PREFACE

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It is now widely recognized and accepted in U.S. policy that deterrence best practice must take into account opponents' unique goals, values, risk tolerances, channels of communication, and "worldviews" in the context of a particular deterrence engagement, i.e., the "tailoring" of deterrence.

Recognition of the need to tailor deterrence, and the analytical challenge of doing so, is hardly new. Carl von Clausewitz emphasized the need for tailoring preparations for war in precisely the same terms that apply to the tailoring of deterrence strategies—which are no less important or intellectually difficult: "To discover how much of our resources must be mobilized for war, we must first examine our own political aim and that of the enemy. We must gauge the character and abilities of its government and people and do the same in regard to our own. Finally, we must evaluate the political sympathies of other states and the effect the war may have on them. To assess these things in all their ramifications and diversity is plainly a colossal task."[1]

While the value of tailoring deterrence is now recognized widely, the challenging analytical work needed for actually doing so—understanding and characterizing opponents' unique worldviews in context to support U.S. deterrence calculations and strategies—does not appear to be undertaken in much of the open literature. Yet, this is the needed preliminary work that can be applied to the tailoring of U.S. deterrence strategies. Still apparent in most commentary on the requirements for deterrence is a more convenient methodology inherited from the early-to-mid Cold War years, i.e., the positing of a standard of adequacy for deterrence that seems reasonable to the observer, but reflects little effort to understand the opponent's decision making in the context of the deterrence engagement. Effectively ignoring opponents' actual decision-making drivers in context has led to deterrence failures in the past and will likely do so again in the future if it is the basis for deterrence strategy.

This study advances the challenging work that must undergird efforts to tailor a deterrence strategy for a particular opponent—in this case, China—in a specific prospective deterrence engagement over Taiwan. It builds on a similar effort, now more than two decades old, that focused on the question of how to tailor the deterrence of China in the event of a crisis over Taiwan.[2] That 2001 study may have been helpful at the time, but changes in the threat context warrant a new look at the question, including a steady and rapid expansion of China's conventional and nuclear capabilities relative to those of the United States and China's apparent new urgency to resolve the Taiwan Question, by force if necessary.

The questions addressed herein as critical for deterrence do not begin with the usual immediate focus on relative force measures, conventional or nuclear, or various possible alterations in U.S. declaratory policy. Instead, à propos the tailoring of deterrence, the initial priority questions of interest involve China's unique goals and worldview, the value the

[1] Carl von Clausewitz, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 708.

[2] Keith B. Payne, *The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2001).

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) attaches to the unification of Taiwan, and its willingness to accept risk to achieve this goal, i.e., the political background of the Taiwan Question.

In addition, the fundamental deterrence question confronting the United States is not simply what threatened sanction may appear intolerable to the CCP. The more complicated question addressed in this study is how the United States might establish a deterrence strategy that presents the CCP with the prospective consequences of a decision to conquer Taiwan that are credible and more intolerable than enduring a continuation of the status quo. The CCP may deem both of these prospects to be intolerable; for deterrence to function, the former must be more so.

Answering this question is a formidable task. The methodology employed in this study builds on that of the earlier 2001 effort. It begins with a detailed set of questions regarding China's goals and worldview pertinent to the U.S. deterrence goal (see the set of questions in Appendix A) and from there sought to create the outlines of a proposed deterrence strategy tailored to the opponent and occasion.

In seeking to understand China's goals and worldview pertinent to the Taiwan Question, the authors of this study called on the outstanding help of 21 subject matter experts—interviewing each at length at least once, and several repeatedly (see the list of experts interviewed in Appendix B and a select summary of "lessons learned" via these interviews in Appendix C). This methodology brought analysts with extensive professional backgrounds in the area of deterrence theory and policy together with analysts who have comparably deep professional backgrounds in Indo-Pacific security matters. This is the merger of different but complementary areas of expertise to focus on a question of common interest: how to envisage a deterrence strategy tailored to the CCP threat to Taiwan. The result is not a deterrence strategy that is foolproof; no deterrence strategy is foolproof. But it is a deterrence strategy more likely to function as hoped than one that essentially dismisses or ignores the value of understanding the opponent in context.

The specific conclusions of this study likely do not transfer without modification to many other prospective U.S. deterrence engagements given the uniqueness of the Taiwan strait context, but the general approach to tailoring deterrence employed herein is not limited to deterrence questions involving China and Taiwan; it also applies to tailoring the deterrence of Russia's obvious revanchist ambitions in Europe. Understanding how best to deter Russia in this regard may be too late to help Ukraine in the current crisis but extremely important for the future.

Many thanks are due to the outstanding analysts and former senior officials who contributed to this study and to the senior reviewers who provided their comments throughout the study effort, but are not responsible for its conclusions. All members of this study team wish to express great thanks to the 21 experts who participated in the dozens of interviews that proved so valuable. Those experts also should not be considered responsible for the conclusions reached in this study. Special thanks are due to Amy Joseph for expertly managing this study project from start to finish and also for turning multiple disparate draft chapters into a remarkably coherent whole. And, finally, many thanks to the Smith Richardson Foundation and the Sarah Scaife Foundation for the generous support that made this study possible.