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국제학석사학위논문

An Empirical Study on
China's use of Force since 1949
: Patterns and Variations

1949년 이후 중국의 무력 사용에 관한 실증 연구
: 패턴과 변수를 중심으로

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Abstract

An empirical study on China's use of Force since 1949 : Patterns and Variations

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With Russia invading Ukraine in 2022, various discussions have been taking place on the use of force, including China's unification of Taiwan by force, under the awareness that "Ukraine may be the East Asia of tomorrow."¹ In particular, China's use of force has drawn attention in the context of the U.S.–China power transition amid the trend of "the relative decline of the United States and the relative rise of China" following the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the 2008 global financial crisis.

Previous research on China's use of force has focused on case studies and normative studies such as China's crisis–management

¹ "Japan PM: East Asia Could Be Next Ukraine," *Voice of America*, January 14, 2023, at <https://www.voanews.com/a/kishida-says-g7-should-show-strong-will-on-russia-s-ukraine-invasion/6918474.html>, last assessed on April 30, 2023.

patterns, strategic culture, and position on international norms related to the use of force. Still, systematic quantitative studies are lacking, and the scope of the research remains in the Cold War. However, such quantitative research has the advantage of not only being able to unveil China's behavior patterns based on facts but also contributing to theoretical discussions over the U.S.–China power transition. Therefore, this study aims to conduct a quantitative study on China's use of force based on the newly-published–Military Interstate Dispute Data by The Correlates of War Project at the University of Michigan in 2020.

The research question of this study is “Under what conditions has China used force since 1949?” To derive an answer to this question, this thesis presented hypotheses based on the structural and agent-level perspectives on China's use of force. In order to test the hypotheses, 197 cases of military conflicts with China from 1949 to 2012 were extracted from the MID data. As a specific methodology, binary logistic regression was conducted between whether China has used force in military conflicts and the independent variables presented in the hypotheses. Prior to regression analysis, the trend of the use of force by period and object was examined through descriptive statistics. Finally, this research analyzed the cases by period based on the trends and variables derived from statistical analysis and explained China's patterns in the use of force.

According to the results of this study, China balanced against the U.S. national power in East Asia except for the Deng period

(1977–1991). During the Mao period, China tended to use force against the U.S. alliance and the quasi–alliance in terms of the balance of power and threat as China perceived that it was encircled by the alliance. In addition, the U.S. military intervention also caused the deterrence effect during this period. However, if these military interventions strengthened the perception that China was encircled, a paradox of deterrence occurred. Thus, China used force even against the states that were not allied with the United States. On the other hand, as competition between communist regimes intensified after the Soviet–China border dispute and the U.S.–China détente in 1969, China mainly used its force against the Soviet Union and its quasi–allies.

During the post–Cold War period, China’s use of force decreased sharply compared to the Cold War period. However, China’s military conflicts with other countries still peaked in the form of displaying force and showed the highest frequency of military conflicts among East Asian countries. This can be interpreted as the degree of hostility decreased due to the U.S.–China minimum nuclear deterrence with the development of China’s nuclear capabilities. Nevertheless, China was still assertive in terms of the balance of power, considering the display of force was mainly against the United States and its (quasi) allies in the U.S.–led world. Thus, future military conflicts between the United States and China may occur in little, unexpected events. The 2001 U.S.–China military aircraft crash was the only case showing the armed conflict between the two sides that occurred in the

process of their displaying force in the region.

In addition to the aircraft collision with the United States, China's use of force during the post-Cold War period was also against the countries with territorial disputes (Vietnam, the Philippines, India, etc.), which either were not US allies or were not guaranteed U.S. military intervention in contingency. Given that the U.S. military intervention still had a deterrence effect during the post-Cold War period, countries in territorial disputes with China could strengthen their alliance or security alignment with the United States to enjoy such a deterrence effect. As a result, the perception of alliance encirclement during the Mao period that the US allies and neighboring countries encircled China could be revived. Also, a paradox of deterrence, as it was in the China-India border disputes in 1962, may emerge. In particular, as China continued to expand the scope of core interests in terms of territorial integrity, and it did not rule out the possibility of using force with regard to its core interests, the deterrent effect of U.S. intervention in future territorial disputes with China could be neutralized.

Keywords: China's use of force, Balance of power, Share of US national power in East Asia, Encirclement of Alliance, the deterrence effect of US intervention, Salience of territorial dispute

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p. 26 : 3	Cold War	post-Cold War
p.32 : 11	core profits	core interest
p.46 : 9	The Chinese Navy	the Chinese Navy
P. 62 : 1	As Xi Jinping noted that	Also, Xi Jinping noted that
p. 63 : 15	diminish	diminish
p. 68 : 20	with Russia's material	with Russia's material support

Chapter 1. Research Design

1.1. Background

After the end of the Cold War in 1991, the United States, which reigned as a single hegemon in a unipolar world, suffered a decline in national power due to the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the ensuing war in the Middle East, as well as the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis. In contrast, China, which emerged as a rising power after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, overtook Japan based on GDP in 2010 and became the second-largest economy, drawing attention to the possibility of power transition amid the trend of the “relative decline of the U.S. and relative rise of China.”¹

In this regard, Graham Allison mentioned in his book, *Destined for War* that the U.S.–China war is “not inevitable,” but it is “much more likely than currently recognized.” This hints at both the possibility of a peaceful power transition and a hegemonic war between the United States and China, especially emphasizing the possibility of an accidental armed conflict between the two countries turning into a war because of the “Thucydides’ trap.”²

Moreover, the possibility of armed conflict between the United

¹ For discussions on the U.S.–China power transition, see David Rapkin and William R. Thompson, *Transition Scenarios: China and the United States in the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Jae Ho Chung, “Assessing China’s Power,” in Jae Ho Chung (ed.), *Assessing China’s Power*, (New York: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 2–3.

² Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’ Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), x vii–x ix.

States and China is related to the entrapment of alliances and the establishment of East Asia's military strategy, such as its participation in the Indo-Pacific strategy and security relations with neighboring countries. Thus, empirical research on the patterns of China's use of force is of great significance both in theory and regarding policy aspects for East Asian countries. Though China's use of force in the future will not necessarily follow past patterns, these will be able to provide meaningful insights through a historical approach.

To empirically examine the possibility of such an armed conflict between the United States and China, this research aims to analyze the factors that influenced China's use of force after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as "China") in 1949. Much research has already been conducted on China's use of force. While case studies based on specific theories have accumulated, systematic quantitative studies are lacking, and data used for research remains from the Cold War.³ Therefore, this research will inquire into the factors influencing China's use of force through quantitative analysis based on newly updated data and will also examine the relevant cases.

³ For a quantitative approach to China's use of force, see Alastair Iain Johnston, "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behavior, 1949-1992: A First Cut at the Data," *The China Quarterly*, No. 153 (March 1998), pp. 1-30. For other quantitative research out of China, see Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules and Empirical Patterns," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 1996), pp. 163-213; Benjamin O. Fordham and Christopher C. Sarver, "Militarized Interstate Disputes and United States Uses of Force," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (September 2001), pp. 455-466.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. The Levels of Analysis

According to the nearly exhausted list of pertinent literature on this theme, there are three perspectives regarding the patterns of China's use of force since 1949. The first level of analysis is the structural view that explains and predicts the conditions for China to use force. Western theories such as defensive realism or offensive realism provide explanations for the causes of war or the use of force as a means of seeking security under the structure constructed by the dominant powers of the international system, and they track the patterns of alliances or changes in national power as specific explanatory variables.⁴

On the other hand, the structural approach in Chinese studies emphasizes the concept of a sphere of influence rather than the distribution of power in the international system. Such a concept originates from strategic thinking in the Warring States period or

⁴ For a structural approach in structural realism, see Kenneth N. Waltz, "Anarchic Orders and Balance of Power," in *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979), pp. 102–128; Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 137–168; Stephen Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Spring 1985), pp. 3–43; Randall Schwedler, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 72–107; Paul W. Schroeder, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No.1 (Summer 1994), pp. 108–148; John J. Mearsheimer, "The Cause of Great Power War," in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), pp. 334–359.

Mao's Revolutionary Strategy.⁵

The second level of analysis is an agent-level approach that explains China's use of force. Regarding Western theories, most studies examine China's crisis-management patterns through coercive diplomacy as an extension of deterrence theory.⁶ Furthermore, Gerald Segal suggests that few united patterns of crisis management can be identified in China.⁷ In the Chinese studies approach, some research has attempted to derive China's crisis-management patterns based on China's military doctrine.⁸

While the above empirical studies have attempted to explain and predict China's use of force as a means of achieving specific

⁵ For a structural approach to Chinese studies, see Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2016); Scott Boorman, *The Protracted Game: A Wei-Ch'i Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). Regarding the analogy between China's strategy and the Go strategy, see David Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept, Shi* (Carlisle: US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), at <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1770&context=monographs>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

⁶ For an agent-level approach based on deterrence theory, see Alexander L. George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics," in Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (eds.), *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 1-35; Steve Chan, "Chinese conflict calculus and behavior: assessments from a perspective of conflict management," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (April 1978), pp. 391-410; Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1975); Allen S. Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950-1996, and Taiwan," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 103-31.

⁷ See Gerald Segal, *Defending China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 231-257.

⁸ For an agent-level approach based on China's military doctrine, see Mark Bules and Abram N. Shulsky, *Patterns in China's Use of Force: Evidence from History and Doctrinal Writings* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1999); M. Taylor Fravel, *Active Defense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

political goals, in contrast, the third level of analysis is a normative approach that seeks to identify the normative nature of China's use of force on the one hand, and China's discussion on international laws concerning the use of force on the other.

Specifically, Western theories focusing on China's strategic culture are divided into the cult of the offensive or the cult of the defensive. They argue that China has a tradition of preemptively using force when it assumes it is for a legitimate goal or as a last resort.⁹ In addition, the Chinese studies approach asserts that the use of force in China has a symbolic function independent of the offensive or defensive nature of the use of force.¹⁰ Other normative studies provide China's interpretation of self-defense in the UN Charter and China's positions on the discussions over the preemptive strike and preventive strike. These studies also examined their possible applications to territorial disputes in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and border disputes with India.¹¹

Among the three levels of analysis discussed above, I choose the structural approach to analyze the patterns and variations in

⁹ For a normative approach based on the concept of strategic culture, see Frank Kierman, Jr. and John Fairbank, *Chinese Ways in Warfare* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1974); Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012); Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995); Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁰ See Jonathan R. Ademan and Chih-yu Shih, *Symbolic War: The Chinese Use of Force, 1840-1980* (Taiwan: National Chengchi University, 1993), pp. 233-240.

¹¹ Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walter, "Use of Force," in *China, the United States, and Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), pp. 31-78.

China's use of force. Firstly, whereas the second and third approaches have already occupied most of the previous research on China's use of force, the structural approach still leaves space to explore and can contribute to the existing theoretical discussions on war studies and international relations theories on war and military conflict.¹² Second, while the second and third approaches only focus on an agent's behavior or a norm itself, the structural approach helps us analyze both the structure of the order and behavior of a state, as one of its main theoretical interests lies in the relationship between the structure and its agents.

1.2.2. The Structural View of China's Use of Force

To further elaborate on the structural approach to China's use of force, in defensive realism, there exist various types of balance of power theory as derivative theories, arguing that the existence of dominant powers poses a threat to the security of a state due to its national power gap with the dominant powers as well as national interests or threat perception, thus the state balances against the dominant powers with other states, otherwise the state could use

¹² For previous discussions on the cause of war and military conflict based on war studies and international relations theories, in addition to the literature regarding structural realism mentioned above, see also Stephen Van Evera, *Cause of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999); Manus I. Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993); A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980); Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1987).

force or wage war.¹³ In the case of China, the question can be posed whether China has balanced against the United States or the Soviet Union with other states and whether China has used force when balancing policy has failed.

While defensive realism presumes that states passively balance against dominant powers, on the other hand, offensive realism assumes that states take proactive measures under the same structural constraint. For instance, a great power will pursue becoming a regional hegemony, replacing the existing hegemon. Regarding China's use of force, offensive realism argues that China seeks to become a regional hegemon to maximize its chances of survival but also to resolve territorial disputes with neighboring states. Considering the importance and zero-sum nature of territorial disputes for China, it may regard coercion as the best way to solve problems. In other words, if China were to become far more powerful than any of its neighbors, the mere acknowledgment that China would use force might coerce other states to adopt a favorable solution to China. Otherwise, China may achieve its goal through war when coercion does not work.¹⁴

As a derivative theory of offensive realism, preventive war theory further argues that a war is more likely when the relative power of a state sharply declines. Also, the leader of the state fears

¹³ For various balance of power theories, see Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Christensen and Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks"; Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power"; Schwedler, "Bandwagoning for Profit"; Schroeder, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory."

