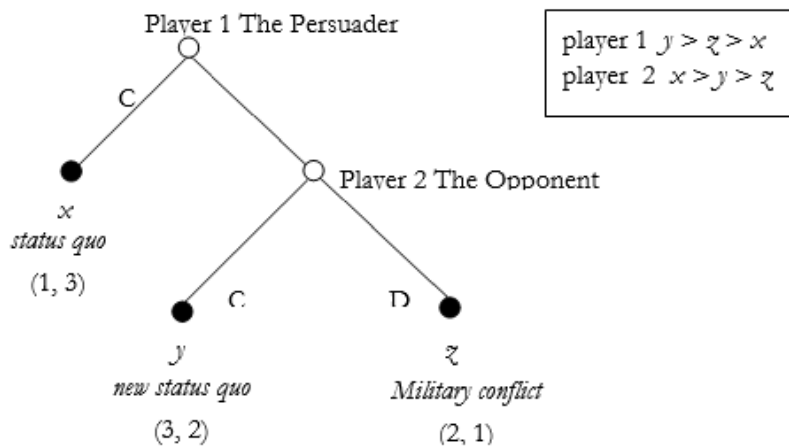


Fig. 2: A game of compellence (Pellikaan, 2019)

The second figure illustrates a situation of compellence. This situation differs from a situation of deterrence in that the control over the threat is in the hands of the first player. The first player takes initiative to coerce the second player into adopting a certain action. The first player already realizes a certain threat and attempts to pressure the second player onto a certain action. “The threat” in this case is a certain coercive device (in the form of economic sanctions, military movements, etc.) issued by the first player which is realized until the second player adopts a certain course of action. As Schelling (1966) states, the coercion in this situation is much more active, as the first player has to take initiative to coerce the other player into something.

Other authors have further defined the differences between deterrence and compellence. Huth and Russett (1990) define deterrence as an attempt by a certain actor

to prevent the other actor from taking a certain undesirable action, by convincing them that the costs of undertaking a certain action are higher than refraining from such action, because the compelling state is willing to actively increase the costs associated with the action. Compellence on the other hand is an attempt to convince another actor to comply with the demands of the compelling state (Huth and Russett, 1990). Freedman (1998) gives, for the purposes of this thesis, the clearest distinction between the two situation. Freedman defines the concept of compellence as an attempt to change the status quo, rather than maintain the status quo (in case of deterrence). More specifically, Freedman (1998) defines the concept of compellence as;

“(1)the use of threats by one actor (2) to induce a change in the behavior of another actor (3) by persuading the target that the probable costs of continuing its current behavior will exceed the costs of altering it tin the direction desired by the actor issuing the compellent threat (4) because that actor is willing to take actions that will increase the cost of maintaining the status quo.”

For the purpose of this thesis a derivative of this definition will be used, as it is the clearest description of the differences between a situation of compellence and a situation of deterrence.

Keeping with the notions demonstrated by Freedman (1998) and Schelling (1966) we will further construct conditions for a compellence situation. First of all, the compellent actor is the actor taking the initiative, as the compellent actor is the one attempting to change the status quo. Two more conditions are specified by Freedman (1998). The first condition suggests that a demand for the alteration in the actions of the target must be communicated, specifying if this alteration is stopping, initiating or altering certain actions. The second condition is the formulation of a threat that increases the costs of continuing the actions for the target state. Neither of these conditions is sufficient on its own however, if the first is missing the target will not know to what demands to comply and if the latter is missing, the target will have no incentive to comply. These will from the conditions on which this thesis will judge the classification of each crisis.

In summary, in a deterrence situation, the defender attempts to influence the behavior of the attacker by drawing a definitive line, the defendant can wait

(indefinitely) for the attacker to cross that certain line (Schelling, 1966). In a situation of compellence, the roles are different. In such a situation the threat is in the hands of the persuader, the actor that wants the other actor to change its behavior. This means that a certain threat is initiated and can only be averted or made harmless by the actions of the other state (Schelling, 1966). This is further clarified by Freedman (1998), identifying a deterrence strategy as a strategy to maintain the status quo and a compellence strategy to change the status quo.

This thesis therefore considers the following as a situation of deterrence; A situation in which (1) policymakers in state A attempt to coerce the policymakers in state B (2) to abandon a certain course of action that is in the best interest of state B, (3) by persuading the policymakers of state B that state A is willing to take action to increase the costs of pursuing this course of action (5), state A thereby aiming to maintain the status quo.

A situation of compellence is defined as; A situation in which (1) policymakers in state A attempt to coerce the policymakers in state B (2) to commit to a certain course of action they normally would not have, (3) by persuading the policymakers in state B that state A is willing to increase the costs of continuing the current course of action by state B, (4) state A therefore aiming to change the status quo.

