



# Dire Strait: Military Aspects of the China-Taiwan Confrontation and Implications for U.S. Policy

David A. Shlapak, David T. Orletsky, Barry Wilson

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Among the hottest flashpoints in the world today, U.S. policymakers and diplomats cannot ignore the Taiwan Strait. China regularly rattles its saber to intimidate Taiwan and influence U.S. policy but has thus far stopped short of overt military action. This report analyzes the steps Taiwan should take to bolster the odds in its favor should a conflict with the mainland occur and describes how the United States can most effectively contribute in both peace and crisis. The authors conclude that the United States and Taiwan can take a number of fairly simple and relatively inexpensive measures-including hardening air bases and other facilities and upgrading the air defense command and control system-that would significantly enhance Taiwan's ability to defend itself against a large-scale Chinese attack.



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