

## How Taiwan can avoid a Chinese takeover: expert

Written by Taipei Times

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US Naval War College professor James Holmes has some advice for Taiwan on how to avoid a Chinese takeover.

“I reject the idea that a free people is doomed to fall to foreign conquerors,” he said.

Writing on Web site RealClearDefense, the strategy expert said that Taiwan can “master its destiny” if it does a few basic things.

First, Taiwan must not be taken in by “hooplah” over cordial cross-strait relations, he said.

“Much has been made of the supposed thaw in cross-strait relations during the [President] Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) years,” Holmes said. “This will last precisely as long as Beijing sees the trendlines going its way toward unification.”

Taiwan must be realistic about US help in the case of an invasion, he added.

“Taiwan must ready itself to hold out as long as possible while the US political process sorts itself out, orders are given and US relief forces try to pry open the region,” he said.

“Self-help” should be the watchword for Taipei’s defense preparations, he wrote.

“Threaten credibly to make things hard and drawn-out for Chinese forces and Beijing’s success doubtful and you may balk its plans — or deter aggression altogether,” he said.

Taipei needs to be “pessimistic” about allied support.

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“Events will either prove you right and you’ll be ready, or you will be pleasantly surprised when American planes appear overhead and gray hulls come over the horizon,” Holmes said.

“Savvy defenders” can make a cross-strait amphibious assault “hell” for the invaders, he added.

“Taiwan’s topography is extraordinarily mountainous, offering numerous emplacements for anti-ship and anti-air missiles and long-range gunnery,” Holmes said.

“Dug-in forces armed with such weaponry can withstand serious punishment from air and missile strikes, China’s chief methods of softening up the island’s defenses,” the professor said.

Holmes said that thinking ahead about the worst case of Chinese forces getting ashore, Taiwan should prepare an insurgency that could help dissuade Beijing from ordering an invasion in the first place.

“Visibly preparing for protracted resistance would telegraph Taipei’s seriousness and could bolster deterrence,” he said.

He advised the Taiwanese navy to deploy “swarms” of lethal, missile-armed small craft around the island’s periphery.

The professor said that guerrilla war at sea can work for Taiwan’s defenders the way it worked for Mao Zedong’s (毛澤東) irregular forces against Japan and Chiang Kai-shek’s (蔣介石) Nationalists.

“The weak can win if they deploy scarce assets cunningly,” he said.

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