

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

轉型中的美中台三角關係與美國角色 研究成果報告(精簡版)

計畫類別：個別型
計畫編號：NSC 98-2410-H-004-054-
執行期間：98年08月01日至99年12月31日
執行單位：國立政治大學國際關係研究中心

計畫主持人：鄭端耀

處理方式：本計畫可公開查詢

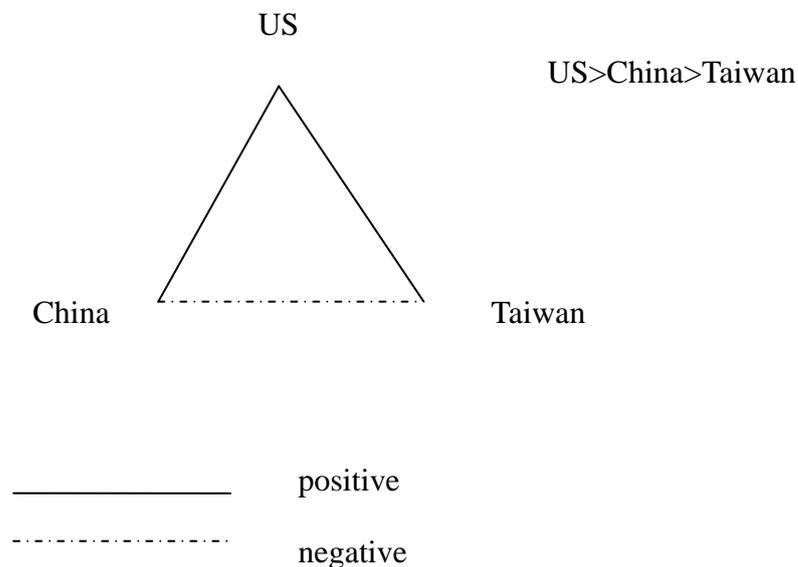
中華民國 100 年 08 月 16 日

The Changing U.S.-China-Taiwan Triangular Relations

Tuan Y. Cheng
Research Fellow
Institute of International Relations
National Chengchi University

The US-China-Taiwan relationship has long been considered as a micro strategic triangle in a part of Asia-Pacific region.¹ Due to historical, political, security and other factors, the three sides have been closely connected and formed a kind of relationship of inter-reactive and mutually constrained. It has established its own pattern in terms of the internal power structure and the way of its operation and the conduct of activities. It has been hard for the other actors to get involved in their affairs, at least not significant enough to make a change of the relationship.

Generally the specific relationship was characterized as the triple asymmetrical triangle while the United States was the most powerful actor, followed by China, and



Taiwan the weakest. Since the United States was much more powerful than China and Taiwan, it was quite natural for her to take the dominant position – the so-called

¹ Gerald Segal, *The Great Power Triangle* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982; and Raju G. C. Thomas, *The Great-Power Triangle and Asian Security* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983).

pivot – in the triangle. Moreover, since China and Taiwan were in a constant antagonistic relationship and that put both sides in continuous efforts to try to win better relationship with the third actor, this only reinforced the United States' pivot position.

The asymmetrical triangle started from the early 1970s when the United States broke ice and began to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China.² In 1979 the United States terminated diplomatic ties with the Republic of China (Taiwan) but it still maintained substantial relations with Taiwan aided by the Taiwan Relations Act, and the basic pattern of the triangle remained unchanged. In 1980s Washington kept parallel relations with both Beijing and Taipei even though the former was annoyed by American continuous arms sales to Taiwan. In the post-cold war period, the United States became the only unipolar power that could be challenged by no one while the relations across the Taiwan Strait were mostly acrimonious and tense. The asymmetrical triangle was kept intact.

However, beginning from 2008 it seemed that the triangle was on the way to change. First, after Ma Ying-jeou was elected the President of Taiwan in March 2008 and sworn into office on May 20, the cross-Strait relations have been greatly improved. Less than a year, the two sides across the Taiwan Strait held three meetings and reached nine agreements in which had never been achieved before. The substantial improvement of the relations has brought Beijing and Taipei from conflict of the past to cooperation of the present, and that significantly affects the relationships in the asymmetrical triangle. The dyad of Chinese-Taiwan relationship is changing from the constant variable – conflict – in the triangle to becoming a variable either conflict or cooperation.

² "Strategic triangle" as a theoretical analytical framework was proposed by Professor Lowell Dittmer in 1981. Please read his works as the following. Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (July 1981), pp. 485-515; and Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: A Critical Review," in Ilpyong J. Kim, ed, *The Strategic Triangle: China, the United States and the Soviet Union* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), pp. 29-47.

However, Dittmer's strategic triangle is equilateral, and that is hard to apply to the US-China-Taiwan relations. Hence, Professor Wu, Yu-Shan revised Dittmer's proto framework and proposed asymmetric triangles to US-China-Taiwan relations. Please refer his works as the following. Brantly Womack and Yu-Shan Wu, "Asymmetric Triangles and the Washington-Beijing-Taipei Relationship," Paper Presented at the 36th Taiwan-U.S. conference on contemporary China, June 1-2, 2007, Denver, Colorado, USA; Yu-Shan Wu, "Domestic Political Competition and Triangular Interaction Among Washington, Beijing, and Taipei: the U.S. China Policy," *Issues & Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (March 2006), pp. 1-46; and Yu-Shan Wu, "From Romantic Triangle to Marriage? Washington-Beijing-Taipei Relations in Historical Comparison," *Issues & Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 113-159.