As is illustrated by this debate between Lebow and Stein (1990) and Huth and Russett (1984; 1990) it is relevant to further examine the classification of these crises. However, to properly establish the conditions required of these two cases to classify either as relevant cases we must, again, consider the debate of Lebow and Stein (1990) versus Huth (1984, 1988). Huth (1984) requires three things for a case to be considered a deterrence situation; first of all officials in the attacking state must be considering an attack on a protégé, second, officials in the defending state must realize this threat. Lastly the defender must threaten with retaliation. Lebow and Stein (1990) argue that these requirements are not enough, as the seriousness of the intent must be taken into account. If the threat of retaliation or attack is not serious enough, a case cannot be considered a case of deterrence. The authors argue that military movements or statements made by officials are not enough to establish a serious intent. Huth and Russett (1990) respond to the critique of Lebow and Stein (1990) that it is impossible to

fully determine the seriousness of a threat. Not even far-reaching historical research can establish this. As Huth and Russett (1990) argue, documentary evidence can be misleading as they require a great deal of interpretation. Not only this but the seriousness of a threat is rarely fully clear. On the basis of the arguments made by Huth (1990), this study will not focus on the seriousness of the threat, as long as a government official is recommending the use force and this leaves observable traces (in the form of actions or statements) we see a case as a relevant case. This means that this thesis refuses to rely on interpretations of the intention of a certain state. However, if there is proof that for the motivation for a certain action, this will be considered as proof of a certain intent. If documents from one of the actors support the initiation of a certain action with a certain desired effect, this will be considered in the analysis.

Both crises in the Taiwanese strait meet the criteria set out above, as there is proof that in both cases there was a serious perceived threat against the island of Taiwan by the Chinese Communist forces. As Chang (1990) describes, in the first crisis the threat came from the increased concentration and movement of Communist forces was seen by the U.S. as a sufficient threat to consider the deployment of nuclear weapons in the region. This account proves that there was a serious threat that has left clearly observable trace (both in the form of statements as in the form of actions) in the first strait crisis. The second crisis was initiated by the movement of Communist Chinese troops and a renewed campaign by the Chinese Communists to “liberate Taiwan” (Chang, 1990). In this case too, it is clear that there was a perceived threat against the territories belonging to Taiwan. A further discussion about the catalysts of each crisis will be presented in the study of each case.

For this thesis we will test the claim made by Lebow and Stein (1990). This argument is mainly based on a matter of perspective, this means that this factor will be examined thoroughly. By gaining a deeper insight in the perspective of the Communist Chinese, we can determine whether or not the crises can be considered situations of compellence rather than deterrence. By doing so, a description is constructed which can be compared to the conditions of either situation formulated above. If the crises meet the criteria of a compellence situation formulated by Schelling (1966) and Freedman (1998), then the argument made by Lebow and Stein (1990) is considered to be confirmed.



How this thesis aims to achieve this is by constructing an objective description of the events surrounding both the crises. In order to properly establish the nature of the two crises, a description of the events surrounding each crisis will be constructed. Using different primary and secondary sources, the events surrounding the two crises will be mapped and ordered. By comparing the timelines of the two crises with the conditions put forward by Schelling, a classification of either deterrence or compellence is constructed. Especially the build-up towards the eventual crises are relevant as here it is clearest who is control over each threat.

This study will have an historiographic approach to the construction of these timelines. This means that historic facts and contexts will be used to determine the sequencing of events surrounding a political events (Lowndes et al., 2017), in this case the two crises. This thesis will take into account different accounts of each of the crises in order to establish their classification. Studies that especially take into account the perspective of the Chinese Communists are particularly useful for the question this thesis attempts to answer, as the main argument posed by Lebow and Stein (1990) hinges upon a matter of perspective. If it is possible to come to a classification of compellence based on the perspective of the Chinese, this proposition might be correct.

## **The first Taiwanese Strait crisis**

### ***Sino-American relations (before 1954)***

The policies of the U.S. government and the leadership of the P.R.C. both focused on the isolation of the other (Chang, 1990; Wang, 2012; Stolper, 1985). The most important organ of the U.S. government, the National Security Council (NSC), had recently identified communist China as the most important threat in South East-Asia (Chang, 1990). In the same document the NSC had proposed a strategy based on isolation of China. The U.S. diplomacy was focused on non-recognition of the Communist leadership of the P.R.C. and further straining the relations in the Sino-Soviet alliance (Wang, 2012). In this policy Taiwan was mentioned as an important source of anti-communist influence, close to the mainland of China. These factors eventually resulted in discussions between the U.S. and the R.O.C. over a Mutual Defense Treaty (M.D.T.) between the two nations (Stolper, 1985; Chang, 1990; Wang, 2012). We will discuss the relevance of this development in a later section.