¹⁴ Mearsheimer, "The Cause of Great Power War."

that if military action is not taken in the short term, then security will be more threatened by the more powerful and aggressive enemies or their allies.¹⁵ Based on this theory, Thomas J. Christensen attempted to explore the patterns of China's use of force from the strategic thinking of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). According to his research, the CCP used force despite its military inferiority in cases where it determined that the long-term security trend would deteriorate if military action were not taken in the short term, and he termed it "trend analysis."¹⁶ Going one step further from trend analysis, M. Taylor Fravel termed the CCP's strategic thinking in territorial disputes "driving escalation," meaning that China used force when the bargaining power in territorial disputes became drastically unfavorable.¹⁷

At the same time, the structural approach to Chinese studies emphasizes the concept of spheres of influence rather than the distribution of power in the international system. Such a concept originates from strategic thinking in the Warring States period or Mao's Revolutionary Strategy. Based upon ancient Chinese military literature and recent relevant studies by Chinese military research institutes, Michael Pillsbury argues that China is preparing to

¹⁵ See Thomas J. Christensen, "Windows and War: Trend Analysis and Beijing's Use of Force," in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (eds.), *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 50–85.

¹⁶ Christensen, "Windows and War."

¹⁷ M. Taylor Fravel, "Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China's Use of Force in Territorial Disputes," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter 2007/2008), pp. 44–83; M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

expand its sphere of influence and use the so-called “warning attack” to steer the situation in the direction it favors. He mentions the term “expanding sphere of influence by attacking (打擊增勢, *dajizengshi*)” in Chinese military literature. This implies that China has used force not for territorial conquest but rather for various political motives, including to inflict a psychological shock, to reverse a crisis in its favor, or to make the situation a *fait accompli*.¹⁸

For Mao’s Revolutionary Strategy, Scott Boorman draws an analogy between the Maoist Revolutionary Strategy and the Go Approach. He asserts that the primary goal of Mao’s strategy and the Go strategy is to maximize the sphere of influence, and the aim of eliminating forces comes next. To realize such goals, China resorts to isolation–encirclement–elimination to gradually reduce the enemy’s influence. This process entails political techniques such as subversion, propaganda, and political maneuvering. As this strategy proceeds at a slow but progressively increasing tempo, dispersion is allowed through a discontinuous deployment of force.¹⁹ In essence, this research from Chinese studies argues that China has used force to expand or maximize its sphere of influence.

Although not a structural approach and limited in its explanation regarding under what structural conditions China has used force, deterrence theory still plays a supplementary role in empirically analyzing the patterns of China’s use of force by adopting various

¹⁸ Pillsbury, *The Hundred-year Marathon*, pp. 134–155.

¹⁹ Boorman, *The Protracted Game*, pp. 154–184.

concepts like deterrence, coercive diplomacy, etc. Contrary to the concept of deterrence, which is a measure of threat or persuasion to prevent an opponent's military attack in advance, coercive diplomacy is a defensive response to the action taken by the opponent to turn the situation to its advantage. Furthermore, coercive diplomacy stresses the threat of retaliation rather than the explicit use of force. In the case of using force, it plays a symbolic role in preventing the opponent's intention through the limited use of force. Therefore, coercive diplomacy emphasizes sufficient power through which a state can demonstrate a will to protect its interests. It also demands the credibility of using greater power with signaling, trading, negotiating, and warning to use force.²⁰

In this context, Steve Chan draws a pattern that China has used force when deterrence has failed, sending clear signals under central control, starting from appropriate demonstrations, and gradually escalating conflict to a limited extent to prevent hostilities or reverse the situation.²¹ In the meantime, Allen Whiting asserts that China has deployed its military and has repeatedly warned through diplomatic channels to deter an adversary's military action either beforehand or thereafter the military action. Moreover, China has used force when the political costs of passive measures have exceeded the military and economic costs of using force. In addition, China has preferred a preemptive attack to take the initiative and has managed situations to maintain the crisis at an appropriate

²⁰ George, "Coercive Diplomacy."

²¹ Chan, "Chinese conflict calculus and behavior."

level.²² Both Steve Chan and Allen Whiting claim that China has used force to a limited extent to deter enemy military action and has managed the crisis if China has failed to deter. Allen Whiting emphasizes the preference for a preemptive strike in line with China's military doctrine of taking the first initiative.

1.3. Research Question and Hypotheses

The research question of this study is: **“Under what conditions has China used force since 1949?”** Specifically, this study explores the important variables that have led to China's use of force since 1949 and how these variables have influenced the use of force.

According to the logic of the structural approach discussed above, China may have used force to balance against (to reduce the influence of) hegemonic powers or to become a regional hegemon (to maximize its sphere of influence). In this case, we can hypothesize that China has used force to balance against hegemons or to become a regional hegemon. As an indicator, we can use the share of the United States or the Soviet Union's national power in the region. As prevention war theory focuses on gaps in national power or military power, indicators including relative national power (especially military power) between the states subject to armed conflict can also be used. Also, it can be hypothesized that China has used force when the gap in relative national power (especially military power) between states subject to armed conflict narrows.

²² Whiting, “China's Use of Force, 1950–1996, and Taiwan.”

After comparing all these indicators of national power through this research model, the first hypothesis is narrowed down as follows.

Hypothesis 1: For China, the greater the share of U.S. national power in the region, the greater the possibility of using force.

If national power is a variable that guarantees internal balance, alliances can be said to be a variable of external balance. As an indicator, we can use whether parties where China used force were allied with the United States or the Soviet Union and establish the second hypothesis below. On the contrary, China could also show its reservation to use force when the United States or the Soviet Union intervened in the conflicts between China and its allies. In some cases, the United States or the Soviet Union intervened even when China's counterparties were not its allies. According to the logic of the deterrence theory mentioned above, the United States or the Soviet Union's intervention may have also influenced China's use of force. This leads to the third hypothesis, which uses whether the United States or the Soviet Union intervenes as an indicator.

Hypothesis 2: China was likely to use force against countries allied with the United States or the Soviet Union.

Hypothesis 3: China was less likely to use force when the United States or the Soviet Union intervened.

In the above three hypotheses, the logic applied to the Soviet Union might differ from that to the United States. This is because the logic of power competition between the communist regimes is more persuasive than the logic of balance theory in the case of the Soviet Union.

China and the Soviet Union formed an alliance by signing the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty in 1952. Still, the alliance was virtually broken because of continuous disagreement over various issues, including their relationships with the United States, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Before China and the Soviet Union began their full-scale power competition within the communist camp in the mid-1960s, Soviet intervention might have had an escalation effect rather than the deterrence effect regarding China's use of force by neutralizing deterrence caused by US intervention.

On the other hand, the use of force against the Soviet Union and states allied (or quasi-aligned) with the Soviet Union increased from 1966. It is more logically convincing that China has used force against the Soviet Union in militarization as a part of power competition rather than as a balance of power against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, using force against the Soviet Union's allies (or quasi-allies) can be seen as an extension of the power competition with the Soviet Union.²³

To more effectively test the hypotheses using structural views, this research also reviews major alternative hypotheses from interdependence theory, constructivism theory, domestic approach, and the concept of China's core interests. Similar to a structural

²³ If the share of military expenditure in China's national power is seen as an indicator, a significant value was not obtained in a logistic regression analysis on the use of force against the Soviet Union. Still, in a linear regression analysis on the frequency of armed conflict with the Soviet Union, a significant value was found (corrected $R^2 = 0.24$, $p = 0.001$). For research on linear regression analysis, see Johnston, "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behavior, 1949-1992," p. 21.

approach, interdependence theory and constructivism theory, respectively, consider the distribution of economic profit and perception rather than national power as important variables to explain China's use of force against other states. Interdependence theory suggests that economic interdependence between China and states subject to the conflicts may have affected China's use of force because China's economy depends not only on other states' economies but also on peaceful relations.²⁴ Moreover, the Chinese leadership considers economic performance a key variable for national security and the legitimacy of the CCP, and the use of force could deteriorate China's economic profits.²⁵ This research uses the share of trade in China's GDP as an indicator and makes the following hypothesis.

Alternative Hypothesis 1: China was less likely to use force when it was more economically interdependent with other states.

On the other hand, constructivism theory argues that the greater the gap between the international status that China seeks and its perception of its status, the more likely China used force in territorial disputes.²⁶ As an indicator, we use the ideal points of

²⁴ For discussions on the relationship between economic interdependence and war, see Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relationship of Military Power in Nations to Their Economic and Social Advantage* (London: William Heinemann, 1910); Kenneth N. Walz, "The Myth of National Interdependence," in Charles P. Kindleberger (ed.), *The International Corporation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970); Dale C. Copeland, "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Spring 1996), pp. 5–41.

²⁵ Melvin Gurtov and Byung-Moo Hwang, *China Under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1980), p. 244.

²⁶ Johnston, "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behavior, 1949–1992."

China in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which is an index to show how China has voted in alignment with the U.S.–led liberal order.²⁷ The lower the points, we can interpret, the lower the international status that China is perceived to hold. As such, we establish the hypothesis as follows.

Alternative Hypothesis 2: China was more likely to use force when there was a greater gap between its international status and its perception of international status.

On the contrary, some researchers have asserted that China has used force by making decisions according to its core interests regardless of the international structure. Several studies have commonly concluded that China is more likely to use force in territorial disputes, especially when China considers these disputes more salient issues.²⁸ Michael Swaine further analyzed that China would make no compromises and would even use force regarding its core interests, including territorial disputes and other issues regarding China’s sovereignty.²⁹ Thus, we can draw the next hypothesis as follows and use the salience index for territorial disputes as an indicator of China’s core interests.

Alternative Hypothesis 3: China was likely to use force against targets when it considered them core interests.

²⁷ For the methodology of the index, see Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev, and Erik Voeten, “Estimating Dynamic State Preferences from United Nations Voting Data,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 2, (February 2017), pp. 430–456.

²⁸ Johnston, “China’s Militarized Interstate Dispute Behavior, 1949–1992”; Fravel, “Power Shifts and Escalation”; Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*.

²⁹ See Michael Swaine, China’s Assertive Behavior–Part One: On “Core Interests,” *China Leadership Monitor*, November 15, 2010, at <https://carnegieendowment.org/2010/11/15/china-s-assertive-behavior-part-one-on-core-interests-pub-41937>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

In addition, there has also been research focusing on China's domestic variables rather than the international structure. In the diversionary theory of war, a state intentionally provokes a war or creates a crisis to divert public attention and stabilize the regime when faced with a domestic challenge.³⁰ Some have argued that China is the most sensitive to external threats when there is a domestic political weakness or conflict.³¹ Furthermore, once the mobilization system starts to work, unnecessary confrontation could follow contrary to the intention of the Chinese leadership.³² However, an empirical study has shown that if China starts a war in a domestically unstable situation, there is a risk of losing power, so it acts cautiously. In other words, when faced with a crisis where the survival of the regime's survival is at stake due to internal problems, China resolves the conflict through negotiation rather than using force.³³ Therefore, this research does not further discuss the hypothesis regarding domestic political stability.

1.4. Research Scope

This research used Militarized Interstate Disputes data (1816-2014) from The Correlates of War Project at the University of Michigan and organized 197 cases of armed conflict in China with

³⁰ Jack S Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies*, pp. 259–288.

³¹ Gurtov and Hwang, *China Under Threat*, p. 245.

³² Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

³³ Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*.

other states from 1949 to 2012.³⁴ The cases were summarized only until 2012 because data from 2013 to 2014 was insufficient to examine the changes following Xi Jinping’s rule. Besides, according to the coding criteria of the War Project, the number of observations is smaller than that of actual cases. This is because the War Project regards incidents as one case if troops were not withdrawn within one month after the military conflict or if there were follow-up measures within six months.

1.5. Variables and Methodology

In the above-mentioned data, the types of action during armed conflicts were classified into five degrees of hostility: 1 = no military action, 2 = threat of using force, 3 = display of force, 4 = use of force, and 5 = war. Each degree can be defined as follows.

Tabel-1: Definition of Five Degrees of Hostility.

Degree	Definition
No Military Action=1	It refers to a case in which the actor does not respond specifically even though it is in a military conflict
Threat of Using Force=2	It refers to a variety of rhetorical threats, from threat of blockade to threat of war intervention
Display of Force=3	It includes measures that may imply the use of force, such as a show of force,

³⁴ The Correlates of War Project, “MIDB 5.0,” in “MID-Level and Incident-Level Data 5.0,” at <https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/MIDs>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

	escalation of conventional and nuclear readiness, declaration of mobilization orders, strengthening or violating border boundaries
Military Action=4	“An act in which a country’s military power seriously damages one’s territory, people, and property against another’s military power,” and it includes attack, collision, blockade, occupation of territory, tactical use of chemical weapons, and declaration of war
War=5	The Correlates of War Project divides the levels of use of force and war based on whether there are more than 1,000 casualties and is divided into interstate war and war intervention

Source: Table-1 is derived by the author based on Bremer and Singer, “Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1992.”