Second, doubtless the United States has been considered as the most powerful actor in the triangle as well as the world; it's hardly to be challenged by China, Taiwan or any other actor. However, by the fast rise of its national power and growing influence in the East Asia, China is becoming much more competitive in the region and capable to pose a challenge to the United States even though Chinese military power is still far unmatched to American. Accordingly, the disparity between the US and China in the triangle could be changed, or at least be narrowed down, and that might bring the triple asymmetrical triangle ($X > Y > Z$) to a kind of twin-head dual asymmetrical triangle ($X \geq Y > Z$).

And third, despite differences between Washington and Beijing on a range of issues, the PRC did not challenge American leadership, and there existed acknowledgement-of-deference. This was mainly owing to preponderance of American power and Chinese dependence on the US for economic modernization and international development. Nevertheless, the 911 event began to shift the bilateral relationship that allowed China to play more evenly. America's war on terrorism was in need of Chinese support. The North Korean nuclear challenge brought China to the front position in dealing with the regional security. Moreover, the global financial tsunami has made the United States counting on China for financial relief and economic recovery.

The purpose of the paper is to explore the changing US-China-Taiwan triangular relations. It will first review the formation and function of the asymmetrical triangle. Then it will probe the recent changes and developments of the triangular relations, and the implications to the triangle. A new analytical framework will be offered in order to examine and explore the changes of relations. Finally it will provide various perspectives on the prospects of US-China-Taiwan relations and possible changes of the types of triangle.

Triple Asymmetrical Triangle

The US-China-Taiwan relations originally started from 1949 by the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the withdrawal of the Republic of China from Mainland China to Taiwan. The emergence of the two Chinas (or China and Taiwan) and the complex links of the United States with them led to the creation of the triangle. In fact, from 1949 until 1970 due to political and military rivalry between the Western and Communist countries, it was the two confronting

lines against each other among the three actors while Taiwan was allied with the United States. And most of people viewed the triangular relations during the period mainly from the Cold-War perspective.

Nevertheless, the triangle began to take shape in 1970 when Washington opened relations with Beijing. Motivated by international strategic interest, the United States had a strong desire to normalize relations with China, and that could position itself at advantage vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. China was then in an attempt to break international isolation and reduce the threat from Moscow, and there existed a common strategic interest between Washington and Beijing. Taiwan no doubt fell victim to the development of the great strategic triangle and moreover moved to the vulnerable corner in the micro Washington-Beijing-Taipei triangle. In 1979, the United States severed official ties with Taiwan and formally established diplomatic relations with China.

Anyway, by the formation of the triangle it was a triple asymmetrical shape. In terms of power, Washington was predominant, much more powerful than the other two actors. Yet China by its size and influence overshadowed Taiwan. In terms of relationships, since Beijing and Taipei were hostile to each other, they all tried to win better relations with Washington. Hence, this allowed the United States to stand on the pivot easily and safely.

Though the United States was on the pivot, its ability to control was still limited to a certain extent. It could not fully determine the operation of the triangle, nor could it forcefully constrain Beijing and Taipei. There were three major reasons to explain the phenomenon. First, the three actors did not trust each other. Washington concerned China taking military action against Taiwan just the same as her worried Taipei to make provocative words and deeds. As to Beijing, it was suspicious of American intent to separate Taiwan from China for good and Taiwan's attempt to be independent. Meanwhile, Taiwan felt fear of American sellout and Chinese military invasion.

Second, though Beijing and Taipei recognized American predominance, they were unsatisfied with the status quo, with different reasons, and wanted to make change. Beijing tried to reduce and neutralize American interference to Taiwan whereas Taipei sought to escape from Chinese meddling and obstruction. In the meantime, both tried to get America to stand on their sides.

And third, despite the framework as set up by the three Communiques and Taiwan Relations Act to guide the relations of the triangle, they only provided the basic principles and norms. They were unclear in terms of day-to-day operation; in fact it was hardly possible for anyone to foresee all kinds of situations. Consequently, Beijing and Taipei often sought to interpret and act upon the rules to their advantages by which inevitably brought about many disputes and controversies in the process.

Nonetheless, in order to manage the triangle and keep it running smoothly, the United States through the period seemed to adopt a sort of the institutional approach by which to specify what the actors were supposed to do or not to do in their relations with each other. For example, after the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis the Clinton administration made it clear of American position of “no military used by China and no Taiwan independence.” In 1998 during his visit to China President Clinton announced the “Three No’s”; that was, “We don’t support independence for Taiwan, or two Chinas, or one Taiwan- one China. And we don’t believe that Taiwan should be a member of any organization for which statehood is a requirement.” Again in 2003 President Bush publicly stated, “we oppose any unilateral decision, by either China or Taiwan, to change the status quo. And the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose.”

China however took a rather realistic approach. Knowing well its limits to compete with the United States, Beijing was unwilling to challenge American leadership as long as Washington stayed on one China policy. On the other hand, China put great emphasis on economic development for they believed that it was the foundation of nation-building and the way to lead to power, and they thought by giving more time they could achieve the major power status. For that purpose, to keep peaceful relations with the United States and develop close economic links was in the interest of China.