On the other hand the P.R.C. also pursued a policy of isolation towards the U.S.. This policy was threefold. On a political level the P.R.C. would advocate peace to further form an anti-Western alliance. On an economical aspect they were trading with other nations to win these for the communist ideals. On a strategical level the policy aimed to increase U.S. military presence in the area (Wang, 2012; Chang, 1990). Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese communists was convinced that the U.S. were prepared to invade the mainland of China in order to re-establish the Nationalists as the Government of China. Communist policy aimed to exploit the cracks in the relation between the U.S. and its allies that existed in respect to the American China-policy to further isolate the U.S., forcing it to make concessions on the issue of Taiwan. The most important of these relations was the Anglo-American alliance, since the two nations differed in a couple of major ways in respect to their China policy. The U.K. was willing to co-exist with the P.R.C. in order to be able to trade with what was traditionally an important region for the British. The U.K. was primarily focused on improving trade with the P.R.C. and preventing the nationalists from conducting raids on merchant ships, as the British had lost many merchant ships to these practices (Wang, 2012). Again this relation becomes relevant later in the thesis.

As is illustrated by the description above the two nations pursued the same strategy of isolation of its adversary, however they took very different paths in the achievement of this goal (Wang, 2012). The strategy of the U.S. was based on non-recognition and hard line against the communist government (Chang, 1990; Wang, 2012). This approach was motivated by both pro-nationalist sentiment in the United States parliament and actions by the communist government in China (Clubb, 1981). This resulted in the massive U.S. support for the nationalist regime (Chang, 1990), and an inevitable connection between the nationalist government and that of the U.S.. Because of the focus on the development and the support of nationalist action, any damage to the prestige of the Taiwanese government would mean an intolerable loss to the prestige of the U.S. (Delpech, 2012). The P.R.C. on the other hand aimed to use a “diplomacy offensive” to win over the allies of the U.S. thereby isolating the U.S. (Wang, 2012). These points illustrate the commitment of the U.S. to Taiwan and make clear the relations between the two superpowers.

#### *The first crisis in the Taiwanese Strait*

The first crisis in the Taiwanese strait began with the shelling of Jinmen on the fourth of September in 1954. Chang (1990) provides an useful account of the events during the crisis, however, this thesis will only focus on the events before the crisis, as this is the most relevant phase for the purpose of this thesis. Chang (1990) clearly sees the military build-up of the Communist forces along the strait as the main event triggering a reaction from the U.S., the situation escalated to the point of the shelling of Jinmen. Chang (1990) thereby provides a basis for the classification made by Huth and Russett (1984). As the Chinese Communist were posing a threat of invasion of the island of Taiwan, thereby taking on the role of attacker. In this interpretation it is clear that the U.S. drew a line in the sand and told the Chinese Communists not to cross it (Schelling, 1966). It would therefore be classified as a situation of deterrence rather than compellence.

However the conclusion noted above is disputed by the accounts of different authors. Many authors have devoted their time to establishing the motivation behind the initiation of the crises around the offshore islands. As Zhang (1992) argues, the principal motivation could have been to deter the U.S. from concluding a M.D.T. with

Taiwan. Chang and Di (1993) claim that the aim was not to capture Taiwan but rather to get attention the interference of the U.S. in the Taiwanese Strait and by mere chance resulted in minor local territorial gains. Stolper (1985) claims the bombardment of Jinmen to be “communication by action” aimed to remind the U.S. of the potential danger of concluding a M.D.T. with the Taiwanese government. Others claim that there was no long term strategy nor a short term plan, and the crisis was a result of erratic Mao Zedong (Sheng, 2008).

What all these motivations have in common is that they refute the notion that the P.R.C. was actually aiming to capture and invade Taiwan. On the basis of different Chinese sources these authors conclude that the aims of the P.R.C. were much smaller than what the U.S. interpreted from the actions of the Communist Chinese. An example of this is found in the analysis of the crisis provided by Di and Chang (1993), who determine the motivation of the P.R.C. to be much more modest than capturing Taiwan. Rather than this objective Mao Zedong was pursuing diplomatic and political goals. As the authors mention on page 1523 of their article:

“ The Quemoy-Matsu crisis of 1954-1955 is not an example of successful deterrence, since there was not an immediate, specific threat to these two island groups”

The most recent and most convincing argument for this notion is presented by Wang (2012), basing his argument on newly released documents from the P.R.C. and the notions put forward by the aforementioned writers.