According to the definition of the use of force that, “An act in which a country’s military power seriously damages one’s territory, people, and property against another’s military power,” hostility degrees 1-3 refer to the cases that did not use force, while degrees 4-5 refer to the use of force in cases of armed conflict with China.³⁵

Tabel-2: Type of Action for Five Degrees of Hostility.

Degree	Type of Action
No Military Action=1	0 = No militarized action
Threat of Using Force=2	1 = Threat to use force 2 = Threat to blockade

³⁵ For a definition of the use of force and degrees of hostility, see Bremer and Singer, “Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1992,” pp. 170–73.

	3 = Threat to occupy territory 4 = Threat to declare war 5 = Threat to use Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) weapons 6 = Threat to join war
Display of Force=3	7 = Show of force 8 = Alert 9 = Nuclear alert 10 = Mobilization 11 = Fortify border 12 = Border violation
Use of Force=4	13 = Blockade 14 = Occupation of territory 15 = Seizure 16 = attack 17 = Clash 18 = Declaration of war 19 = Use of CBR weapons
War=5	20 = Begin an interstate war 21 = Join an interstate war

Source: “Codebook for the Militarized Interstate Dispute Data, Version 5.0,” in “MID-Level and Incident-Level Data 5.0” (Access Date: April 30, 2023).

As seen in Table-2, the specific types of action for hostility degree 1-3 include 0 = No militarized action (1), 1 = Threat to use force (2), 2 = Threat to blockade (2), 3 = Threat to occupy territory (2), 4 = Threat to declare war (2), 5 = Threat to use Chemical, Biological, and Radiological(CBR) weapons (2), 6 = Threat to join war (2), 7 = Show of force (3), 8 = Alert (3), 9 = Nuclear alert (3), 10 = Mobilization (3), 11 = Fortify border (3), 12 = Border violation (3).³⁶

³⁶ Numbers in parentheses refer to the corresponding hostility degree.

On the other hand, types of action for hostility degrees 4–5 are classified into 13 = Blockade, 14 = Occupation of territory, 15 = Seizure, 16 = attack, 17 = Clash, 18 = Declaration of war, 19 = Use of CBR weapons, 20 = Begin an interstate war, and 21 = Join an interstate war. According to the degrees of hostility, Types 13-19 refer to the use of force, and Types 20-21 refer to war. To summarize, the dependent variable of this research is whether China uses force. As a binary dependent variable, it is set to use of force = 1 and no use of force = 0.

As discussed above, the independent variable is the factor that influences China's use of force. Among those variables, the continuous independent variables are as follows: 1 = national power, 2 = economic interdependence, 3 = perception of international status, and 4 = China's core interests. As categorical independent variables, 5 = alliances with the United States or the Soviet Union, and 6 = U.S. intervention or Soviet intervention. The respective indicators are 1 = share of U.S. national power in East Asia, 2 = share of China's trade in GDP, 3 = the ideal points of China in the UNGA, 4 = the salience index for territorial disputes, 5 = the type of alliance with the United States or the Soviet Union, and 6 = the type of intervention by the United States or the Soviet Union.

According to the "National Material Capabilities" assessed by The Correlates of War Project, national power in this research is defined as an index combining military expenditure, military personnel, energy consumption, iron production, urban population,

and total population.³⁷ GDP is also taken into account to enable further explanation. In addition, the scope of research is regional rather than global because the range of Chinese activities is limited to the region, and the balancing policy against the United States was also being implemented at the regional level rather than the global level. Even though China's strategic outreach is growing, and there is recent research considering the scope of Chinese activities globally, this research assumes that China's strategic interest lies in East Asia.³⁸

Specifically, the East Asian region is defined as 20 states or regimes, including the United States, Russia (the Soviet Union), Taiwan, Mongolia, North Korea, Japan, China, South Korea, Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries (excluding Brunei, which has a small national power and no armed conflicts with China), India, Australia, and New Zealand. As for data, this research utilizes the National Capabilities Dataset of The Correlates of War Project and the GDP data from the International Monetary Fund.³⁹

³⁷ The Correlates of War Project, "National Material Capabilities (NMC) Data Documentation Version 6.0" in "NMC_Documentation 6.0," at <https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities/>, last accessed on April 30, 2023

³⁸ For the logic of China's strategic outreach, see Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Power Politics*, pp. 29–54. Further, the most recent white paper on China's defense in 2019 stated that China's defense goal was rather more set at a regional level, see The State Council Information Office of China, "Actively Contributing to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," in *China's National Defense in the New Era* (Beijing: July 2019), at https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html, last accessed on April 30, 2023. In my interview with a Chinese general in 2021, he confirmed that China has been and will be a regional power.

³⁹ "NMC-60-abridged" in "NMC_Documentation 6.0," accessed April 30,

As additional continuous independent variables, China's share of trade in GDP and China's ideal points in the UNGA are considered measures for China's economic interdependence and perception of its international status. Regarding the data, the trade share in GDP is obtained from 1960 to 2012, because the World Bank has tracked China's trade since the 1960s.⁴⁰ Further, the ideal points in UNGA are from 1971, when China joined the United Nations.⁴¹ In addition, the salience index for territorial disputes is used for measuring China's core interests.⁴²

For categorical independent variables, this research set the indicators as below: whether to have an alliance (post-Cold War alliance = 6, post-Cold War no alliance=5, Cold War alliance with the Soviet Union= 4, Cold War quasi-alliance with the Soviet Union =3, Cold War alliance with the United States = 2, Cold War quasi-alliance with the United States= 1, Cold War no alliance = 0); U.S. intervention (U.S. use of force = 2, display of force/threat of using force or military assistance by the United States= 1, no U.S. intervention = 0); and Soviet intervention (Soviet use of force = 2, display of force/threat of using force or military assistance by the

2023; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "GDP Dataset," at <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/W/EOWORLD>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

⁴⁰ See World Bank, "Trade (% of GDP) - China," at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?Locations=CN&name_desc=true, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

⁴¹ See Harvard Dataverse, "Erik Voeten's Dataverse," at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/12379>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

⁴² For the data on salience score, see Fravel, *Strong Borders Secure Nation*, pp. 46-47, 64-65.

Soviet Union= 1, no Soviet intervention = 0).⁴³

This research conducted a binary logistic regression analysis on the dependent and independent variables to identify significant variables that affect China's use of force. Statistically, we examine how these variables have affected China's use of force. Furthermore, by classifying the cases of China's use of force by period and object, this study qualitatively interprets the impact of these variables on China's use of force through case studies.

⁴³ For indicators regarding alliance and intervention, see Douglas M. Gibler, *International Military Alliances 1648-2008* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2009); The Correlates of War Project, "MIDB 5.0," last accessed on April 30, 2023.

Chapter 2. Quantitative Analysis

2.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table–3: China’s Military Conflicts by Period.

	Use of force	Threat of using force or display of force	No military action	Total
Mao Period (1949– 1976)	18 states, 70 times (73.7%, 2.5 per year)	14 states, 27 times (39.7%, 0.96 per year)	6 states, 15 times (44.1%, 0.54 per year)	112 times (4 per year)
Deng Period (1977– 1991)	4 states, 16 times (16.8%, 1.07 per year)	3 states, 3 times (4.4%, 0.2 per year)	4 states, 6 times (17.7%, 0.4 per year)	25 times (1.67 per year)
Post– Cold War (1992– 2012)	5 states, 9 times (9.5%, 0.43 per year)	9 states, 38 times (55.9%, 1.81 per year)	8 states, 13 times (38.2%, 0.62 per year)	60 times (2.86 per year)
Total	95 times	68 times	34 times	197 times

Source: Table–2 is derived by the author based on The Correlates of War Project, “MIDB 5.0.”

Prior to the regression analysis, this research glanced at the descriptive statistics on China’s use of force. As can be seen from

Table-3, there are differences in China's use of force by period: the Mao period had the highest percentage of instances of the use of force at 73.7%, followed by 16.8% during the Deng period and 9.5% during the post-Cold War period.

Table-4: China's Military Conflict Frequency Per Year Compared with Major Powers.

Country	Cold War Frequency	Post-Cold War Frequency	Overall	
China	1949-1991 2.37	1992-2012 2.71	2.48	
France	0.83		0.90	0.85
Soviet (Russia)	1946-1991 2.85		3.43	3.03
United Kingdom	2.71		2.71	2.37
United States	3.39		3.43	3.40

Table-5: China's Military Conflict Frequency Per Year Compared with Asian Major States.

Country	Cold War Frequency	Post-Cold War Frequency	Overall	
China	1949-1991 2.37	1992-2012 2.71	2.48	
Australia	1946-1991 0.09		0.10	0.09
India	1947-1991 1.53		1.19	1.42
Japan	1946-1991 0.76		1.86	1.10
South Korea	1948-1991 0.89		1.05	0.94

Source: Table-3 and 5 are derived by the author based on "MIDB 5.0."

Significantly, China's use of force decreased during the post-Cold War period compared to the Cold War period. However, China's display of force during the Cold War increased by 1.41 times, up to 55.9% compared to 39.7% during Mao's rule. Further, as we can see from table-4 and table-5, although China was not the most frequent in terms of military disputes compared with the other four permanent members of the United Nations Security Councils, it had the highest frequency among major Asian countries during the post-Cold War period. In other words, while the degree of hostility in the armed conflicts decreased during the post-Cold War period, China was still assertive regarding the threat to use or display force, especially in the East Asian region.

Table-6: China's Use of Force by Object.

		① Against the U.S. and 10 allies of the U.S: 48 times (68.6%)
Mao Period (1949-1976)	18 states, 70 times	② Against the Soviet Union and its ally Mongolia: 6 times (8.5%)
		③ Against India, Laos, Nepal, Myanmar, and Vietnam: 16 times (22.9%)
Deng Period (1977-1990)	4 states, 16 times	① Against the Soviet and its quasi-allies, India and Vietnam: 15 times (93.8%)
		② Against quasi-ally of the U.S., Taiwan: 1 time (6.2%)

Post-Cold War (1991–2012)	5 states, 9 times	① Against Russia, North Korea, and Vietnam: 7 times (78%)
		② Against the U.S. and its ally Philippines: 2 times (22%)

Source: Table-6 is derived by the author based on “MIDB 5.0.”

Next, if we classify China’s use of force by object, the 18 states this study reviewed during the Mao period were the United States and ten of its allies (Australia, France, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom), the Soviet Union and its ally Mongolia (1936–1991), and five other states (India, Laos, Nepal, Myanmar, and Vietnam).⁴⁴ The four states or regimes during the Deng period include the Soviet Union, which China regarded as a threat after the U.S.–China détente; India (1971–1991) and Vietnam (1978–1991), with which the Soviet Union signed a friendship and cooperation treaties; and Taiwan, which maintained a quasi-alliance with the United States through the U.S.–Taiwan Relations Act (1979). Finally, the five states or regimes during the post-Cold War period include the United States, the Philippines, an ally of the United States, and, on the other hand, Russia, North Korea, and Vietnam, which were not allied with the United States.

According to Table-6, among 70 times of using forces against 18 states during the Mao period, 48 times (68.6%) included the use

⁴⁴ Vietnam here refers to the Republic of Vietnam (1955–1975), and Vietnam in the Deng period refers to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945–1976) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (1976–).

of force against the United States and the ten allies of the United States, 6 times (8.5%) included the use of force against the Soviet Union and its ally Mongolia, and 16 times (22.9%) included the use of force against India, Laos, Nepal, Myanmar, and Vietnam.⁴⁵ During the Deng period, there were 16 instances where force was used against the four states or regimes. Among those, 15 times (93.8%) included a use of force against the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and India, which signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, and 1 time (6.7%) included a use of force against Taiwan, a quasi-ally of the United States. During the post-Cold War period, 9 times included a use of force against 5 states or regimes, and among those, 2 times (22%) included a use of force against the United States and its ally, the Philippines, and 7 times (78%) included a use of force against Russia, North Korea, and Vietnam, which were not US allies.

