

Academic says US, China fighting for Taiwan's heart

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China has a secret plan to draw Taiwan into its campaign to replace the US as the global superpower, Hudson Institute Center for Chinese Strategy director Michael Pillsbury said on Tuesday.

“Part of their secret strategy is to pull Taiwan over to China’s side — they believe it is a big mistake to alienate Taiwan,” he said.

Pillsbury, a former US assistant undersecretary of defense for policy planning, was speaking at a Hudson Institute event in Washington to launch his new book *The Hundred Year Marathon* in which he makes the case that Beijing has outwitted Washington.

Based on interviews with Chinese defectors and newly declassified national security documents, he says that the US has been fooled into helping China promote its economic and political system.

According to Pillsbury, then-Chinese leader Mao Zedong (毛泽东) designed the strategic deception program in 1955 to persuade Washington that China was a poor, backward, inward-looking nation that deserved US economic and military aid.

In reality, Pillsbury says in the book, China is running a 100-year marathon modernization program to work against US interests.

He said at the book-launch event that Beijing works in Washington to stop Taiwan becoming “part of the conversation.”

When the US announced its rebalance and pivot toward Asia, Pillsbury pointed out there was no mention of Taiwan.

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He said that Chinese military hawks claim that Taiwan is still an “unsinkable aircraft-carrier” working for the US to contain China.

Pillsbury claimed that Chinese military hawks have “big maps” to show how Taiwan is being used by the US to block Chinese ports and stop the Chinese navy from reaching the Pacific.

There were other parts to the narrative, he said, but basically the hawks believed that the US and Taiwan were engaged in a very sophisticated plot to contain China.

The truth was very different, he said.

He said that in the 1960s, the US did plot with Taiwan, but since the diplomatic recognition of China, things had changed completely.

“We don’t recognize Taiwan diplomatically, Taiwan doesn’t exist as an official entity,” he said.

Pillsbury said that China and Washington were competing for Taiwan.

“Are we going to get Taiwan to eat McDonald’s hamburgers and have everyone speaking English when we are telling them they are not a country?” he said.

Or, he wondered, would China do better by arguing that both sides were Chinese and that Taiwan was really part of Chinese history.

“Who is going to win the 100-year marathon for Taiwan — Washington or Beijing? “I think it is an open question,” Pillsbury said.

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