Wang (2012) states that the CPR leadership felt threatened by the possibility of the conclusion of a M.D.T. between the U.S. and Taiwan. The U.S. had previously tried to consolidate a wider pacific treaty organization, that included a South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and a North East Asia Treaty Organization, however these attempts were not met with much enthusiasm. The P.R.C. leadership was convinced that by concluding different bilateral treaties, the U.S. wanted to gradually build up this Organization. The P.R.C. saw this as a larger plan to encircle China and to further contain it (Wang, 2012). From the perspective of the P.R.C. the threat from the United States was steadily increasing due to these developments and therefore Beijing formulated policy in order to prevent this M.D.T. from realization. This policy was threefold, with political, military and diplomatic dimensions. Politically the P.R.C.

started a worldwide campaign to highlight the domestic nature of the Taiwan issue. Militarily the P.R.C. was prepared to take action against Nationalist forces in order to demonstrate the U.S. the dangers of getting involved in the Chinese civil war (Wang, 2012). However these military actions would specifically only target nationalist forces in the area, as to prevent a direct confrontation with the U.S.. Diplomatically, the P.R.C. focused on further pressuring the Anglo-American relations. The Communist leadership hoped that by taking advantage of the main schisms in the relation between the U.S. and the U.K., the P.R.C. would be able to get the British to further pressure the U.S. from concluding a M.D.T. with Taiwan. This diplomatic step was a continuation of the policy of the P.R.C. before the crisis as is illustrated above. This diplomatic policy was especially represented in the conciliatory attitude the P.R.C. had towards the U.K. in several instances (Wang, 2012).

Wang (2012) therefore concludes that the main motivation of the Chinese in this crisis was to prevent the U.S. from concluding the M.D.T.. This is consistent with the work of Stolper (1985), as the conclusion of the treaty would threaten the P.R.C. in three ways. First, the treaty guaranteed protection of the islands of Taiwan and the Tachens from Communist attacks, which would establish the zone as a protectorate of the U.S.. This would mean that reunification of the islands with the mainland became impossible without a direct war with the U.S. or by convincing the Nationalists to voluntarily join the P.R.C.. Second, as is mentioned by Wang (2012), the P.R.C. feared that the treaty would become part of a larger international organization which would further encircle the P.R.C.. Finally, the treaty contained articles that were ambiguous over the support of a Nationalist invasion of the mainland. The Treaty containing such articles that allowed the treaty to be extended to territories that may be determined by mutual agreement.

Stolper (1985) claims that the P.R.C. aimed to remind the international community of the dangers of conflict with the P.R.C.. The P.R.C. pursued to remind any nation that considered closer ties to the Nationalists that they were interfering in the domestic issues of the Chinese. Therefore, the Communist Chinese decided to initiate a bombardment of the islands of Jinmen. Beijing believed that by showing the U.S. that a commitment to Taiwan, to the extent represented by a D.M.T., could drag them into a unwanted war with the P.R.C..

From the analysis presented by Wang (2012) and by Stolper (1985), the true intentions of the Chinese Communists become clear. The military actions in the strait were nothing more than a political device, designed to deter the Americans from concluding a M.D.T. with Taiwan and to further pressure the relation between the U.S. and its allies. Even though this treaty was far from being signed and was being held-up by discussions about the disposition of Nationalist forces on the offshore islands. The treaty was concluded in December 2, a month after the initial bombardment of Jinmen (Stolper, 1985). The actions of the P.R.C. only seemed to have pressured the U.S. into concluding a M.D.T., which they were initially not fond of concluding (Wang, 2012; Stolper, 2012; Xiao and Lin, 2018)

#### *Discussion and conclusion*

Lebow and Stein (1990), argue that the crisis can be qualified as a situation of compellence, as the U.S. attempted to force the Chinese communists into accepting an unnatural division of their country. However from the description provided by Chang (1990) presented here, it is clear that the coercive threat of the U.S. was in response to an increased military activity of the Chinese communists along the Taiwanese Strait (Chang, 1990). There is no reason to assume that the U.S. would have used a military threat if not in response to the Chinese communists. This means that, even though the U.S. had a rather hostile relationship towards China (Chang, 1990; Wang, 2012), they did not issue a coercive threat to force the Chinese communists into accepting this policy. Because the U.S. did not issue a coercive threat, the situation can't be classified as a case of compellence. Looking at the evidence presented by Chang (1990) it becomes clear that through the eyes of the U.S. the situation might have been one of deterrence of an invasion of Taiwan.

This initial conclusion, however, does not take into account the arguments put forward by other authors. Even though the current literature has some minor differences in their perceived motivation for the initiation of the crisis, they all refute the notion that the P.R.C. was actually attempting to seize the entire island of Taiwan. Based on the authors mentioned above it is clear that the goal of the P.R.C. was not to invade the islands held by the nationalists. The most compelling argument, made by Wang (2012), is that the P.R.C. was attempting to deter the U.S. from concluding a M.D.T. with the

R.O.C., as the Communist leadership felt that such a treaty would further increase the threat from the U.S.. As is argued by Stolper (1985) and Wang (2012), the main reason for the initiation of this crisis was to coerce the U.S. from concluding a Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan. We must therefore reconsider the classification of the crisis.