2.2. Statistics Inference

Table-7		
Logistic Regression of Variables.	Cold War	Post-Cold War
Independent Variables	Odds ratio	
Share of the US national power in East Asia	1.035* (0.021)	1.026* (0.015)

⁴⁵ Among the observations that China used force, there are states where China used force only once, such as Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Greece, Luxembourg, Turkey, and South Africa, which participated in the Korean War (joined the War in 1950 or 1951) as well as Cambodia (1964), Malaysia (1983), Indonesia (1996), Bhutan (2005). Still, they were excluded from the list because they had few samples.

No allies	3.50** (1.98)	
Quasi-ally with the United States	19.73*** (20.09)	
Ally with the United States	13.55*** (7.83)	
Quasi-ally with the Soviet Union	12.18*** (9.54)	
Ally with the Soviet Union	5.46** (4.46)	
No allies		0.255** (0.138)
Ally with the United States		0.048*** (0.032)
US intervention	0.36*** (0.112)	0.63** (0.147)
Soviet intervention	2.39** (0.842)	
Core interest (Salience of territorial conflict)	1.12** (0.045)	1.12** (0.048)
Constant	0.066*** (0.040)	0.775 (0.346)
Observations	197	197

Source: Table-7 is derived by the author through the STATA

Standard error see form in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table-7 was obtained by conducting the binary logistic regression of the above dependent and independent variables. Compared to the regression conducted with other related variables, this model provides the most powerful explanation for China's use of force with the most efficient variables. Among the categorical independent variables, an alliance with the United States or the Soviet Union reflected the classification in accordance with time changes from Cold War to the post-Cold War period, during which

the international system shifted from the U.S.–Soviet bipolar system to the U.S.–led unipolar system.⁴⁶

As we can see from Table–7, significant variables related to national power are the share of U.S. national power in East Asia. If the share of U.S. national power in East Asia increased by 1%, China’s probability of using force slightly increased by 3.5% than the probability of not using force. This indicates that China was more likely to use force in terms of balancing against the United States when it increased its national power in the East Asian region.

Such a balance of power was made particularly against the allies and quasi–allies of the United States as well as power competition with those of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. China was more likely to use force in the following orders: US quasi–allies, followed by the US and its allies, Soviet quasi–allies, and Soviet and its allies. The higher probability of using force against US quasi–allies than the US and its allies could be attributed to the deterrence effect of the US intervention. According to the model of this research, when the United States intervened, the probability of China’s use of force decreased by 64% during the Cold War. On the other hand, the probability of China’s use of force against the quasi–allies was higher than against the Soviets and its allies, as the Soviet Union more frequently intervened in military

⁴⁶ As an independent variable related to the Cold War, there are also camp variables which can be categorized into a free world camp, a communist camp, or a third world that did not belong to either camp. However, these camp variables are not applied during the post–Cold War period. Thus, this study only adopts alliance variables that continued even during the post–Cold War period.

conflicts with the quasi-allies, India and Vietnam.⁴⁷ In the meantime, China was more likely to use force when the Soviet Union indirectly intervened in multinational military conflicts, such as the Korean War (1950–1953) and the early stages of the Laotian Civil War (1959–1975).⁴⁸

During the post-Cold War period, the probability of using force decreased for parties both allied with the United States and those not allied with the United States. This indicates that China's overall probability of using force decreased during the post-Cold War period. Compared to the Cold War period, the significantly lower probability of using force against the US allies can be attributed partly to the deterrence effect of US intervention. Although such an effect was less than that of the Cold War period, the probability of China's use of force decreased by 37% when the US intervened. Meanwhile, it can be seen that China was more likely to use force in serious territorial disputes, regardless of time and object.

If the above discussion tests the impact of individual independent variables on China's use of force, how conflicting variables affect China's use of force can also be an important issue. For instance, if the U.S. intervenes in an issue that China considers to be a core interest, such as the Taiwan issue, the question arises whether deterrence of U.S. intervention will work or whether China

⁴⁷ The ratio of the use of force against the Soviet Union and its quasi-alliance was 1:2.2.

⁴⁸ 谢益显主编[Xie Yixian (ed.)], 『中国当代外交史(1949-2009)』 [*Contemporary Diplomatic History of China 1949-2009*] (北京: 中国青年出版社[Beijing: China Youth Publisher], 2009), pp. 113-119, 189-190.

will use force despite U.S. intervention. In this case, the result, which the two variables acted in common, can be derived by multiplying the result value of both variables.

According to the result of the regression, the US intervention effect during the Cold War was 0.36, while China's core interest effect was 1.12. Therefore, when the two variables worked together during the Cold War, the result was 0.4, which can be said to reduce China's use of force by 60% if the United States intervenes in its core interests. During the post-Cold War period, the U.S. intervention effect was 0.63, while China's core interest effect was 1.12, so the U.S. deterrence effect on core profits was 29%(0.71).

Chapter 3. Case Studies

The descriptive statistics have shown that the patterns of China's use of force vary by period. Moreover, the binary logistic regression indicates that the following variables affected China's use of force: share of U.S. national power in East Asia, alliance with the United States or the Soviet Union, the intervention of the United States or the Soviet Union, and salience of territorial disputes. Accordingly, this research further classifies China's use of force by period and object as follows.

Table-8: Types of China's Use of Force (by Period and Object).

Mao Period (1949– 1976)	Type ①: Country with superior national power to China (the United States and Soviet Union)
	Type ②: An ally of the U.S. or the Soviet Union (Australia, Korea, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Mongolia)
	Type ③: Not an ally of the U.S. but implied military intervention (Laos, Vietnam, and India)
	Type ④: No allies and U.S. military intervention (Nepal, Myanmar)
Deng Period (1977– 1991)	Type ①: Country with superior national power to China (Soviet Union)
	Type ②: Quasi-ally of the Soviet Union (Vietnam and India)
	Type ③: Quasi-ally of the U.S. (Taiwan)

Post–	Type ①: Country with superior national power to China (U.S.)
Cold War (1991–	Type ②: Ally of the Soviet Union (the Philippines)
2012)	Type ③: Not an ally with the United States (Russia, North Korea, Vietnam)

Table-8 is derived by the author based on “MIDB 5.0.”

According to Table-8, the Korean War (1950–1953), the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954–1955 and 1958), and the China–India border war (1962) were selected as cases of conflict for the Mao period. The Sino–Vietnam War (1979), the South China Sea conflicts (1987–1988), and an armed conflict with Taiwan were analyzed during the Deng period. Finally, the U.S.–China military aircraft collision (2001) and the South China Sea disputes with Vietnam (1993, 2010, and 2012), the Philippines (1995) were analyzed for the post–Cold War period.

3.1. Cold War: Mao Period (1949–1976)

In the Mao period, more than 70% of China’s use of force was against the United States, its allies, and Laos, where the United States provided military aid and implied military intervention. The Korean War (1950–1953) epitomized China’s use of force against the United States and its allies despite China’s inferiority.⁵⁰ The First and Second Taiwan Strait Criss (1954–1955 and 1958,

⁵⁰ Based on the National Material Capabilities index, a share of U.S. national power in East Asia was 41%, while China’s was 15.6% in 1950.

respectively) immediately followed the Korean War. During that period, the United States attempted to establish a so-called hub-and-spoke system in Northeast and Southeast Asia.⁵¹ China used force mainly through shelling to prevent Taiwan from being incorporated into the U.S.-led alliance system and from becoming *de facto* “two Chinas.”⁵² In the 1962 China-India border war, India was not an ally of the United States. Still, after the 1959 China-India border dispute, the United States tried to contain the spread of communism in South Asia by providing military aid to India.⁵³ Although the United States implied military intervention in the 1962 border dispute by dispatching its aircraft carrier fleet to the Bay of Bengal, China used force against the non-allied country in these territorial disputes with India.⁵⁴

During the Mao period, China recognized that the United States had established an alliance system that encircled China from

⁵¹ In the 1950s, the United States established regional alliances with 10 countries in the form of mutual defense treaties (Philippines/August 1951, Korea/August 1953, Taiwan/December 1954), security treaties (Australia, New Zealand, Japan/September 1951), and collective defense treaties (Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines/September 1954). For more information, see Gibler, *International Military Alliances 1648-2008*.

⁵² See Whiting, “China’s Use of Force, 1950-1996, and Taiwan,” pp. 108-110.

⁵³ See Cheng Feng and Larry M. Wortzel, “PLA Operational Principles and Limited War: The Sino-Indian War of 1962,” in Mark A. Ryan et al. (eds.), *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience since 1949*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 179.

⁵⁴ See Bruce Riedel, “JFK stopped a China-India War. Can Trump? The nuclear stakes are much higher now,” Brookings Institution, August 9, 2017, at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/08/09/jfk-stopped-a-china-india-war-can-trump-the-nuclear-stakes-are-much-higher-now/>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

Indochina to Taiwan and South Korea.⁵⁵ China had predicted that competition with the United States would be inevitable one day.⁵⁶ Therefore, China's use of force in this period can be largely explained as balancing against the United States and its allies. In the case of India, the alliance variable still mattered even though India was not an ally of the United States. This was because the United States militarily supported India, and thus the perception of encirclement of the alliance also applied to India during this period.⁵⁷ China exerted force as an extension of balance against the United States in terms of the balance of threat, and territorial disputes with India also catalyzed China's use of force. In this regard, contrary to the analysis of the logistic model of this study, there was a paradox that the US intervention did not deter China from using force against India.

With the shift of the United States' strategy in South Asia in the early 1960s, India received \$600,000 in military aid from 1959 to 1963, and 36 and 34 new posts were installed at the western and eastern border areas with China, respectively. At the same time, India carried out the forward policy in July 1962. China initially responded to such a change in the status quo in the disputed area by establishing a blocking position (September 1962). However, China soon launched an attack (October–November of the same

⁵⁵ Christensen, "Windows and War," p. 54; Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950–1996, and Taiwan," p. 107.

⁵⁶ 姚旭[Yao Xu], "抗美援朝的英明决策[The brilliant decision to resist America and aid Korea]," 『党史研究』 [*Party History Research*] Issue 5 (1980), pp. 213–235.

⁵⁷ For the perception of India case, see Christensen, "Windows and War," pp. 63–64; Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950–1996, and Taiwan," p. 113.

year) and restored it to its pre-attack state. In other words, India was not an ally of the United States, but due to the U.S. military support, India pursued a proactive policy toward China at the border. Thus, China used force as a balance of power to prevent changes in the status quo of territorial disputes even if the United States implied military intervention.

Although the cases regarding the variables of an alliance with the Soviet Union and the Soviet intervention are not included in this period, I would like to mention the Soviet Union and its ally, Mongolia, briefly. Under the banner of dedicated communists, China used force in multinational conflicts against the free world before 1965, including the Korean War and the Laotian Civil War, where the Soviet Union indirectly intervened. As China continued to disagree with the Soviet Union on a series of issues from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, China publicly declared in 1965 that the Sino-Soviet bilateral alliance had broken and that the communist camp no longer existed.⁵⁸

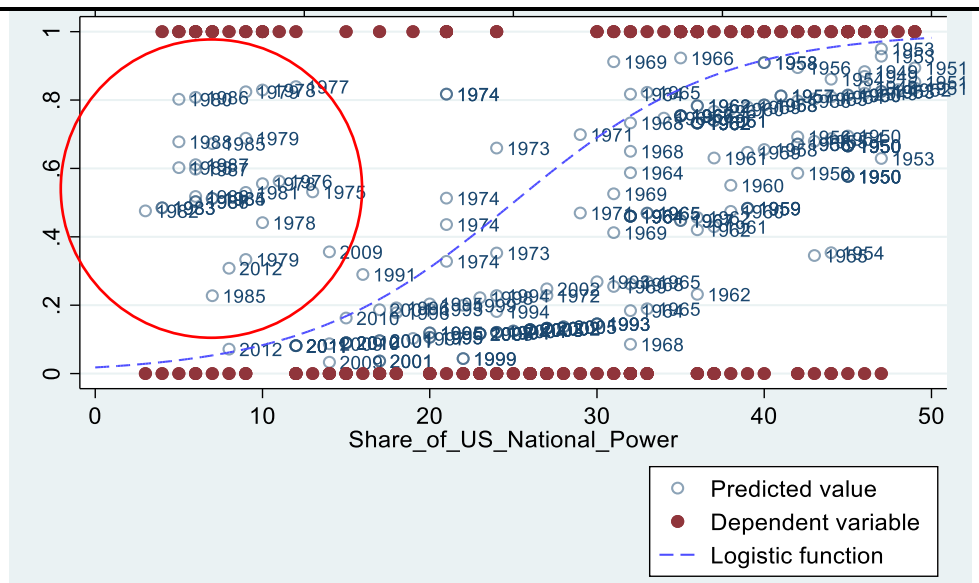
Accordingly, in the following years, China reduced the level of intervention in the Vietnam War (1964-1975) by giving back support rather than full intervention, as it was faced with Soviet threats from the North at the same time. Rather, China used force six times against the Soviet Union and Mongolia from 1966 to 1974 (40% of China's use of force during the same period). As mentioned above, China might have used force to strengthen militarization and power competition between communist regimes.