With regards to Taiwan, it was in anxiety about the status quo. It was impossible for her to challenge American as well as Chinese power; moreover, it became more and more difficult to compete with China as time went by. What it could do was to change the relationships with the actors within the triangle or furthermore to try to escape from the influence of China. So Taiwan seemed to adopt a constructive approach, to change itself and its relations with the others. The approach began from the mid-1990s particularly after the 1996 Missile Crisis. Taiwan

attempted to distance itself from China in a more fundamental way. It started to develop a distinctive “Taiwan identity,” calling itself “Taiwan” – the meaning from previous geographical to political connotation – as different from a part of China. Their people were identified as Taiwanese instead of Chinese, and the relationship between Taiwan and China was as it called by former President Lee Teng-Hui in 1999 “the two states special relationship” and called by former President Chen Sui-Bien in 2003 “one side one country across the Taiwan Strait.” Of course, for what Taiwan tried to forge a new state identity was strongly opposed by China.

In short, until 2008 by the election of Ma Ying-Jeou as the president of Taiwan and coming with the changes of the cross-Strait relations and other things, the basic pattern of the triple asymmetrical triangle did not change. The United States undisputedly stayed on the pivot, powerful and cajoled by the other two actors. China was unsatisfied with her placement as the secondary and its inability to control Taiwan, but by large it accepted the status quo. Taiwan remained on the vulnerable position even though it made helpless efforts to break away from China.

New Types of Triangle

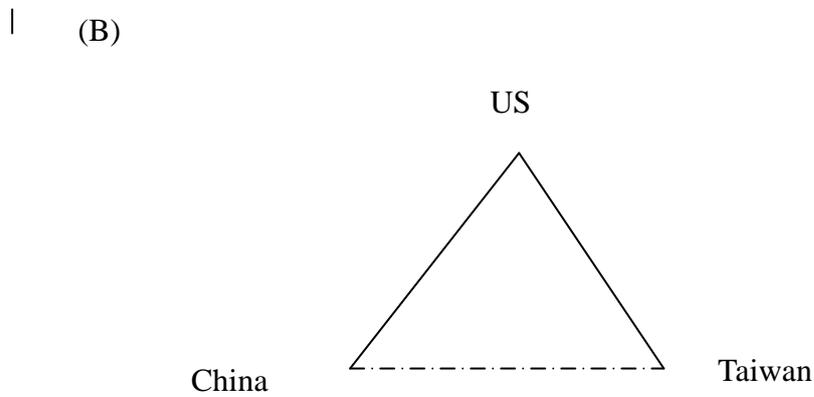
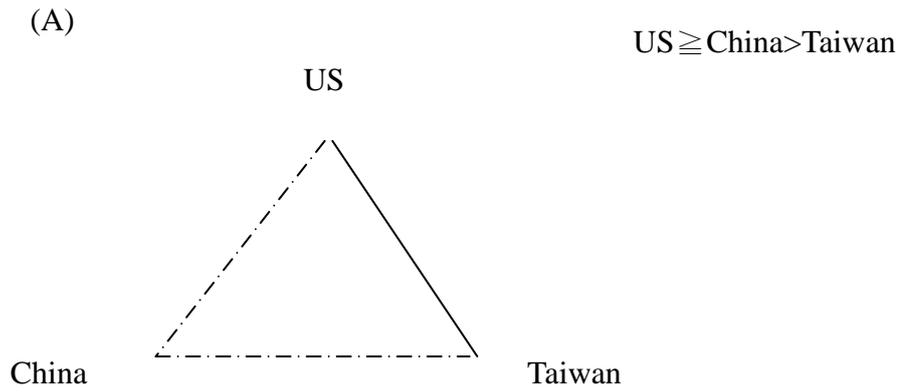
As indicated above, since 2008 the US-China-Taiwan relations have gone through three major changes. There are the improvement of the cross-Strait relations, the fast rising of Chinese power, and the autonomy of Chinese diplomacy. These major changes have substantially transformed the previous triangle of a fixed pattern to the future of a changeable and complex pattern. First, the ease of cross-Strait relations has made China and Taiwan relationship from the constant variable to a variable; that is from constant conflict of the past to either conflict or cooperation in the future. Second, the rise of China has narrowed down power difference from the United States and gradually transformed the triple asymmetrical triangle ($X > Y > Z$) to a twin-head dual triangle ($X = Y > Z$). Such a change has reduced American predominance in the triangle and made it more difficult for the U.S. to control the triangular relations. And third, China has increased its gain in diplomatic autonomy and influence. Not only the U.S. depends on China for coping with Asian and world affairs, but also it counts on Chinese support to overcome international financial crisis. The diplomatic gain has allowed China to act more independent of its relations with the U.S. It no more needs to comply with American command if it is not in her wish. Hence, the constant cooperation as provided by China to the U.S. of the past could be changed to either cooperation or conflict in the future.

In other words, the undergoing changes of the US-China-Taiwan relations have made the triple asymmetrical triangle hard to sustain, and it is on the way toward transformation. Following the above analysis, there are at least two variables in function in the current triangular relationships. They are the cross-Strait relation and US-China relation. The cross-Strait relation is moving from the constant conflict of the past to either conflict or cooperation in the future. In the same way, the US-China relation is moving from the constant cooperation of the past to either cooperation or conflict in the future. With regard to US-Taiwan relation, it remains no change since Taiwan still needs to rely on the U.S. for survival and development, and it is in no way to challenge American power.

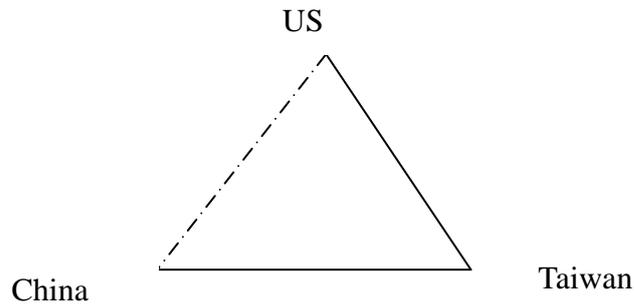
Accordingly, basing upon the aforementioned two variables, a matrix diagram could be drawn to illustrate four types of possible triangular relations and the position taken by Taiwan. Each can be characterized as the followings. (A) While the cross-Strait relations are in conflict and the U.S.-China relations are also in conflict, Taiwan will align with the U.S. and take a conflictive stand against China. (B) While the cross-Strait relations are in conflict but U.S.-China relations in cooperation, Taiwan will be constrained by the U.S. or by U.S. and China jointly. (C) While the cross-Strait relations are in cooperation but the US-China relations in conflict, Taiwan will prefer to stand neutralized of its relations with the U.S. and China. (D) While the cross-Strait relations are in cooperation and the U.S.-China relations also in cooperation, Taiwan will be cooperative with the U.S. and China.

	Cross-Strait Relations		
U.S.-China Relations		Conflict	Cooperation
	Conflict	Conflict	Neutralization
	Cooperation	Constraint	Cooperation

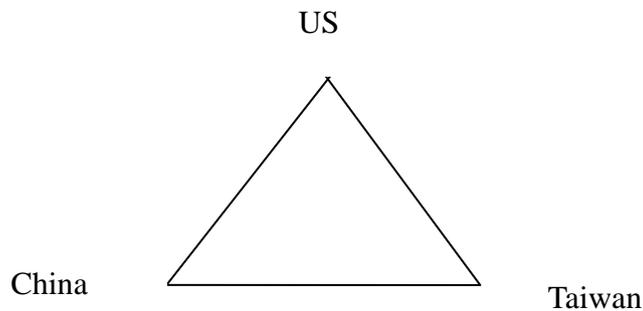
Furthermore, if we use triangle to characterize the four types of triangular relations and the positions taken by Taiwan, they could be reflected as the followings.



(C)



(D)



Among the four types of triangles, Type (D) is considered as the ideal condition. The three sides are positive of the relations among them. It is a win-win-win situation, and each gains from cooperation with the other two. Since every one is satisfied with the current gain, no one intends to change the status, and the triangle is rather stable. Type (B) looks like the same as the previous pattern by which the US stood as the pivot and maintained positive relations with both sides while China and Taiwan were in conflict. However, since the rise of China and its increasing influence on the Asia Pacific region including over the cross-Strait relations, American predominance in the triangle decreases even though it is still the strongest actor among the three. Under the situation, it will be more difficult for the U.S. to provide full security and assurance to Taiwan in coping with pressure from Beijing. Taiwan is likely to be constrained more by the U.S. or the U.S. and China jointly. The conflictive relations across the Taiwan Strait will not only bring more risks to Taiwan but also place the triangle unstable. Hence, by comparing with the past, the Type (B) will not be so stable and easily controlled as before.

Type (C) is a hazard to Taiwan as well as to the triangle itself. Though Taiwan maintains positive relations with both sides, it is too weak to serve as the pivot; nor is it able to manage the relations of the two big powers. The conflictive relations between Washington and Beijing will put Taiwan in dilemma. What Taiwan can do the best is to neutralize itself with the U.S. and China. But even so it might antagonize both of them because neither of them likes to see Taiwan stand neutral and it is easy for them to punish Taiwan. Therefore the triangle is rather unstable and Taiwan is in difficult position.

And Type (A) is considered as the most dangerous and explosive triangular relations. The rise of China has given itself more resources and tools to confront the U.S. and punish Taiwan. Taiwan joining the U.S. and vice versa against China would make Beijing becoming more uncompromised. This is the major conflict between two great powers and deep division within the triangle. No doubt, it is very unstable and dangerous.

American Roles in Cross-Strait Relations

With regard to American role across the Taiwan Strait, it varies in four different types of triangle. It exerts the most influence on Type (A). When the cross-Strait relations are in conflict and the U.S. and China also in conflict, the U.S. can give full support to Taiwan and hence reinforces confrontation against China. Taiwan, dependent on the U.S. for survival, can only follow American leadership. And the U.S. alone can decide whatever strategies or policies it likes to adopt to cope with Chinese challenges.

The U.S. exercises substantial influence on Type (B). Since the cross-Strait relations are in conflict, Taiwan needs to count on the U.S. for help. Consequently, to the U.S., Taiwan can serve as the chip to bargain with China. Also because of cooperative relations between the U.S. and China, Washington can deal directly with Beijing as well as Taipei. Beijing, to a certain extent, depends on American cooperation to constrain Taiwan from breaking away from China or taking any provocative action.

The U.S. influence on the cross-Strait relations becomes limited in Type (C). Inasmuch as Taiwan maintains positive relations with both sides, it does not like to get

involved in the disputes or conflicts between the U.S. and China. It might take a friendly but neutralized policy for keeping it away from trouble. However, Taiwan interest to stay neutral will allow China to gain more than the U.S. since Taiwan always sides with the U.S., historically and presently. By doing so, Taiwan might run the risk of being punished by Washington for lack of loyalty.

The U.S. influence seems to be the least in Type (D). While the U.S., China and Taiwan are all friendly among them, it reflects three positive parallel relationships in the triangle. Any of them can deal directly with the others on bilateral basis without the need to concern much about the third party intent. Under the situation, the cross-Strait relations will mainly negotiated and managed by China and Taiwan. It is hard for the U.S. to get involved and play roles.

In short, according to the aforementioned analysis, in terms of stability of triangular relations, they are ranked as (D) > (B) > (C) > (A). However, in terms of American role and influence on the cross-Strait relations, they are ranked as (A) > (B) > (C) > (D). It is interesting to find out that stability in triangle is determined by both relationship and power. Particularly the relationship between the two great powers - the U.S. and China - is the major determining variable. By contrast, American influence on the cross-Strait relations is mainly determined by the relationship across the Strait. When the cross-Strait relations are in conflict, the U.S. plays strong roles; however, when in cooperation, the U.S. roles get weak.

Prospect of Triangular Relations

Most of the people agree that the US-China-Taiwan relations are presently in good shape. The U.S.-China relations have been well since the 911 event in the Bush administration. The positive relationship continues to grow in the Obama administration when the two countries agree to further cooperation to cope with the international financial crisis. As to the cross-Strait relations, the election of Ma Ying-Jeou as the president of Taiwan in May 2008 dramatically changed the scene. During the past eight years of the Chen Shui-Bien administration, the two sides across the Taiwan Strait were hostile and often involved in acrimonious quarrels. Since Ma elected, the relations have been much relaxed and started government-to-government dialogues and economic negotiations. Also the U.S. and Taiwan relations, damaged during President Chen's years, have been gradually recovered after Ma took office. Washington and Taipei maintains good and direct communication, and their policies

are by large consistent and mutually accommodating. In short, the relations of the three sides are all positive in the triangle; in fact, it is the first time for the past 50 years to have such a full positive scene ever appeared in the US-China-Taiwan triangle.

Nevertheless, the immediate question followed is that whether the all-sides positive triangle, Type (D), is temporary phenomenon or long-lasting development. Shall we be optimistic about the future? And on what basis? Or maybe the future will be more complicated and changeable than the past. Is it possible to see the emergence of one type of triangle from another as those listed above? Again what are the rationales for continuity and change?

Chinese Perspective

Viewed from Chinese perspective, many are optimistic about the Sino-American relations and consider that the good relations will continue to proceed. There are four main reasons for the arguments. First, China is becoming more important to the United States. Not only Washington continues to rely on Beijing for help on regional and international affairs, but also it expands to economic matters as indicated from the recent international financial crisis. The calling for G 2 to manage world affairs is another sign to indicate that the U.S. is interested in expanding cooperation with China.³ Second, there has been hardly disagreement on engaging China. In the past, China policy was often a controversial issue in American presidential election and the forthcoming new administration. But it seems to be no more. China was not an issue in the 2008 presidential campaign as both Democratic and Republican candidates were for engagement.⁴ Moreover, there has been no policy debate on China in the Obama administration, only for more engagement. Third, the U.S.-China relations are becoming more interdependent; therefore, it is hard for any party to change the direction. Even though there still exist some differences on various issues between Washington and Beijing, they won't affect the overall relations of the two countries. In addition, the well-established communication channels and the high-level visits between the two governments shall

³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Group of Two That Could Change the World," *Financial Times*, January 13, 2009; and Henry C K Liu, "Brzezinski's G 2 Grand Strategy," *China Daily*, April 22, 2009, See [Http://bbs.chinadaily.com.cn/viewthread.php?gid=2&tid=633271&extra=page%3D3](http://bbs.chinadaily.com.cn/viewthread.php?gid=2&tid=633271&extra=page%3D3).

⁴ Barack Obama, "Renewing American Leadership," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (July/August 2007), pp. 2-16; and John McCain, "An Enduring Peace Built on Freedom," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 6 (November/ December 2007), pp. 19-34.

be helpful to lessen their differences and establish mutual confidence.⁵ And fourth, the rapidly growing Chinese power will make the U.S. more hesitant to adopt the confrontational approach. Simply speaking, the price is so high that no any American administration would like to pay. Under the circumstance, consultation and negotiation shall be the common pattern to deal with the bilateral issues.

They are also holding optimistic views toward the cross-Strait relations and consider a downtrend of American roles in the region. First, the change brought by Ma was significant, which ended the deteriorating relations across the Taiwan Strait and paved the way for future cooperation. Beijing was encouraged by the new development and responded quite positively. Presently, the two sides are satisfied with the progress of relations, and further improvement can be expected. Second, the easing of the cross-Strait relations has led Taiwan close economic ties to China. Less than a year, nine agreements were reached including the realization of the three direct links – postal, trade and airline. With the coming of more economic activities and social interchanges, the cross-Strait relations will be getting closer. Third, by the progress of relations and reconvening of government-to-government dialogues, the two sides across the Taiwan-Strait are able to come and deal with their mutually concerns. Any issue can be negotiated under one China principle, as often claimed by Chinese authority.⁶ There is no need for the third party – the U.S. – to get involved. And fourth, it is the long-held official policy of the U.S. to encourage direct dialogues or negotiations between the two governments across the Strait. As it is often claimed that so long as it is peacefully achieved, it is up to the people on both sides of the Strait to decide the terms and conditions under which exchanges, dialogue, and consultation occur.⁷ Therefore, Washington shall be encouraged and delighted to see the renewal negotiation across the Strait.

In short, according to Chinese views, Type (D) triangle will continue to function, and the U.S. roles in the cross-Strait relations will substantially decrease.

American Perspective

⁵ Liu Changmin, “Relations Between Big Power and Rising Power – A Case Study on the Development of Sino-U.S. Strategic Dialogue Mechanism,” *Modern International Relations (Beijing)*, 2008, No. 7, pp. 1-7.

⁶ “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue,” *Chinese Government’s Official Web Portal*, February 2000, See http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/27/content_17613.htm.

⁷ “US Welcomes Hu’s Call for Cross-Straits Peace Deal,” *Chinataiwan.org*, October 16, 2007, See http://203.192.15.115/sy/yw/200710/t20071016_468998.htm.

However, with regard to American perspective, there are various views on the prospect of U.S.-China relations. Generally, observers agree that there won't be changes of American policies towards China during the first two years of the Obama administration. It is because the new administration is preoccupied by urgent economic and financial problems, and some tough security issues like Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. Obama can not but continue his predecessor's cooperative policy to work with China; moreover, he is aware of the importance of China to deal with those financial and regional problems. The calling for building up a positive, cooperative and comprehensive partnership is a clear message sent by Obama to China.⁸

But it becomes unclear and contentious as to the future development. There are still some people believing the inevitable conflict between the U.S. and China. It is argued that historically the emergence of new power has been geopolitically destabilizing, and there is no reason to believe that China will be an exception. A peaceful rise, as claimed by China, is for the purpose of buying time to grow stronger so that can balance the United States and establish regional hegemony in East Asia.⁹ Also some concern that the long-term Chinese military planning and strategy are designed to target the U.S. Even though current Sino-American relations are in the unprecedented expansion, simultaneous with the development of military policies, programs, and activities that could skew future ties in much more adversary directions.¹⁰

Also many others are uncertain about what possible changes might be brought up by China. Some believe that China can be a positive force and contribute to regional and international peace and development if the United States pursues a positive relationship with China.¹¹ Some consider that whether the rise of China can be a peaceful change in the international system depends on strength and consolidation of the Western world. If the United States can set about strengthening the existing order, rebuilding Western rules and institutions, and reaffirming the political value of its alliance, China has no choice but accept the governance of the international order led by the U.S.¹² In addition, some suggest that strategic

⁸ "China-US Summit Well-Timed in Fight against Economic Crisis," *China Economic Net*, April 2, 2009, See http://en.ce.cn/National/Politics/200904/02/20090402_18697403.shtml.

⁹ Christopher Layne, "China's Challenge to US Hegemony," *Current History*, January 2008, pp. 13-18.

¹⁰ Jonathan D. Pollack, "Chinese Military Power: What Vexes the United States and Why?" *Orbis*, Fall 2007, pp. 635-50.

¹¹ Hillary Rodham Clinton, "U.S.-Asia Relations: Indispensable to Our Future," *Remarks at the Asia Society, New York*, February 13, 2009, See <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/02/117333.htm>.

¹² G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (January/February 2008), pp. 23-37.

collaboration with major powers stands the best chance of facing the rise of China and securing a world that supports U.S. interests. China is only one of the rising powers, which shall contain India, Russia and Brazil, and Japan and European Union remain strong and influential on the world stage. Collaboration with major powers is not only necessary to deal with the rising global problems but also powerful enough to keep the U.S. from challenge by any single country.¹³

Regarding the cross-strait relations, no doubt most Americans welcome the new changes and developments.¹⁴ It seems that there are good reasons to be optimistic. Washington clearly likes Ma Ying-jeou and his policies that he is more reliable and easy to communicate. Ma's "Three No's" policies – no unification, no independence, and no military confrontation – are the same as the status quo proposed by Washington. Ma's military defense posture is consistent with Washington's defense policy towards Taiwan. And Ma's "no surprise diplomacy" and "being a peace-maker instead of a trouble-maker" are well received by Washington.

Despite the cheerful mood and relief, Washington does not like to talk too much about the future. More often than not, it sticks to the official policy line – especially the statements from the State Department- that the United States will accept the agreements peacefully reached by the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. But Washington observers seem to know too well about Taiwan politics to have wishful thinking toward the cross-Strait relations. The deep ideological cleavages between the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) and the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will make it very difficult in Taiwan to reach any political agreement before going to negotiate with China. The increasing economic activities across the Taiwan Strait have not been able to translate into easing political differences. Hence it is still far away to anticipate any kind of political agreement or cooperation across the Taiwan Strait.

