

The US-China relationship sits atop four powder kegs: the Korean Peninsula, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea; with the South China Sea the most likely cause of a direct confrontation between the two nations.

The dynamics of the relationship are changing; this time Washington is serious about confronting Beijing. As a result, China's leaders have been forced to swallow their pride and make hasty peace initiatives to prevent conflict.

A book written by the founder of modern US Sinology, John Fairbank, titled *The United States and China*, contains a lengthy introduction to Confucianism. It was clear that many Western experts on China had a habit of indulging in Confucianism, possessing a special fondness for all things China and consequently were all too willing to make excuses for the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) wicked deeds.

In contrast, in his book *The Hundred-Year Marathon — China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, contemporary US China expert Michael Pillsbury quotes extensively from the legalist school of classical Chinese philosophy, including the school of diplomacy — one of 10 schools of thought that came out of the Warring States period of Chinese history — Sun Zi's (孫子) *The Art of War* and the *Thirty-six Stratagems*. The real China is one of hypocrisy and treachery.

Pillsbury, an influential thinker within the US national security apparatus, writes that he was originally a pro-China “panda-hugger,” who advocated US economic and military assistance to China to help its leaders realize their dream of becoming a “great nation” once again.

Pillsbury writes that he realized that Washington has been duped by China for the past 60 years: Beijing has no intention of initiating democratic reforms. Instead, China's leaders have been quietly hatching a plot for global domination by 2049 — the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

It was awful to see the US providing assistance to China following the rapprochement between the two nations initiated by former US president Richard Nixon.

Washington bristles, China cowers

Written by Paul Lin 林

Tuesday, 22 March 2016 13:07

Washington even thought former Chinese president Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) was a US ally and believed that his successor Jiang Zemin (江澤民) was closer still, so much so that Washington initially showed no concern when former CCP general secretary Zhao Ziyang (趙紫陽) was placed under house arrest after sympathizing with student protesters during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

Former Chinese president Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) softened China's stance toward Taiwan, which fooled the US into forming a mistaken assessment of China's hegemonic aspirations.

In 2013 Pillsbury traveled to Beijing for the last time and met with five high-ranking officers from China's military and 60 security affairs specialists.

It was then that Pillsbury realized how wrong he had been.

He writes that at the time, not all of his fellow officials shared his view, but that a growing number are coming over to his side and that this is altering Washington's China policy.

The final transformation took place in September last year when Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) visited the US. According to a report in the Hong Kong media, US President Barack Obama still held hopes for Xi and used the opportunity to try to persuade the Chinese leader to give ground on the South China Sea issue.

To this end, Obama organized a private dinner, inviting only a select few of his trusted advisers, to facilitate easy communication between the two heads of state.

However, Xi remained unmoved and would listen to neither reasonable argument nor rational persuasion. Obama left the dinner seething with rage and immediately instructed US National Security Council officials to issue an order to the head of the US Pacific Command, Admiral Harry Harris, authorizing his ships to conduct navigation exercises in the South China Sea, and authorizing the use of firepower if necessary.

Only after the event did Chinese officials discover the disastrous turn of events, in particular the potential damage to the interests of senior party figures' children, a large number of whom are living in the US. A great deal of bickering ensued within the party, although Xi was not blamed for his arrogance and ignorance. Instead, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of State Security were blamed for not providing Xi with intelligence. The Chinese military were at a loss what to do next and the Central Military Committee (CMC) became more aware of the limitations of Chinese military force.

Therefore, orders were given not to provoke US ships and to take precautions against the accidental discharge of weapons.

In the latter half of October last year at the Xiangshan Forum — China's alternative to the annual Shangri-La Dialogue Asian security forum — CMC Deputy Chairman Fan Changlong (范长龙) pledged that China "will not resort to force" and in doing so betrayed that China is nothing more than a paper tiger.

However, leading figures within the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) still insist on using China to scare Taiwanese. President Ma Ying-jeou (马英九) even visited the disputed Itu Aba Island (Taiping Island, 太平岛) in January at the behest of Beijing. Such acts can no longer be described as foolish any longer, it was just low-down, dirty behavior.

Beijing's attempt to pass itself off as an underdog has ended in failure; the US is closing in on China.

The incident has done more than intensify internal conflict within the CCP: If Beijing fans the flames of war, it might force each of China's provincial governments to act in the interests of their own self-preservation and bypass the CCP's centralized totalitarian regime.

That might just be the critical moment when democracy takes hold in China.

Washington bristles, China cowers

Written by Paul Lin 林 義

Tuesday, 22 March 2016 13:07

Paul Lin is a political commentator.

Translated by Edward Jones

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2016/03/22](#)