⁵⁸ Xie Yixian (ed.), *Contemporary Diplomatic History of China 1949-2009* (Beijing: China Youth Publisher, 2009), p. 169, 191.

3.2. Cold War: Deng Period (1977–1991)

During the Deng period, the offense and defense dynamics between the United States and the Soviet Union reversed due to the relative decline of the United States and the relative rise of the Soviet Union in terms of national power.⁵⁹ As seen in Figure–1, most of the outliers of this logistic regression model were distributed in the Deng period. This might be due to the change in threat perception. From China’s point of view, the Soviet Union was the biggest threat to China because of the Sino–Soviet border dispute in March 1969 and the U.S.–China détente that began in July of the same year.⁶⁰

Figure–1: Scatter Plot of Logistic Regression with the Dependent and Independent (national power) Variables



Source: Figure–1 is derived by the author through the STATA.

⁵⁹ While a share of the U.S. national power in East Asia on average was 23%, the Soviet Union accounted for 27.1% from 1977 to 1991.

⁶⁰ See Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the US Rapprochement with China, 1961–1974: From Red Menace to Tacit Ally* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 131.

In this regard, the percentage of using force during the Deng period decreased to 16.8% from Mao's 73.8%. This was largely attributed to a significant decrease in using force against the free camp from about 70% to 6.2%. On the other hand, China still frequently used force against the Soviet Union as well as India and Vietnam, which signed friendly cooperation treaties with the Soviet Union in 1971 and 1978, respectively.⁶¹ During this period, China's use of force was mainly motivated by power competition between communist regimes and territorial disputes.

As a case, the 1979 Sino-Vietnam War occurred under the situation where Vietnam invaded and occupied Cambodia's Phnom Penh in December 1978 to oust the then pro-China regime of Pol Pot. Then China invaded Vietnam in February 1979. At that time, China justified its invasion for the following reasons: the Vietnamese government's hegemonic ambition in Southeast Asia, the conflict on the Chinese border with Vietnam and its subsequent invasion of territory, and Vietnam's close ties with the Soviet Union, which had expanded its influence in Southeast Asia.⁶²

The outbreak of the Sino-Vietnam War is attributed to the power competition with the Soviet Union over Southeast Asia. China

⁶¹ 94% of using force (15 times) during the Deng period was against the Soviet Union and its quasi-allies, India and Vietnam.

⁶² While North Vietnam began to complain about improving U.S.-China relations, China reduced aid when the economic impact of China's Cultural Revolution rose to the surface in 1974. Thus, North Vietnam gradually began to lean toward the Soviet Union in 1976, as the Soviet Union actively supported North Vietnam to fill the vacuum by U.S. troops withdrawing from Southeast Asia. See 유인선[Insun Yu], 『베트남과 그 이웃 중국, 양국관계의 어제와 오늘』 [*Vietnam and its neighboring China, Yesterday and Today's bilateral relations*] (서울: 창비[Seoul: Changbi], 2016), pp. 413-428, 442-448.

used force to check Soviet Union expansion in Southeast Asia and enhance China's negotiating power in territorial disputes with Vietnam. In addition, Deng Xiaoping tried to win support from the United States, Japan, and neighboring Southeast Asian countries. In particular, he visited the United States after normalizing diplomatic relations in January 1979. During his visit, the United States did not make any public accusation but only recommended a peaceful resolution concerning the issue. The fact that the United States did not imply military intervention can also be seen as why China was able to start the war.

In January 1980, China claimed sovereignty over the Paracel /Xisha Islands and Spratly/Nansha Islands in a document issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while Vietnam signed an agreement with the Soviet Union in July to explore Vietnam's southern continental shelf.⁶³ Moreover, China lagged behind other disputed countries, such as Vietnam, in occupying islands and reefs in the Spratly/Nansha Islands. China began investigating and patrolling the area in 1987 and occupied six reefs from January to April 1988.⁶⁴ As a result, Vietnamese ships attacked Chinese fishing boats and naval vessels near the Johnson/Chigua Reef, resulting in naval combat between the two sides.⁶⁵ During this period, the South

⁶³ Yixian Xie (ed.), *Contemporary Diplomatic History of China 1949-2009*, p. 340.

⁶⁴ In the 1970s, South Vietnam and the Philippines occupied 11 islands and reefs, and in the 1980s, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia occupied 15 more islands and reefs (1980-1988). See Fravel, "Power Shifts and Escalation," p. 74, 77.

⁶⁵ Yixian Xie (ed.), *Contemporary Diplomatic History of China 1949-2009*, p. 340.

China Sea conflict between China and Vietnam might also be attributed to checking Soviet Union expansion by deepening cooperation with Vietnam in the South China Sea. In particular, the salience of territorial disputes might also be significant, considering that China has not effectively occupied any island or reef in the Spratly/Nansha Islands. Further, the fact that the United States did not intervene in the South China Sea dispute at the time might also affect China's use of force.

In the meantime, in order to confirm the security impact of Taiwan's lifting of martial law on Kinmen (Quemoy) in July 1987, more than 1,400 Chinese fishing boats operated near Taiwan's occupied islands, such as Kinmen and Matsu. In this process, an armed conflict with the Taiwanese military occurred.⁶⁶ This is the only case of using force against Taiwan since adopting a peaceful cross-strait unification policy in 1979. Taiwan responded to China's peaceful unification policy with a policy of exchange and cooperation from a closed-continental policy in July 1988.⁶⁷ The spread of a reconciliation mood in 1987, including the expansion of cross-strait political and civilian dialogues, decreased the

⁶⁶ See Nicholas D. Kristof, "Chinese Fight 40-Year-Old Propaganda War," *The New York Times*, September 27, 1987, at <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1987/09/27/034587.html?pageNumber=21>, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

⁶⁷ For the cross-strait policy of both sides, see The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, "양안관계 [Cross-strait relations]," in 『대만개황 2016』 [Introduction to Taiwan 2016], pp. 39-65, at https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_4099/view.do?seq=367570&srchFr=&mp%3BsrchTo=&mp%3BsrchWord=&mp%3BsrchTp=&mp%3Bmulti_itm_seq=0&mp%3Bitm_seq_1=0&mp%3Bitm_seq_2=0&mp%3Bcompany_cd=&mp%3Bcompany_nm=, last accessed on April 30, 2023.

possibility of the U.S. intervention in Taiwan.⁶⁸ This might make it possible for China to use force against Taiwan.

3.3. Post–Cold War Period (1991–2012)

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the end of bipolarity and the beginning of a unipolar world led by the United States. As shown in Figure–2, the share of U.S. national power in the region increased during the post–Cold War period compared to the Deng period.

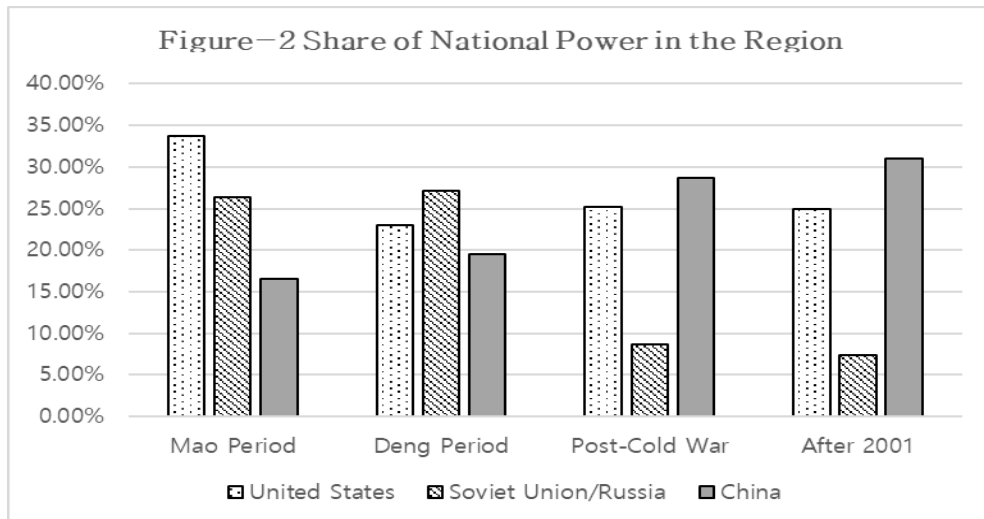
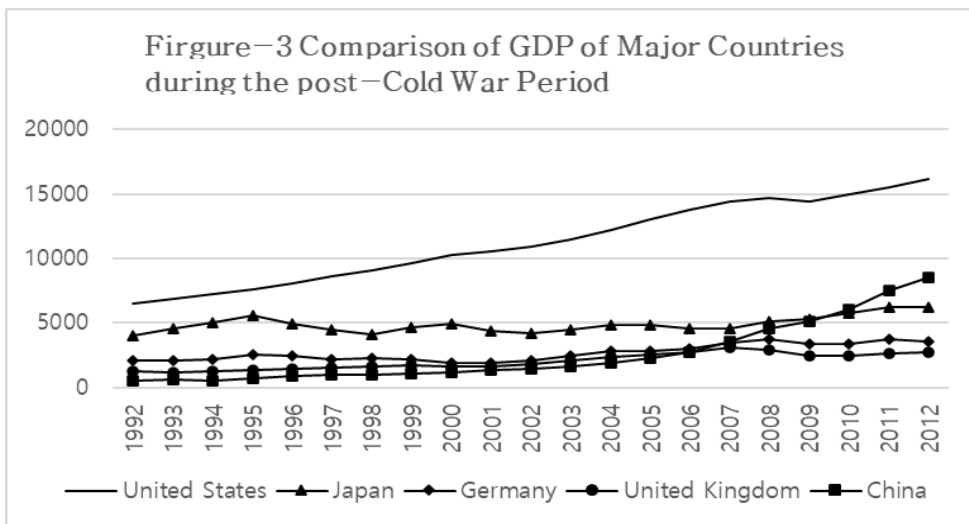


Figure 2 is derived by the author based on The Correlates of War Projects, “NMC-60-abridged.”

When comparing the share of national power in the region during the post–Cold War period, China overtook the United States, especially in 2001, and this gap widened. This result is somewhat different when other national power indicators, such as GDP, are

⁶⁸ For US–China relations during this period, see Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 1992), p. 155.

applied. Given that National Material Capabilities Index consists of military spending, military personnel, energy consumption, iron production, urban population, and total population, such outcome is due to China’s larger population, military personnel, and iron production. Whether National Material Capabilities Index is a good indicator has to be further examined, but at least it can be concluded that during the post–Cold War period, the U.S.–China power gap has narrowed. As shown in Figure–3, this trend is clearly shown when GDP is viewed as an indicator.⁶⁹



Source: Figure 3 is derived by the author based on the “GDP Dataset.”

Despite the increase in U.S. national power during the post–Cold War period, China’s use of force decreased from 16.8% in the Deng period to 9.5%. This was due to the overall decrease in the probability of using force against the US (quasi) allies and those not allied with the United States. In particular, the deterrence effect of the US intervention further lowered the possibility of China’s use of

⁶⁹ “GDP Dataset,” accessed April 30, 2023.

force against the US and its allies. In the meantime, China still used force in territorial disputes.

While China's use of force decreased at the lowest level, its display of force peaked at 56%, even higher than 40% in the Mao period. More than 82% (31 out of 38 times) of displaying force was against the United States and its (quasi) allies. The main types of action were a show of force (68%) and border violation (16%). This indicates that China's degree of hostility decreased, but China still balanced against the United States and its (quasi) allies by displaying force during the post-Cold War period.