In short, viewed from American observers, the Type (D) triangle will possibly remain in the first two years of the Obama administration but it will be uncertain afterward. The US-China relations could be either cooperative or conflictive, depending on by American policies, Chinese strategic planning, Western world, and many other factors. Similarly, the cross-Strait relations could be either cooperative

¹³ Nina Hachigian and Mona Sutphen, "Strategic collaboration: How the United States Can Thrive as Other Powers Rise," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Autumn 2008), pp. 43-57.

¹⁴ "Chairman Raymond Burghardt, AIT, Press conference, Taipei," *American Institute in Taiwan- Transcript*, March 18, 2009, see <http://www.ait.org.tw/zh/news/officialtext/viewer.aspx?id=2009031902>.

or conflictive, too, due to factors in Taiwan politics, uncertain relations between the two sides, and different political agendas. Accordingly, all the four types of triangle could possibly emerge in the future.

Taiwan Perspective

As to the views from Taiwan, it is generally agreed that the Obama administration would like to maintain cooperation with China in the present stage. The reasons are clear enough as pointed out above by American observers that for pragmatic concerns Washington needs Chinese help in dealing with global financial crisis and economic recovery. It also likes to get Beijing in joint efforts to manage international and regional security.

However, the real problem is that it is hard to keep eagle and dragon dancing long. They are two different species and dance in different steps. China is in the development stage with a strong desire for acquiring resources and economic expansion, whereas the United States is a well-developed country concerned more about economic changes and international stability. Furthermore, China is a centralized state whose national interest overwhelms individual needs and rights, whereas the United States is a democratic country which can never ignore the needs and rights of people for long.

Therefore, it is hard to imagine the Obama administration willingness to tolerate the repression of human rights in China for long, including the recent crackdown of protesters in Urumqi of Xinjiang Province.¹⁵ It is hard again for Obama to accept the huge imports from Chinese commodities for long without reaction. On the same token, it is difficult for Beijing to hold and sustain the US dollar while American economy is in steady shaking condition. And it is inconceivable for China not to flex her muscles while she is continuingly building up massive military power.

For what is said does not mean the inevitable conflict between the U.S. and China. But it does point out the complex relations of the two countries that cooperation and conflict often go hand in hand. Many in Taiwan believe that the more China is getting powerful, the less the United States is willing to confront. Simply, the price is too high; no any country likes to pay. For pragmatic concern, it

¹⁵ Austin Ramzy, "After Deadly Riots, Ethnic Tensions Heat Up in Urumqi," *Time*, July 7, 2009, See <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1908969,00.html>.

is quite reasonable for the United States to enhance cooperation with China, to the extent that they can be compatible with. But their cooperation will be limited and hard to sustain; they are simply quite different in value, system and development stage.

With regard to the cross-Strait relations, some from the opposition camp are suspicious of Ma's policies that might lead to Taiwan to be an integral part of China and eventually swallowed by the later. They worry that Ma has been moving too fast leaning to China and making Taiwan heavily dependent on China for economic development and its international activities. By comparison, people from the ruling camp argue that what has been done in the cross-Strait relations is only to make up inaction for the past eight years of the former DPP administration. Moreover, until the present Taipei only negotiates with China on economic matters, which are mostly beneficial to Taiwan economy and welcomed by the public. It does not change the status quo of Taiwan, nor does it touch on the issue of Taiwan sovereignty at all.

In my opinion, the future cross-Strait relationship can not be too close, nor too far; it will stand and move between the two ends. The main points for the argument are as the following. First, Taiwan is a democratic country, and it will hold presidential election in every four years. Since Taiwan population is mainly composed by Taiwanese ethnic group (80%) – the rest are Hakka, mainland Chinese and aboriginal – no any presidential candidate would deviate from “Taiwan identity;” otherwise, he will never be elected. When Ma campaigned in 2008 – who is a mainland Chinese and was born in Hong Kong – he identified himself as a real Taiwanese as living in Taiwan most of his life time. The institutionalized exercise on Taiwan identity built-up would make it extremely difficult for any policy-maker to attempt to drive Taiwan to China side, especially in political matters.

Second, it is getting true that economically Taiwan depends more on China, which absorbs about 40% of Taiwan total trade. As a matter of fact, it is not a surprised development. The fast growing Chinese economy, geographic proximity and same cultural heritage have all contributed to Taiwan getting-closer economic links with China. This trend was occurred prior to Ma in power; however, Ma's policy of economic normalization with China will expedite the process. Some concern about economic dependence on China might become political hostage to Taiwan. In my opinion, this is rather overstated. But it seems true that economic dependence will make Taiwan be more cautious and less provocative in dealing its relations with China.

And third, irrespective of the rapprochement of the cross-Strait relations, the United States still plays the pivot role in Taiwan. The U.S. security guarantees, support to Taiwan's international participation, commonly-shared democratic value, and special bilateral relationships can not be matched by any other country. Taiwan's engagement with China to a large extent is also encouraged by the United States and in parallel with American policy interest toward China. In the future, the U.S.-China relations and the U.S. interest with Taiwan will no doubt directly and indirectly affect the development of cross-Strait relations.