Freedman (1998) emphasizes the difference between compellence and deterrence as the first being an attempt to change the status quo and the latter being an attempt to maintain the status quo. The status quo in the eyes of the Communist Chinese would be that of an imminent M.D.T. between the US and Taiwan, as the Chinese were convinced that the U.S. was determined to conclude this treaty (Stolper 1985; Wang, 2012). The P.R.C. therefore aimed to coerce the U.S. into refraining from the conclusion of this treaty. The Chinese, therefore, were trying to change the status quo and thus this situation can be classified as a situation of compellence. More specifically, the P.R.C. was using the threat of an confrontation between the P.R.C. and the U.S. in the Taiwanese Strait (even though they never intended it to happen) to induce a change in the behavior of the U.S., refraining from concluding a M.D.T. with Taiwan. They did this by demonstrating that the costs of continuing its current behavior would be higher than altering it to the demands made by the P.R.C., because the P.R.C. was willing to take actions that would increase the costs of maintaining the status. It is however clear that this strategy had not the intended effect as the Treaty was concluded in 1954 (Stolper, 1985; Wang, 2012). This thesis therefore classifies the first crisis in the Taiwan strait as a situation of compellence.

## **The second Taiwanese Strait Crisis**

### *Sino-American relations (1954-1958)*

In the continuation of the ambassadorial talks following the first Taiwanese strait crisis, very little progress in the easing of bilateral relations between the U.S. and the P.R.C. was made. The U.S. insisted on the renunciation of the use of force in the strait as a prior condition for any other discussion (Stolper, 1985). The main strategy of the U.S. in these talks was attempting to buy time in order to build a world opinion that would compel the P.R.C. into accepting the current situation in the strait (Stolper, 1985; Zhai, 1994). Therefore the U.S. took an opposing stance to all concessions towards the demands of the P.R.C.. The inflexibility of the U.S. in these negotiations was caused by the perceived strategic importance of Taiwan in a greater barrier around the P.R.C. and external and internal pressure that demanded an harsh policy against the P.R.C. (Zhai, 1994). The US also believed that pressuring the P.R.C. would further deteriorate the Sino-Soviet alliance, which had been a goal of Foreign Secretary Dulles since the foundation of the P.R.C. (Zhai, 1994). Instead of a conciliatory route, the U.S. further took provocative action by the placement of matador-missiles on the islands, while Chiang was supported with large sums of military aid (Chang, 1990; Gurtov and Hwang, 1980). As a result the Nationalist troops became firmly entrenched on the offshore islands (Chang, 1990). The US acquiesced in these developments and thereby committed itself to the defending these islands as part of its pledge to defend Taiwan (Zhai, 1994; Stolper, 1985; Chang, 1990; Soman, 2000). The P.R.C. was therefore convinced that their strategy of diplomacy only benefited the U.S. in their pursuit of their “two-China solution” (Stolper, 1985). The two-China solution was aimed at constructing a situation in which the Nationalists were allowed on Taiwan to form their own republic, while the P.R.C. remained on the mainland (Chang, 1990) effectively creating two different China’s and denying both the Nationalists from returning to the mainland as well as denying the Communists their goal of the reunification of China. The official stance of the communists was that Taiwan and the reunification issue was an internal affair and therefore opposed the “two-China solution” desired by the Americans (Stolper, 1985; Zhai, 1994). this policy lead to the breakdown of ambassadorial talks between the P.R.C. and the U.S. in July in 1958 (Zhai, 1994; Gurtov and Hwang, 1980).



### *The second crisis in the Taiwanese Strait*

Similar to the first the crisis, the second crisis began with the shelling of Jinmen and different military movements of Communist forces along the Taiwanese Strait (Chang, 1990; Stolper, 1985; Zhai, 1994). Chang (1990), once more, provides a detailed account of the events preceding the crisis. Chang (1990) concludes that the build-up of troops and the shelling of Jinmen were signs of an impending invasion of the offshore islands or Taiwan itself. He thereby, once more, provides a basis for the classification by Huth and Russett (1984) of the situation as a case of deterrence.

This interpretation is, however, challenged by the description provided by Gurtov and Hwang (1980). This description is especially interesting as it provides an insight in the perspective of the Communists in the crisis over Taiwan. As mentioned in the introduction, the argument made by Lebow and Stein (1990) is that a different perspective will lead to a different classification of this crisis. By examining the description made by Gurtov and Hwang, a reconsideration of the classification of the crisis might be warranted. The thesis of their study is that if had not been for the actions of the U.S. preceding the crisis, Mao would not have felt the need to attack the offshore islands. The authors provide three reasons for this.

The first reason is the buildup of K.M.T. forces on the offshore islands, from 40,000 men in September of 1954 to 100,000 men in August of 1958. Even though they did not approve of it, the U.S. “acquiesced” in these developments. Not only did the number of troops increase in these years, the operation which they were trained for also became more offensive and provocative in nature (Gurtov and Hwang, 1980).