However, China still used force against the United States, a US ally, the Philippines, and countries that did not have an alliance with the United States, such as Russia, North Korea, and Vietnam. China used force against Russia and North Korea in the early 1990s, when relations with existing communist regimes were not established. There was no use of force against them as China strengthened relations with Russia and North Korea in the following years.⁷⁰

China also used force against the United States in the context of balancing. The April 2001 crash of a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft and a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea was the only case in which China used force against the United States during the

⁷⁰ For the development of Sino-Russia relations, see Yong Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4-5 (August-October 2007), pp. 863-903; Alexander Lukin, "Have We Passed the Peak of Sino-Russian Rapprochement?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Fall 2021), pp. 155-173. For Sino-North Korea relations, see You Ji, "China and North Korea: a fragile relationship of strategic convenience," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10, No. 29 (August 2010), pp. 387-398.

post-Cold War period. After the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis (1995–1996), China increased its military presence by deploying additional SU-27 fighter jets toward Taiwan and strengthening its naval capabilities. On the other hand, the United States responded by strengthening reconnaissance activities around China and its coast.⁷¹ This can be seen as the United States strengthening its response activities in the process of China balancing against the United States after the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Although there have been no further armed conflicts between the United States and China since the 2001 collision, the 2009 *Impeccable* incident rekindled another round of air and sea encounters between the two countries. While the United States began to intervene in the South China Sea for Freedom of Navigation, China argued that the South China Sea was its core interest in 2010.⁷² To take one step further beyond the scope of this study, China's Anti-Access/Area Denial(A2AD) capabilities have significantly improved since 2015, and the United States responded through an Air-Sea Battle strategy and Freedom of

⁷¹ 박현진 [Park, Hyun-Jin], “美 EP-3 中國 전투기간 南中國海上 공중충돌 사건 [Aerial Collision of April 1, 2001, between a US EP-3 Plane and a Chinese F-8 Fighter Jet over the South China Sea],” 『서울국제법연구』 [*Seoul International Law Journal*], Vol. 9, No. 1 (June 2002), pp. 78–79.

⁷² For the *Impeccable* incident and China's first labeling of the South China Sea as a core interest, see Michael Green et al., “Counter-Coercion Series: Harassment of the USNS *Impeccable*,” The Center for Strategic & International Studies, April 7, 2017, at <https://amti.csis.org/counter-co-harassment-usns-impeccable/>, last accessed on May 11, 2023; Edward Wong, “Chinese Military Seeks to Extend Its Naval Power,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2010, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/world/asia/24navy.html>, last accessed on May 11, 2023.

Navigation Operation(FONOP).⁷³ As the Trump administration regularized the FONOP, close navigation and flight became more frequent.⁷⁴

In addition to the above countries, China continued to use force regarding territorial issues regardless of the alliance throughout the post-Cold War period, including the South China Sea Conflict with Vietnam and the Philippines. These countries were either not allied with the United States or not insured by the U.S. military intervention. As a result, The Chinese Navy blocked Vietnam's excavation sites in the disputed South China Sea (1993), occupied (2012), fired flares (2013) on Vietnamese fishing boats, and occupied Philippine fishing boats (1995).⁷⁵ If the scope of this study is extended after 2013, China's use of force in territorial disputes can still be applied to border disputes with India (2013, 2017, 2020).⁷⁶

⁷³ For the U.S.-China interaction and evaluation, see The Department of Defense, United States of America, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, at <https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/quadrennial/QDR2014.pdf?ver=tXH94SVvSQLVw-ENZ-a2pQ%3d%3d>, last accessed on May 11, 2023; William Yale, "Air-Sea Battle: A Dangerous, Un-affordable Threat," *The Diplomat*, November 9, 2013, at <https://thediplomat.com/2013/11/air-sea-battle-a-dangerous-unaffordable-threat/>, last accessed on May 11, 2023; The RAND Blog, "How Will China Respond to Future U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations?" at <https://www.rand.org/blog/2015/10/how-will-china-respond-to-future-us-freedom-of-navigation.html>, last accessed on May 11, 2023.

⁷⁴ John Power, "US freedom of navigation patrols in South China Sea hit record high in 2019," *South China Morning Post*, February 5, 2020, at <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3048967/us-freedom->, last accessed on May 11, 2023.

⁷⁵ See "MID Narrates 1993-2001, 2002-2010, 2011-2014" in "MID-Level and Incident-Level Data 5.0," last accessed on April 30, 2023.

⁷⁶ The border dispute between China and India is divided into three regions: Kashmir in the west, Sikkim in the middle, and Arunachal Pradesh in the east, with both countries claiming sovereignty over the disputed area. China

On the contrary, China did not use force against Japan, which is in dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea, and Taiwan, which is in a territorial dispute in terms of complete territorial integrity. This can be interpreted that the U.S. intervention had a deterrent effect on those territorial disputes. While the United States has not taken a position on the territorial issue, it has confirmed that the 1960 U.S.–Japan Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (2004, 2010, 2014).

The U.S. guarantees for the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands continued to be upgraded from a government–spokesman level to a ministerial and presidential level. The deputy spokesperson of the State Department affirmed the issue on March 2004 that the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty (1960) applied to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.⁷⁷ In 2010, when Senkaku/Diaoyu Boat Collision incident occurred, the U.S. Secretary of Defense reassured Japan that the United States would fulfill alliance responsibility on the issue.⁷⁸ After the U.S.–Japan summit in April 2014, a joint statement said that the Senkaku /Diaoyu Islands were subject to the 1960 Treaty.⁷⁹ Besides, Japan

effectively controlled the area except for the eastern border. For more information, see the KIDA World Dispute Database, at <https://www.kida.re.kr/frt/board/frtNormalBoardDetail.do?sidx=2166&idx=97&depth=3&searchCondition=&searchKeyword=&pageIndex=1&lang=kr>, last accessed on May 1, 2023,

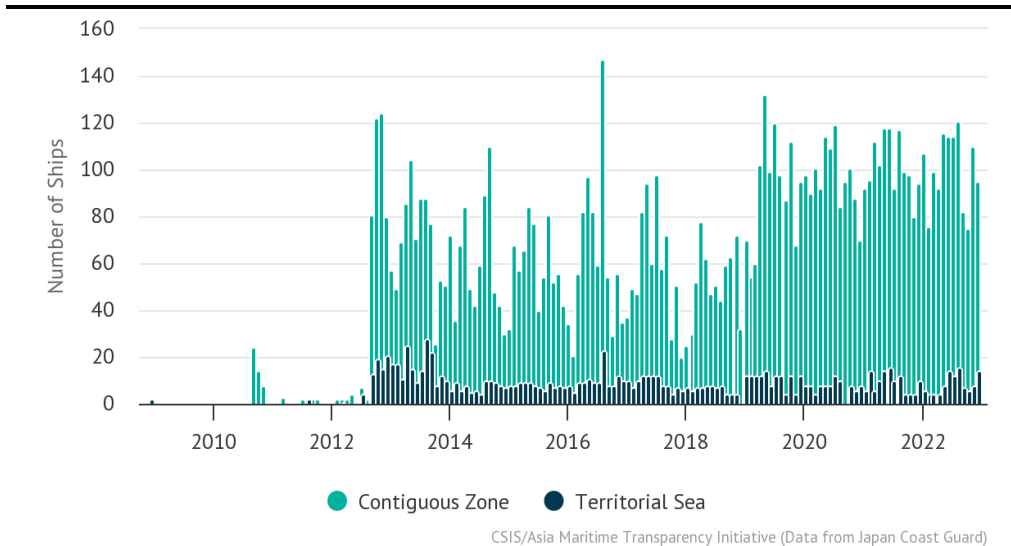
⁷⁷ Regarding the announcement, see June Teufel Dreyer, “The shifting Triangle: Sino-Japanese-American relations in stressful times,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 21, No. 75 (February 2012), p. 424.

⁷⁸ Kei Koga, “The rise of China and Japan’s balancing strategy: critical junctures and policy shifts in the 2010s,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 25, No. 101 (April 2016), pp. 786–787.

⁷⁹ The White House, “U.S.–Japan Joint Statement: The United States and Japan: Shaping the Future of the Asia-Pacific and Beyond,” April 25, 2014,

has been deepening the U.S.–Japan alliance in the direction of discussing the use of force based on the right of collective self-defense through the implementation of Japan’s Legislation for Peace and Security in 2016, and aligning its policy documents with the U.S. strategic document system under the current Kishida’s Cabinet.⁸⁰ However, on the other hand, as can be seen in Figure–4, the number of Chinese government vessels has increased drastically since the 2012 Japanese government purchase of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.⁸¹

Figure–4: Number of Chinese Government Vessels in Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands’ Contiguous Zone/Territorial Sea (2009–2022).



Source: CSIS/Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, “Over the Line: Tracking Energy Competition in the East China Sea,” at <https://anti.csis.org/energy-competition-east-china-sea/> (Access Date: May 15, 2023).

at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/25/us-japan-joint-statement-united-states-and-japan-shaping-future-asia-pac>, last accessed on May 1, 2023.

⁸⁰ 조진구 [Cho, Jin-Goo], “일본의 안보/방위정책 변화와 對 한반도 영향 [Changes in Japan’s Security and Defense Policy and Impact on the Korean Peninsula],” mimeo (August, 2022).

⁸¹ For Japan’s purchase of the Islands, see Koga, “The rise of China and Japan’s balancing strategy,” pp. 787–790.

On the Taiwan issue, the United States enacted the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, stipulating that the United States can determine the size and nature of military aid to Taiwan by identifying threats that are against Taiwan's security and concerning the national interest of the United States.⁸² For instance, during the third Taiwan Strait crisis (1995–1996), the United States deterred China's use of force by dispatching two carrier strike groups and the largest U.S. naval force gathering in the region since the second Taiwan Strait crisis (1958).⁸³ However, China has been training and regularizing Taiwan contingency operational plans(OP), including blockade and landing operations, since Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022.⁸⁴ Thus, the

⁸² The Taiwan Relations Act further stipulates that “to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security of the people of Taiwan.” See The United States Congress, “Taiwan Relation Act,” April 10, 1979, at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479>, last accessed on May 1, 2023.

⁸³ Robert S. Ross. “The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force.” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall, 2000), pp. 87–123; Whiting, “China's Use of Force, 1950–1996, and Taiwan,” p. 123.

⁸⁴ For China's military activities after Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, see “佩洛西與台海軍演：軍事緊張‘常態化’懸念猶在，觀察人士看低開戰可能 [Pelosi and the Taiwan Strait Exercise: Worries for ‘Regularization’ of Military Tensions Remain, while Observers Underestimate the Possibility of War],” *BBC News Chinese*, August 11, 2022, at <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-62501007>, last accessed on May 4, 2023; “Tracking the Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis,” The Center for Strategic & International Studies, at [Tracking the Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis | ChinaPower Project \(csis.org\)](https://chinapower.csis.org/tracking-the-fourth-taiwan-strait-crisis/), last accessed on May 18, 2023; Bonny Lin et al., “Tracking China's April 2023 Military Exercises around Taiwan,” The Center for Strategic & International Studies, April 8, 2023, at <https://chinapower.csis.org/tracking-chinas-april-2023-military-exercises-around-taiwan/>, last accessed on May 4, 2023.

future U.S. deterrence for Taiwan has to be further examined.

As the next chapter comprehensively covers the U.S. deterrence toward Taiwan, here briefly introduces some assessments of the U.S. military deterrence toward Taiwan. The Rand Corporation estimated that China had the home advantage to deter the U.S. air and naval capabilities in the early stages (1–2 weeks) of the Taiwan contingency in 2017.⁸⁵ Further, the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) concluded through a wargame in 2023 that although the United States could win the war, the challenge confronting China’s invasion would be formidable at a grave cost to the United States and its allies. Thus, the United States is urgent to enhance its deterrence.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ For a detailed analysis, see Eric Heginbotham et al., *The U.S.–China military scorecard: forces, geography, and the evolving balance of power, 1996–2017* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 2015), at https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR392/RAND_RR392.pdf, last accessed on May 1, 2023.

⁸⁶ For the analysis of wargame, see Mark F. Cancian et al., *The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan*, The Center for Strategic & International Studies, January 9, 2023, at https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/230109_Cancian_FirstBattle_NextWar.pdf?VersionId=WdE_UwJYWIySMPIr3ivhFolxC_gZQuSOQ, last accessed on May 4, 2023.

Chapter 4. Assessment and Prospect

4.1. A Revisit of the Hypotheses

Based on the above statistical analysis and case studies, the hypotheses of this research have been proved and rejected as follows, and the corresponding patterns can be derived.

Table-9: Proved and Rejected Hypotheses.

Proved	Rejected
Hypothesis 1: For China, the greater the share of U.S. national power in the region, the greater the possibility of using force.	Alternative Hypothesis 1: China was less likely to use force when it was more economically interdependent with other states.
Hypothesis 2: China was likely to use force against countries allied with the United States or the Soviet Union.	Alternative Hypothesis 2: China was more likely to use force when there was a greater gap between its international status and its perception of international status.
Hypothesis 3: China was less likely to use force when the United States or the Soviet Union intervened.	n/a
Alternative Hypothesis 3: China was likely to use force against targets when it considered them core interests.	n/a

Table-9 is derived by the author based on the analysis of the thesis.