In short, viewed from Taiwan, though the Type (D) reflects the present conditions of the trilateral relations, it is changeable in the future. Cooperation and conflict will simultaneously coexist in the U.S.-China relations. Restrained by Taiwan politics, mutual economic ties of the Strait, and American interest in Taiwan, the cross-Strait relations will not be too close or too loose. Under the circumstances, the future triangular relations will go around the Type (D), Type (C) and Type (B). An outright conflict between the U.S.-Taiwan and China – Type (A) – might not be taken place.

Conclusion

The triple asymmetrical triangle with the U.S. standing as the pivot was considered the typical type of the U.S.-China-Taiwan triangular relations. However, by the easing of the cross-Strait relations, the fast rising of Chinese power, and the gaining influence of Chinese diplomacy, the triangular relations are undergoing changes. The old type of triangle has not been able to apply, and a new analytical framework is needed to meet changing development. Accordingly, a matrix of four types of triangle is proposed in the paper. Each type has its own characteristics and reflects the roles played by three actors.

Generally, most of observers agree that the three-sides all positive triangle, the Type (D), reflect the present triangular relations. It is the ideal type in the twin-head dual asymmetrical triangle ($U.S. \geq China > Taiwan$); it is the win-win-win scenario. With regard to the future, views from Chinese, American and Taiwan however are different. Chinese look more optimistic about the future relations and consider that the Type (D) will remain. Americans exist various views – some are optimistic while some are cautious or even pessimistic. Basically all four types of triangle are

possible to emerge. Taiwan seems to stand in the middle. They are not so optimistic as Chinese, nor do they foresee the inevitable conflict between the U.S. and China or China and Taiwan since all three actors are restrained by some major forces. The future triangular relations will be mixed by cooperation and conflict. In other words, the future type of triangle is changeable, and easy to change.

國科會補助計畫衍生研發成果推廣資料表

日期:2011/08/16

國科會補助計畫	計畫名稱: 轉型中的美中台三角關係與美國角色
	計畫主持人: 鄭端耀
	計畫編號: 98-2410-H-004-054- 學門領域: 國際關係
無研發成果推廣資料	

98 年度專題研究計畫研究成果彙整表

計畫主持人：鄭端耀

計畫編號：98-2410-H-004-054-

計畫名稱：轉型中的美中台三角關係與美國角色

成果項目		量化			單位	備註（質化說明：如數個計畫共同成果、成果列為該期刊之封面故事...等）	
		實際已達成數（被接受或已發表）	預期總達成數（含實際已達成數）	本計畫實際貢獻百分比			
國內	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	1	0	100%		
		專書	1	0	100%		
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力 （本國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		
國外	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	0	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		章/本
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力 （外國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		

<p style="text-align: center;">其他成果</p> <p>(無法以量化表達之成果如辦理學術活動、獲得獎項、重要國際合作、研究成果國際影響力及其他協助產業技術發展之具體效益事項等，請以文字敘述填列。)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">無</p>
---	--------------------------------------

	成果項目	量化	名稱或內容性質簡述
科 教 處 計 畫 加 填 項 目	測驗工具(含質性與量性)	0	
	課程/模組	0	
	電腦及網路系統或工具	0	
	教材	0	
	舉辦之活動/競賽	0	
	研討會/工作坊	0	
	電子報、網站	0	
	計畫成果推廣之參與(閱聽)人數	0	

國科會補助專題研究計畫成果報告自評表

請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況、研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）、是否適合在學術期刊發表或申請專利、主要發現或其他有關價值等，作一綜合評估。

1. 請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況作一綜合評估

達成目標

未達成目標（請說明，以 100 字為限）

實驗失敗

因故實驗中斷

其他原因

說明：

2. 研究成果在學術期刊發表或申請專利等情形：

論文： 已發表 未發表之文稿 撰寫中 無

專利： 已獲得 申請中 無

技轉： 已技轉 洽談中 無

其他：（以 100 字為限）

本論文發表在 2009/8 美國華府‘台美當代中國’研討會(英文), 以及在 2010 年國內數場演講會(中文), 目前正在細膩化內容, 預計在 2011 年刊登國內 TSSCI 級期刊.

3. 請依學術成就、技術創新、社會影響等方面，評估研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）（以 500 字為限）

美中台三角關係正經歷重大轉型變化, 它不只對三國關係發展, 而且對西太平洋的穩定安全皆有關鍵影響.

本研究提供探討新三角關係的分析架構, 協助吾人理解和掌握當前和未來三角關係的變化型態, 透國不同三角關係型態洞悉三角關係可能運作.

本研究顯示美中台三角關係已從過去美國主導的單一運作型態, 走向多元三角關係運作型態發展, 而且此三角關係變化相當迅速. 2008-2009 年屬於三邊正面三角關係, 2010 年進入美中兩邊負面三角關係, 2011 年又重回三邊正面三角關係.

隨著兩岸關係的改善, 美國在三角關係的影響力下跌. 本研究顯示兩岸關係衝突性愈高, 美國的影響力升高, 兩岸關係緩和, 美國的影響力下跌

兩岸關係未來仍呈現不確定狀態, 此一方面使得三角關係變化性提高, 另一方面美國角色仍有相當大發揮空間.

基於當前美中台三角關係處於快速變動狀態, 本研究提供的分析架構當有助吾人能理解和掌握此變化的脈絡.