A second development that contributed to the perceived threat from both the U.S. as the Chinese Nationalists, was the installment of Matador missiles on the island of Taiwan. These missiles with a nuclear ability were to be used in case the Communist Chinese did attempt to attack and seize Taiwan. This combined with the construction of missile bases in Korea and Japan, further developed the threat to the Communist Chinese (Gurtov and Hwang, 1980).

The final factor in these developments is the fact that the Communist Chinese did not receive any sign of a peaceful resolution of the conflict over Taiwan. For

example, at the Geneva talks, the American delegation took an uncompromising stance to issues relating to the “Taiwan issue”. Not only this negative response to a peaceful process to end the conflict, aided the construction of a hostile perception of the U.S., the breakdown of ambassadorial talks in June of 1958 also played a major role. The ambassador to the talks between communist China and the U.S. was not replaced by ambassadorial rank. The concerns of the Communist Chinese were not addressed or only further reinforced by these diplomatic actions and the failure to condemn provocative actions by the Nationalists (Gurtov and Hwang, 1980).

These three factors make it clear that Beijing had a very negative perception of the intentions of the U.S. in the conflict over Taiwan. This means that the situation is very different to the situation described by Chang (1990). Instead of the crisis being a result of the aggression of the P.R.C. towards Taiwan. In this interpretation the cause of the crisis is found in the actions of the U.S.. Not those of the P.R.C., but the actions of the U.S. and the Nationalist government are the cause of the crisis. By posing a threat to the Chinese mainland and not responding to the concerns of the Communists, a pre-emptive strike on the islands of Jinmen was justified in the eyes of Beijing (Gurtov and Hwang, 1980).

However other authors present a different account of the motivations of the P.R.C. to initiate the second crisis in the Taiwanese Strait. Stolper (1985), on the other hand, claims that despite the grave provocations of the placement of matadors and the build-up of Nationalist troops on the offshore islands, the main motivation was not the fear of an invasion. The main reason in Stolper’s (1985) opinion was to show the international community that the pursued “two-China solution” would not create a peaceful co-existence between Taiwan and the P.R.C.. The strategy of the Communists was two-fold as it aimed to bring back the U.S. to the negotiations over the Taiwan issue in a more accommodating frame of mind. The main goal was the controlled withdrawal of the U.S. presence in the strait and the renewal of the Offshore islands problem, which would pressure the U.S. in a more accommodating frame of mind. The goal of the P.R.C. was therefore, not one of the removal of a threat of invasion, as is claimed by Gurtov and Hwang (1980), but a much more diplomatic strategy aimed at the removal of U.S. presence in the strait and the renewal of the ambassadorial talks with a more accommodating attitude on part of the Americans (Stolper, 1985).

White (1975) concludes that the main objective of the Communists was the withdrawal of nationalist troops on the islands of Jinmen and Matsu. The objective was in any case not to attack the island Taiwan itself.

Other interpretations are consistent with the motivation defined by Stolper (1985), but differ slightly on some aspects. Zhai (1994), for example, also highlights the role of the pursued ‘two-China solution’ and, like Stolper (1985), denounces the notion that the initiation of the second crisis was motivated by the threat of an invasion from the islands. The motivation was threefold; to retaliate for and put an end to the Nationalist harassment of ports controlled by the Communists, to show Beijing’s defiance with the U.S. (especially its “two-China solution”) and to divert American attention away from the middle east and back to the Taiwanese Strait (Zhai, 1994). With the shelling of Quemoy, Mao aimed to send two messages, one directly to the Americans signaling displeasure with the presence of the U.S. in the strait. On the other hand he aimed to tie the nationalists to the defense of the islands by threatening them, further complicating a “Two-China solution”.

What all these interpretations have in common is that they denounce the notion that the removal of threat formed the main motivation for the second crisis, as is claimed by Gurtov and Hwang (1980). This claim is further supported by the fact that the P.R.C. did not undertake the kind of military build-up that would have been necessary to seriously threaten to invade Taiwan, or even the offshore islands (Soman, 2000). Mao knew that Quemoy was one of the best defended Offshore islands (Zhai, 1994) and he was aware that a mere artillery bombardment would not bring about the fall of this island (Stolper, 1985). Therefore the removal of a threat or the fall of the islands cannot be seen as the motivation behind the actions of the P.R.C.. The motivation must be sought in different factors. What the interpretations of Stolper (1985) and Zhai (1994) have in common is that they see the crisis as part of the larger problem of the “Taiwan issue”. The Communists saw that, by the commitment to the nationalist forces and acquiescing in the build-up of Nationalist forces, the U.S. had put itself in a position of commitment to the offshore islands. The Chinese aimed to exploit this position to accomplish two things; the distancing of the “two-China” solution and the removal of U.S. interference in the region. Mao aimed to do this by demonstrating that a “two-china solution” would not result in a peaceful co-existence, by showing the

dangerous commitment the U.S. had made towards the Nationalist government and by renewing the offshore island problem of the U.S. in order to renew ambassadorial talks about the issue in a more accommodating frame of mind (Zhai, 1994; Stolper, 1985).

This thesis is therefore not convinced of the notions posed by either Chang (1990), claiming that the P.R.C. aimed to seize the islands, or Gurtov and Hwang (1980), claiming that the actions were a pre-emptive move. As is demonstrated by the accounts presented above a serious threat to the offshore islands was not present (Soman, 2000; Zhai, 1994; Stolper 1985). As the actions were not aimed at and known to be insufficient to bring about the fall of either the island of Jinmen or Taiwan itself, the notion that the P.R.C. was acting out of self-defense is dropped. This thesis concurs with Zhai (1994) and Stolper (1985) that the main objective of the actions in the Strait were aimed at the distancing of a two-China solution and resumption of ambassadorial talks in a more accommodating frame of mind.

#### *Discussion and conclusion*

Now that the motivations and perspective of Beijing is properly established, the classification of the crisis will again be considered.

It is demonstrated by Gurtov and Hwang (1980) that the actions of the U.S. did provide solid evidence for the construction of the hostile image of the U.S. held by the Communists. Actions such as the placement of the matadors on Taiwan and the failure to condemn certain actions by the nationalists do give reason to blame the U.S. for initiating the crisis. On basis of the analysis made by Gurtov and Hwang (1980), a greater insight in the perception of the U.S. by Beijing is provided. This gives room for argument over which nation actually caused the crisis, however it does not provide sufficient grounds for the reclassification of the crisis as one of compellence rather than deterrence.

Furthermore, the account provided by Gurtov and Hwang (1980) is disputed by other authors. As is illustrated by Soman (2000) Several factors are considered as the main motivation for the initiation of the crisis (domestic political considerations, dealing with the security threat to China, rivalry with the S.U., probing the resolve of the United States), however not one can be conclusively pointed out as the main factor.

It might have been a combination of all these factors (Soman, 2000). China did not undertake the kind of buildup of ground and naval forces for an operation sufficient to seriously threaten to invade Taiwan or even the offshore islands (Soman, 2000). Stolper (1985) and Zhai (1994) demonstrate that the actions in the Taiwanese Strait were not aimed at removing the threats that constituted a fear of invasion. Mao knew that the bombardment would not be enough to cause the fall of the offshore island and did not aim to cause the fall of the Nationalist government on Taiwan. The main motivation for the crisis must therefore be considered as having two aims, the first being to further prevent the settlement of the Taiwan issue in the “two-China solution” and the removal of U.S. interference in the Taiwanese Strait (Zhai, 1994; Stolper, 1985) .

Now that the motivation for the crisis is properly established we must look at the implication these analyses have on the classification of the crisis. As is clear from the definition provided by Schelling (1966) the defining feature of a situation of compellence is that the control over the threat is in the hands of the first actor. The main question is; is this the case in the second Taiwanese strait crisis? It is clear that the first actor was the P.R.C., with its shelling of the island of Quemoy. It is also clear that the initiation of this crisis was not motivated by the fear of an invasion and was therefore part of a larger strategy regarding the situation in the Taiwanese Strait. The second crisis in the Taiwanese Strait is therefore considered to be a situation in which policymakers in the P.R.C. attempted to coerce the policymakers in the U.S. to commit to a certain course of action (the resumption of ambassadorial talks and the decrease of their interference), by persuading these policymakers that the P.R.C. was willing to increase the costs of continuation of the current course of action, thereby attempting to change the status quo. Therefore we can consider the actions of the P.R.C. as a coercive threat in a broader compellence-based strategy.

This strategy was a limited success as is demonstrated by Soman (2000) even though the U.S. initially prepared to use nuclear weapons in the defense of the offshore islands and Taiwan itself. Later in the crisis, however both the internal pressure as pressure from America’s allies finally took its toll on Dulles and Eisenhower This resulted in a much more conciliatory mind-set once ambassadorial talks resumed in Warsaw. The U.S. now focused on reducing tensions through the reduction of forces and the halting of actions by either side which could be considered provocative. The

Nationalist presence on the offshore islands should therefore be reduced. This realization is best described in a memo sent by Dulles (1958);

“we are, in effect, demanding that the islands be a ‘privileged sanctuary’ from which the Chinats can wage at least political and subversive warfare against the Chicoms but against which the Chincoms cannot retaliate”.

## **Conclusions and implications**

The preceding case studies have made clear that the classification of the two crises is not as clear cut as is claimed by authors such as Huth and Russett (1984, 1990). Initially, both crises were considered cases of deterrence. The description of events put forward by Chang (1990), supported this notion. However in both instances other authors challenged the claims made by Chang (1990).

In the first crisis the main arguments are derived from the authors Wang (2012) and Stolper (1985). Both these authors determine that the motivation for the initiation of the crisis were different than the capture of the offshore islands or the invasion of Taiwan. The main motivation is determined to be the prevention of a conclusion of a M.D.T. between the U.S. and Taiwan. The authors present multiple reasons for this. First of all, Stolper (1985) argues that the M.D.T. that the communist leadership disagreed with the conclusion of the treaty for three main reasons. First, such a treaty would consolidate Taiwan and the Offshore islands as a protectorate of the U.S.; which would deny the P.R.C. from the re-unifying Taiwan into one China. Second, as is mentioned by Wang (2012), the P.R.C. feared that the treaty would become part of a larger international organization which would further encircle the P.R.C.. Finally the treaty contained articles that were too ambiguous about the territories to which the Treaty applied.

Wang (2012) builds on these reasons to further nullify the notion that the P.R.C. was aiming to seize the islands held by the R.O.C.. The arguments put forward by these authors mean that the initiation of the crisis was aimed at the alteration of the status quo in the Taiwanese Strait. Based on the definitions formulated by Schelling (1966) and especially freedman (1998), the pursuit of such a goal entails that the first crisis in the Taiwanese Strait can only be considered one of compellence.

The classification of the second crisis in the Taiwanese Strait is also disputed. Similar to the first crisis the true intentions of the Chinese Communists were not clear. The initial classification of the case as a deterrence situation in which the Chinese Communist played the attacking role and the U.S. played the defending role over its protégé Taiwan is backed up by accounts such as those presented by Chang (1990). However in the analysis provided by Gurtov and Hwang (1980) it becomes clear that

the initiation of the crisis may not have been entirely dependent on the actions of the Chinese Communists. By increasing the military presence on the offshore islands, the Chinese Communists perceived a growing threat of an American-backed invasion. However even this interpretation is disputed, as Stolper (1985) and Zhai (1994) argue that these actions were, like the first crisis, motivated by a broader political objective and not the capture or neutralization of the offshore islands. As is proven by Soman (2000), the military build-up was not sufficient to constitute an actual threat to the island. Furthermore, as Stolper (1985) and Zhai (1994) note, Mao Zedong was well aware that the attacks on Jinmen would not be enough to cause it to fall. This was however not the intended effect. The strategy of the Chinese Communist focused on distancing the pursued “two-china solution” and on reducing American interference in the “Taiwan issue”. The first objective was pursued by showing that the “two China’s” would never co-exist peacefully, and by tying the Nationalists to defense of the offshore islands. The second objective was pursued by renewing the issue of American commitment to the offshore islands, by a renewed threat. The Chinese communist were therefore not aiming to seize the islands and were not willing to directly confront the Americans.

Here again it is clear that the Chinese communists took initiative to attempt to alter the status quo in the Taiwanese Strait. By initiating the crisis the Communist Chinese attempted to increase the costs of the American hostile policy towards the P.R.C. and its commitment to the Nationalists. Following the definition set out by Freedman in the beginning of this thesis, we can therefore again only conclude that the second Crisis in the Taiwanese Strait was a situation of compellence on part of the Chinese communists, rather than deterrence on part of the U.S..

The conclusions on the classification of the two crises have multiple implications. The first and most important of which is the fact that the classification of the two crises as a situation of deterrence, presented by Huth and russet (1984) is false. There was simply no serious threat to the island of Taiwan or the offshore islands held by the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-Shek. This also means that the classification of Lebow and Stein (1990) of the crises as situations of compellence is, in the argument provided by this thesis, a correct classification of the situation. I, however, disagree with their notion that the classification of these changes on basis of which perspective is



taken towards the analysis of these crises. In my opinion, the facts that are represented by authors such Zhai (1994), Stolper (1985) and Wang (2012) were as much “fact” at the time of the crisis as they are currently. In short, I believe that the classification of the crises can change overtime, as more documentary evidence over the motivation behind certain actions are revealed. However, the facts remain facts, and are therefore not dependent on the perspective from which the analysis takes place.

The third implication of this exercise is that it is relevant to look at the true motivations behind a certain action, as this might make a difference in the classification of a certain situation, and therefore might mean that different lessons can be learned from a certain crisis. If this thesis had assumed the intentions of the P.R.C. were the same as they appeared on first glance, the crises would have been identified as situations of deterrence in which the P.R.C. took on the role of aggressor. However, by delving further in the literature surrounding these crises and taking into account the arguments made by writers who base their conclusions on primary sources, this thesis was able to establish that the motivation of the P.R.C. was very much different than it seemed on first glance. Instead of the U.S. attempting to maintain the status-quo, which was threatened by the actions of the P.R.C., the P.R.C. was attempting to change the status quo in these situations. On basis of this conclusion, we can only determine the two crises in the Taiwanese Strait to be situations of compellence.

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