China was likely to use force to balance against the U.S. national power in East Asia since 1949, except for the Deng period. China balanced against the U.S. national power when the United States prevailed over others in East Asia. Such balancing can be characterized by the frequent use of force against the United States

and its alliance and quasi-alliance during the Mao period. This characteristic was salient in terms of the balance of threat as the United States established an alliance system in East Asia, and China recognized it as an encirclement. In addition, the U.S. military intervention also caused the deterrence effect during this period. However, if the U.S. military intervention strengthened the perception that China was encircled, a paradox of deterrence occurred. As a result, China used force even against the states that were not allied with the United States. Moreover, the deterrence effect of U.S. intervention was also neutralized when the Sino-Soviet relations were not torn apart before 1965, and the Soviet Union indirectly intervened in the multinational armed conflicts, such as Korean War and the Laotian Civil War.

During the Deng period, the Soviet Union had reversed the United States regarding the share of national power in East Asia. Having coincided with the period when the U.S.-China strategic cooperation developed dramatically against the common threat from the Soviet Union, the U.S. national power variable became insignificant during this period. Thus, the degree of hostility decreased as the use of force against the United States and its allies decreased significantly. On the other hand, China rather used force against the Soviet Union and its quasi-allies due to the power competition within the communist camp.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States became the single hegemon in the international system. As the United States regained its dominant position in East Asia, China began to balance against the United States during the post-Cold War. However, contrary to the Cold War period, when China mainly used force for balancing, China resorted to the display of force

during the post–Cold War. In other words, the degree of hostility in China decreased sharply from the Cold War period to the post–Cold War period. In addition to the deterrence effect of the U.S. intervention, such a decrease was largely attributed to the nuclear deterrence between the United States and China, as China had maintained and developed the nuclear power required for the minimum deterrence since the late 1980s.⁸⁷ As such, China still balanced against the United States and its (quasi) allies by displaying force during the post–Cold War. Meanwhile, China was more likely to use force in serious territorial disputes, regardless of time and object. Accordingly, China mainly used force against the countries with territorial disputes during the post–Cold War period.

Although this research rejected alternative hypotheses 1 and 2, considering the consistency of data and efficiency of the model, China’s economic interdependence and perception of international status did have a mitigation effect on China’s use of force when running a regression with the other existing variables.⁸⁸ That is to say, if the U.S.–China nuclear deterrence was an exogenous

⁸⁷ After China conducted its first nuclear test in 1964, China did not possess its first ICBM with its coverage to either Moscow or Washington until the early 1980s. In 1985, China possessed more than 150 warheads as well as gravity bombs and diversified its delivery by launching one nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine. In addition, China’s nationwide air defense system was not established until the late 1980s. For more details, see M. Taylor Fravel and Evan S. Medeiros, “China’s Search for Assured Retaliation: The Evolution of Chinese Nuclear Strategy and Force Structure,” *International Security*, Vol. 35, no. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 48–87. For more debates on China’s nuclear deterrence, see Alastair Iain Johnston, “China’s New ‘Old Thinking’: The Concept of Limited Deterrence,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter, 1995–1996), pp. 5–42.

⁸⁸ The economic interdependence variable decreased the probability of using force by 7%, naturalized national power, alliance (except for the U.S. allies during the Cold War), and core interest variables. The perception of the international status variable decreased the probability of using force by 94%, naturalized alliance and core interest variables.

variable that decreased China's degree of hostility during the post-Cold War period, China's increase in dependence on foreign trade and improvement of its international status were the other attributable endogenous variables.

In that sense, economic and normative approaches and prescriptions are also supposed to consider with regard to China's use of force. For instance, China has been diversifying its non-military approaches, such as the weaponization of the economy in conflicts and the establishment of villages or architectures to push for its effective control over disputed territories.⁸⁹ Therefore, China's non-military approaches should be taken into account at the same time.

4.2. Prospects for China's Use of Force: Xi period (2013-)

In this session, an evaluation is made on how this study can help predict China's use of force in the future, especially during the Xi period.

As the United States took the lead in terms of national power in

⁸⁹ For weaponization of economy, see Farrell, H. and A. L. Newman. "Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion," *International Security*, Vol. 44, No.1 (Summer 2019), pp. 42-79. For non-military approaches to territorial disputes, see Vishnu Som, "China Has Built Village In Arunachal, Show Satellite Images," NDTV, January 18, 2021, at <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/china-has-built-village-in-arunachal-pradesh-show-satellite-images-exclusive-2354154>, last accessed on May 5, 2023; Kristin Huang, "South China Sea: Beijing has extended another Spratly Islands reef, photos show," *South China Morning Post*, 24 March 2021, at <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3126656/south-china-sea-beijing-has-extended-another-spratly-islands>, last accessed on May 5, 2023; 히라마쓰 시게오 [Shigeo Hiramatsu, 平松茂雄], "시작된 '해양의 시대' ['The Age of the Ocean' that Began]," in 『마오쩌둥과 덩샤오핑의 백년대계, 중국군의 핵·해양·우주 전략을 독해한다』 [*Mao and Deng's Centennial Plan: Interpret the Chinese Military's Nuclear, Maritime, and Space Strategies*] (서울: 한국해양전략연구소[Seoul: Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy], 2014), pp. 85-93.

the post–Cold War era, China would continue to balance against the United States before it became the single hegemon in East Asia. China reversed the United States based on the National Capabilities Index in 1995. However, according to the share of global GDP (\$105.57 trillion) in 2022, while China takes up 18.3% (\$19.37 trillion), the United States accounts for 25.4% (\$26.85 trillion), 1.4 times ahead of China. Meanwhile, the U.S. defense spending in 2022 was \$ 7.67 trillion, 3.2 times ahead of China’s \$ 2.42 trillion, and even larger than the sum of Asia’s top five (China, India, Japan, Korea, and Australia) defense spending (\$ 5.16 trillion). At the same time, the United States and China are currently competing in the high–tech and military sectors.⁹⁰

In addition, it is widely believed in the academic community that China has become assertive since 2009 or 2012.⁹¹ On the other

⁹⁰ For data regarding the share of GDP and defense spending, see “GDP Dataset” and “Asia” in *Military Balance 2023*, Vol. 123, Issue. 1, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (February 2023), at [Chapter Six: Asia: Regional trends in 2022 208; Regional defence policy and economics 210; China: defence policy and economics 220; Arms procurements and deliveries 226; Armed forces data section 229: The Military Balance: Vol 123, No 1 \(tandfonline.com\)](#), last accessed on May 10, 2023. For the rivalry between the United States and China in high–tech and military fields, see Graham Allison et al., “The Great Tech Rivalry: China vs the U.S.,” Harvard Kennedy School BELFER Center, December 7, 2021, at https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/GreatTechRivalry_ChinavsUS_211207.pdf, last accessed on May 4, 2023; Graham Allison et al., “The Great Military Rivalry: China vs the U.S.” at https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/GreatMilitaryRivalry_ChinavsUS_211215.pdf, last accessed on May 4.

⁹¹ For discussions on China’s assertiveness, see 조영남[Young Nam Cho], “중국은 왜 강경한가? 2008년 세계 금융위기 이후의 중국 외교 평가[Why Is China Assertive? An Assessment on China’s Foreign Policy Since the Global Financial Crisis in 2008], 『국제·지역연구』 [*Journal of International Area Studies*], Vol. 22, No.2 (Summer 2013), pp. 29–57; Alastair I. Johnston, “How New and Assertive Is China’s New Assertiveness?” *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Spring 2013), pp. 7–48; Andrew Scobell and Scott W. Harold, “An ‘Assertive’ China? Insights from Interviews,” *Asian Survey*,

hand, the United States has strengthened its alliance system in East Asia through the rebalancing policy since 2011.⁹² Under the minimum nuclear deterrence between the United States and China, the estimation could be made that China would continue to display force against the United States and its (quasi) allies for balancing in the future. Given that China's display of force mainly appears in the form of China's show of force in nearby waters and aerospace, China's use of force might occur amid the growing activities in these areas, as seen in the 2001 U.S.–China military aircraft collision. Also, considering that China's balance against the United States had weakened when the United States and China had broad and close strategic cooperation, China would be less likely to ease the balance policy with their strategic competition squeezing the space of cooperation.

Moreover, China would resort to not only displaying force but also using force when it comes to territorial disputes, especially that China regards as core interests. At the same time, the U.S. military intervention is still playing a significant role in deterring China from using force. In this regard, China would be more likely to use force against the parties to which the United States had a weak security commitment. However, according to the current U.S. offshore–balancing strategy, the chief concern for the United

Vol. 63, No. 3 (May 2013), pp. 111–131; Aaron L. Friedberg, “The Sources of Chinese Conduct: Explaining Beijing’s Assertiveness,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (January 2014), pp. 133–150.

⁹² For assessments on the United States policy toward China, see Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, “The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (March/April 2018), pp. 60–70; Baohui Zhang, “From Defensive toward Offensive Realism: Strategic Competition and Continuities in the United States’ China Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 31, Issue 137 (November 2021), pp. 793–809.

States is to preserve dominance in the Western Hemisphere, especially in East Asia with the rise of China.⁹³ As such, the United States is unlikely to abandon East Asia. If disputed parties attempted to strengthen the alliance or security alignment with the United States to secure the deterrence effect, and in turn, bringing about China's perception of encirclement, a paradox of deterrence might occur, increasing the probability of China using force.⁹⁴ Thus, China would be more likely to use force with regard to its territorial disputes with the expansion of U.S. intervention in the region.

As a preliminary verification of the above prediction, MID data for Xi Jinping's early rule (2013–2014) can be used. Among 15 military conflicts, 11 were against the United States and its (quasi) allies, and show of force accounted for 72% of its types of action. Meanwhile, the other 4 cases were in conflict with India and Vietnam, with which China had territorial disputes. Having said that, the following agenda has to be further discussed.

4.3. Further Discussion

To precisely predict under what conditions China will use force given the same structural constraints, research on the critical points has to be carried out. That means, research is needed to answer

⁹³ For prescriptions of offshore balancing for the United States, see Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future Grand Strategy," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Summer, 1997), pp. 86–124; Barry Posen, "Pull Back: The Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (January/February 2013), pp. 116–128; John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (July/August 2016), pp. 70–83.

⁹⁴ For China's perception of the U.S. alliance system, see Adam P. Liff, "China and the US Alliance System," *The China Quarterly*, No. 233 (March 2018), pp. 137–165.

when China escalated to the use of force and how China escalated into war. This might help us to find out to what extent the strategic competition between the United States and China can reach in the future and the wisdom to manage future crises.⁹⁵

4.3.1. Paradox of U.S. Intervention: Taiwan Issue

There is no need to revisit here that Taiwan is the most probable flashpoint of armed conflict between the United States and China in the future. Under the same structural constraints that the United States national power overwhelmed that of other countries in East Asia as well as maintaining an alliance or quasi-alliance with Taiwan, whereas China used force in the Taiwan Strait Crises during the Cold War, China's response to the crises in post-Cold War was the display of force, including firing missiles and conducting landing exercises. Thus, it is necessary to be analyzed under what conditions the U.S. deterrence would be neutralized and China would escalate into the use of force or war concerning the Taiwan issue.

As a preliminary outline based on the MID data (1949–2012), China had 26 armed conflicts in total regarding Taiwan. Among them, 15 cases occurred during the Cold War, and 11 cases were during the post-Cold War period.⁹⁶ Out of the 15 armed conflicts during the Cold War, 9 cases were against Taiwan, while 6 cases were against Taiwan as well as the United States. China used force in 11 cases, including 6 cases with U.S. intervention. China used force without exception when the U.S. intervened during the Cold

⁹⁵ For the prospect of the U.S.–China strategic competition, see Denny Roy, “The ‘Power Transition’: A Spot Check,” *PacNet*, No. 71 (September 11, 2013).

⁹⁶ The Correlates of War Project, “MIDB 5.0,” last accessed on May 19, 2023.

War. On the other hand, there were 11 armed conflicts with no use of force during the post-Cold War. Among them, 7 cases were against Taiwan, and 4 cases were against Taiwan and the United States. Albeit China did not use force with regard to Taiwan during the post-Cold War, China displayed its force in 8 cases, 4 of which were with the U.S. intervention. China responded to the U.S. intervention with a display of force in the Taiwan issue during this period. In other words, whereas the U.S. intervention did not deter China from using force with regard to Taiwan during the Cold War, it had a deterrent effect during the post-Cold War.

Contrary to the model of this research, the deterrence effect of U.S. intervention in Taiwan was neutralized during the Cold War. This was salient in the Mao period, considering that 10 out of 11 cases of using force occurred in this period. As discussed in the previous session, this might be attributed to the threat perception of alliance encirclement. China was likely to use force against the US allies and quasi-allies, when China perceived that it was encircled by these allied powers during the Mao period. As the United States and Taiwan security alignment or alliance was the major pillar of the encirclement, such threat perception might neutralize U.S. deterrence.

On top of that, the dynamics of Taiwan independence might be another important attributable variable for the neutralization of U.S. deterrence. Based on the Taiwan Crises in the past, we can conclude that Taiwan independence was an underlying *casus belli* for China. In the First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954-1955), China intended to deter Taiwan from joining the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO, 1954-1977), which could result in a permanent division across the Straits, as in the Korean Peninsula

and Indochina. Additionally, China attempted to forestall the Cross-Straits becoming “Two Chinas” in the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958), by providing a justification for Taiwan to continue its presence in Kinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu Islands, which were geographically closer to mainland China. In essence, China used force in order to prevent Taiwan from *de facto* independence.⁹⁷

With the change in Taiwan’s political landscape to “democratization” and “localization” since the late 1980s, the new trend of Taiwan independence began to emerge during the post-Cold War.⁹⁸ In this regard, China aimed to counter Taiwan’s pursuit for *de jure* independence. However, China did not use force during the Third Taiwan Crisis (1995–1996). This was due to the deterrence effect of U.S. intervention during the post-Cold War. To be specific, the U.S. “strategic ambiguity” toward Taiwan, through which the United States intentionally created uncertainty to deter China from invading Taiwan, and deter Taiwan from declaring independence.⁹⁹ In addition to the deterrence effect of U.S. intervention, the U.S.–China nuclear deterrence decreased China’s degree of hostility. As China perceived that “the United States would be hesitant to use nuclear weapons against Taiwan,” China found that the display of force could deter Taiwan from pursuing independence as well as the United States from promoting Taiwan independence.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ For China’s intention in the 1950s Taiwan Strait Crises, see Whiting, “China’s Use of Force, 1950–1996, and Taiwan,” p. 108–111.

⁹⁸ For the transition and evolution of Taiwan’s politics, see Weixing Hu, “Explaining Change and Stability in Cross-Strait Relations: a punctuated equilibrium model,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 21, No. 78 (November 2012), pp. 942–946.

⁹⁹ For the discussion of U.S. “dual deterrence,” see Raymond Kuo, “‘Strategic Ambiguity’ Has the U.S. and Taiwan Trapped,” *Foreign Policy*, Issue 248 (Spring 2023), p 22–24.

¹⁰⁰ See Scobell, *China’s Use of Military Force*, p. 177, 187–188.

There has been no China's use of force against Taiwan since the post-Cold War. Nevertheless, as China has legitimized its conditions for the use of force by enacting the Anti-Secession Law in 2005, Taiwan independence and concerning issues would be a litmus paper for China's use of force or justification for armed unification in the future.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, China has set the timeline for unification. Xi Jinping emphasizes in the 20th Party Congress (October 2022) that reunification with Taiwan is essential to realize "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Xi also stressed achieving its goal of military modernization in 2027, which is the centennial anniversary of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) establishment. This means that conditions might be sufficient for China to attempt armed unification by then. At least, the deadline could be 2035, when the second stage of "China's Dream" would be completed.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ According to Article 8 of the Law, China shall employ non-peaceful means "In the event that the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted." See the full text, at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-03/14/content_424643.htm, last accessed on May 13, 2023. Further, the 2019 Xi Jinping speech and 2022 white paper on Taiwan question and reunification in the new era highlight that China does not and will not "renounce the use of force...to guard against external interference and a tiny number of separatists and their separatist activities for 'Taiwan independence'" at <http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201904/t2019041212155687.htm>, https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/202208/10/content_WS62f34f46c6d02e533532f0ac.html, last accessed on May 15, 2023.

¹⁰² 조영남 [Young Nam Cho], "중국공산당 20차 당대회와 시진핑 '집권 3기' 전망 [The 20th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party of and Prospect for 'Xi Jinping's third term," 『아시아 브리핑』 [*Current Issues and Policy Implications*], Vol. 2, No. 35 (September 2022), at https://snuac.snu.ac.kr/2015_snuac/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/%EC%95%84%EC%8B%9C%EC%95%84%EB%B8%8C%EB%A6%AC%ED%94%84_1-74.pdf, last accessed on May 16, 2023.

As Xi Jinping noted that “the Taiwan question is at the very core of China’s core interests, and the first red line that must not be crossed in China–U.S. relations” in his meeting with Joe Biden (November 2022).¹⁰³ In this regard, the Taiwan issue, as China’s core interest, might neutralize U.S. deterrence in the years to come. Then the question arises as to under what conditions China would escalate to the use of force or armed unification in the following years.

As China has gripped Hong Kong’s autonomy through new National Security Law since 2020, the “one country, two systems” formula for the Cross–Straits peaceful unification became in name only. Along with a spiral confrontation that has escalated between the United States and China on the one hand, as well as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Taiwanese Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) on the other, a cloud was cast over the Cross–Straits peaceful unification.¹⁰⁴ While economic coercion is favorable for China to adopt but not sure to bring Taiwan capitulation, armed unification could help China reach its destination but with the great cost of economic, diplomatic, and military losses.

¹⁰³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of China, “President Xi Jinping Meets with U.S. President Joe Biden in Bali,” November 11, 2022, at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202211/t20221114_10974686.html, last accessed on May 16, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ For the U.S.–China relations and Taiwan issue, see 정재호 [Jae Ho Chung], 『생존의 기로: 21세기 미·중관계와 한국』 [*The Crossroads of Survival: U.S.–China Relations and Korea in the 21st Century*] (서울: 서울대학교출판문화원 [Seoul: Seoul National University Press], 2021), pp. 110–203; Richard Bush, “The Return of the Taiwan Issue to US–China Relations,” Brookings Institution, September 21, 2015, at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/09/21/the-return-of-the-taiwan-issue-to-u-s-china-relations/>, last accessed on May 16, 2023. For the development and prospect of CCP–DPP relations since 2016, Xin Qiang, “Selective Engagement: Mainland China’s Dual-Track Taiwan Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 29, No. 124 (October 2020), pp. 535–552.

Notwithstanding, such risks are embedded in the U.S. intervention as well. Despite the victory of the war as of 2023, the scale and suddenness of losses would also cause disillusionment over the war.¹⁰⁵ In that sense, skepticism about the U.S. intervention and prescriptions of retrenchment policy could be raised.¹⁰⁶ A most cited concern would be the deterioration in the credibility of U.S. deterrence as a whole in the region. Even if the United States could reinforce its commitment to allies in the Indo-Pacific, such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, concerns of much more assertive China follow up. China might use Taiwan as a springboard to the Western Pacific and the South China Sea, choking the Sea Lanes of Japan and South Korea, solidifying control in the South China Sea, and further pushing the United States beyond the First Islands Chain. As a result, the United States would diminish and finally share its hegemon with China in the Western Hemisphere.

On the other hand, according to the power transition theory, if such U.S. retrenchment led to “the near point where the rising challenger surpasses that of dominant state, tensions between them would be extraordinarily high.”¹⁰⁷ In addition, based on the estimation of this research, assuming the United States enhanced its alliance under the retrenchment policy, China might have a sense

¹⁰⁵ Mark F. Cancian et al., “The First Battle of the Next War,” pp. 144-145, last accessed on May 13, 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Charles L. Glaser, “Washington Is Avoiding the Tough Questions on Taiwan and China: The Case for Reconsidering U.S. Commitments in East Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 28, 2021, at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2021-04-28/washington-avoiding-tough-questions-taiwan-and-china?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw6vyiBhB_EiwAQJRophwSpfyO8k5V3PGUwRl15PLtu993-QLQP_gxlf0dY4sw1FC6G4dhGBoCbeQQAvDBwE, last accessed on May 13, 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Roy, “The ‘Power Transition’.”

of hostile encirclement from South Korea, Japan, to the Philippines, thus further increasing the probability of China's use of force. This retrenchment policy might deserve discussion combined with successful economic sanctions against China when it invades Taiwan. However, it is questionable for the United States to take its time while China strives to advance into the Western Pacific. Hence, as long as the United States manages to keep its full-front deterrence in the economy, diplomacy, and military, China would be less likely to pursue unification by force in the near future, because decisive damage in any of the above three areas would break down the Chinese dream of rejuvenation.¹⁰⁸

While unification by force is less likely, China's use of force against Taiwan is still on the table. Amid heated discussions on whether to maintain "strategic ambiguity" toward Taiwan, if the United States shifted its policy from "strategic ambiguity" to "strategic clarity," China might use force in order to confirm the U.S. commitment to Taiwan.¹⁰⁹ In 1958, U.S.-Taiwan military cooperation was strengthened in terms of military aid, joint exercises, and deployment of troops and nuclear warhead-armed cruise missiles. China perceived that their bilateral security relations continued to be solidified after signing the defense treaty in 1954. In this context, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis also can be

¹⁰⁸ For countervailing arguments, Mastro, Oriana Skylar, "The Taiwan Temptation," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, Issue 4 (Jul/Aug 2021), pp. 58-67. The author concluded that the United States has no exit for China's armed unification other than an enhanced U.S. military and intelligence presence in the Indo-Pacific, as well as preparation for China's missile strikes against Taiwan.

¹⁰⁹ For discussion on "strategic ambiguity," see Kuo, "'Strategic Ambiguity' Has the U.S. and Taiwan Trapped"; Michael Schuman, "No More 'Strategic Ambiguity' on Taiwan," *The Atlantic*, September 22, 2022, at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/09/joe-biden-taiwan-china-strategic-ambiguity/671512/>, last accessed on May 16, 2023.

seen as China's use of force to confirm the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan.

Although "strategic clarity" would create deterrence by denial instead of deterrence by threats, excluding its application in terms of Taiwan declaring independence, such denial deterrence could be neutralized when China interpreted the enhanced security relations and activities, according to Anti-Session Law, as "the major incidents entailing Taiwan independence." In that case, China might use force in the name of deterring Taiwan independence and confirming the U.S. commitment to Taiwan at the same time.

As for the specific scenarios, there include a blockade, a seizure of offshore islands, etc. As China has strengthened its missile advantage over Taiwan, especially short and intermediate-range missiles, it can carry out various operations using missiles.¹¹⁰ For instance, in 2022, China simulated a blockade operation against Taiwan with its missiles passing over Taiwan for the first time. Thus, China may conduct a blockade operation to deter the United States and Taiwan from further strengthening their security alignment or choose a selective quarantine of Taiwan's air and sea as the United States did in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.¹¹¹

On the other hand, the occupation of offshore islands is also tempting to carry out militarily, given the relatively low risks of the scenario. However, it might be unappealing for China, except China has decided to launch a full-on amphibious assault on Taiwan, because it would not help China settle the Taiwan issue, but rather

¹¹⁰ Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 190-191.

¹¹¹ For an assessment of scenarios for China's occupation of Taiwan's periphery and a blockade/quarantine of Taiwan's maritime and airspace, see Robert D. Blackwill and Philip Zelikow, *The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2021), pp. 32-37.

strengthen the security alignment between the United States and Taiwan.¹¹²

Taken together, China is less likely to escalate into a full-blown war against Taiwan before it believes its full-front capabilities are sufficient to neutralize U.S. deterrence. The shift in U.S. “strategic ambiguity” toward Taiwan might evoke China to use force by interpreting “strategic clarity” with regard to Taiwan independence. The options for choice include a blockade or quarantine operation. The threshold would be where the enhancement of the U.S.–Taiwan security alignment could cause the inferiority of China in Taiwan affairs.

4.3.2. Coalition of Democracy vs. Authoritarian?

During the Cold War, China was more likely to participate or use force in proxy wars between the free and communist camps before it declared that the communist camp no longer existed in 1965, especially when the Soviet Union indirectly intervened. Currently, China and Russia seem to be developing their security alignment in the form of quasi-alliance.

While China and Russia do not guarantee mutual defense in the form of a treaty, and China does not currently provide weapons to the Russia–Ukraine war, the two countries have shown several military cooperation close to quasi-alliance as follows. ①Verified interoperability at a preliminary level by operating a joint command system as well as linking weapon and command control systems through Zapad–Interaction/West–Interaction (*Xibulianhe*, 西部聯合) – 2021, ②Conducted joint naval and air exercise in waters near Japan and South Korea as a response to the U.S. value alliance

¹¹² For this scenario, see *ibid.*, pp. 32–34.

(Penetrated the Japanese archipelago, including Tsugasu and the Osumi Straits after the Joint–Sea Exercise (*Haishanglianhe*, 海上聯合)–2021; Conducted five times of Joint Aerial exercises near the East Sea and beyond from 2020 to 2022), ③Improved global strategic stability by establishing an early warning system.¹¹³

Meanwhile, enhancement of security alignment is unfolding between South Korea, the United States, Japan on the one hand and North Korea, China, