



496

A STRAIT SHOT

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Taiwan's president Chen Shui-bian speaking at an army base near Taipei. The Taiwanese president told military officers that China's intentions to invade Taiwan "were clearer than ever before." He said the Chinese military was vigorously developing its armed forces and weapons. The portrait of Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek is in the background. AP PHOTO/JEROME FAVRE

China currently has 496 missiles aimed at Taiwan, only 135 miles away. These missiles travel at speeds of 1 1/2 miles per second and thus are about 90 seconds from Taiwan's shores. Chen Shui-bian has decided to put forth a referendum asking China to remove these intimidating missiles.

Chen's ultimate desire is to hold a referendum for total independence, but at President Bush's request, he has promised not to do it. However, there remains one provision under which he has reserved the right to declare sovereignty: if the island comes under a clear and present danger. For some reason, the island's leader feels that 496 missiles parked just across the Straits of Taiwan represents such a danger.

Until now, Bush has said that the U.S. will do whatever it takes to guard Tai-

wan against a Chinese assault. Will Bush ever back off from his promise to defend her? "We oppose any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo," Bush said after talks with visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. "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," Bush added. Maintaining the status quo prevents the U.S. from having to take a stand.

If Taiwan is truly a U.S. interest, which it is, then to what extent will America become involved? Taiwan appears resolute to declare self-rule. China looks equally determined to halt them. Does Washington have the ability to pacify both sides? The U.S. has the nuclear capability to cause unthinkable mass destruction. If she is sucked into an all-out war with China, there is no telling how the world would be forever altered.

What's in a name?

In a rare diplomatic victory, Taiwan was recently able to get its national title modified at the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) from "Taiwan, China" to simply "Taiwan". The victory has infuriated Beijing... once again. The news headline read, "International Body Accepts Taiwan." How will this affect the slow but deadly dogfight between Beijing and Taipei? One of the world's largest law enforcement agencies no longer recognizes Taiwan as a renegade province of the Motherland.

Taiwan has continually defied Mainland China since 1949. When the communists overthrew the regime of Free China, Chiang Kai-shek and his followers took flight to the island of Taiwan. Since then, Beijing has contended that Taiwan is under China's authority even though Mao Tse-tung's communists never actually conquered the island. China has been vociferously demanding "reunification" in recent years, and it appears they are not letting up on their demands.

MISSILES: FOR INDEPENDENCE

The haunting One-China Policy, which has been in force since the U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, even now guides President Bush's actions. He has stated that if there is to be unification between Taiwan and the Mainland, it should be done diplomatically and not by force. Taiwan has typically depended on the U.S. for military protection, but the U.S. has respected the economic and military forces of the mainland. Quite a balancing act.

This is a delicate subject since, in the past, China has stated her intentions to take out 25 major U.S. cities with nuclear ballistic missiles. With no missile defense system in place, the U.S. remains vulnerable to any major nuclear power, and China is no exception.

The Plot Thickens

Taiwan is now marching towards declaring sovereignty, or what China would call the 'abyss of destruction'. A referendum that could lead to such a declaration will be voted on when Taiwan goes to the polls for the upcoming March 20th presidential elections.

A recent attempt to put the name 'Taiwan' on all of its passports in place of "Republic of China" is another example of the steps the island has been taking that have exasperated the Red Chinese. What may seem like tiddlywinks to those of us halfway around the world appears as a hardcore threat in the eyes of the communist Chinese.

"Taipei's radical push towards independence has put cross-Straits relations in the crucible... Peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits will be determined by what happens in the next three months," said Wang Zaizi, vice minister of the Taiwan Affairs Office of

the State Council, as quoted in the *China Daily*. Zaizi warned Taiwan to "stop playing with fire". Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has vowed Beijing will pay any price to safeguard the "unity of the motherland". But Wang stopped short of threatening force.

We are a sovereign nation! Chen Shui-bian, president of Taiwan, has declared autonomy at numerous junctures. Now we are seeing an amplified effort to affirm Taiwan's independence on the global level. The IACP is an international organization. It is also a

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member of Interpol, the international police system.

Nobody wants blood on their hands, yet everybody wants it their way. Is it possible to make both Red China and Taiwan happy without resorting to full-scale warfare? Who will decide the game has gone on long enough and act on the unthinkable?

The Day After

What future date will become the next "September 11th" that, when mentioned, will invoke horrific memories forever to be embedded in the minds of survivors? What will the world be like the day after two billion people are

obliterated? Revelation 9:13-16 prophesies a war coming that will kill one-third of mankind. Whatever date it turns out to be, we can bank on the fact that it will be a day that the four billion survivors will never forget.

The prophecy states that one of the combatants in this war will have an army of 200 million soldiers. China is the only nation to ever make such a boast and have the population to back it up. We may be looking at a political Mount St. Helens.

One thing we can know for certain: in the event that two billion people die, it will open the door for global governance to have its day in the sun. The Antichrist and his regime will quickly rise as the new champions of peace. They will be embraced for their heroic leadership. But it will be the most brutal leadership the world has ever known.

Whether the 6th Trumpet war begins here and now, or not, one truth remains unchanged. It is time to proclaim the gospel like never before.

If the Bible says this war is sure to happen, then nothing will prevent it. The only sheltered place is in the name of Jesus Christ. Proverbs 18:10 declares, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

496 missiles on the wall. 496 missiles. If one of those missiles just happens to fall...

*Craig Treadwell and Dana Grohman contributed to the writing of this article. Related resources from **ENDTIME**: "The China Threat," VHS, one hour. "Did 9/11 Start World War III?," VHS or DVD, one hour. Understanding the Endtime Level 3: The Sequence of Endtime Events, 6 lessons on VHS, Cassette Series or Study Manual.*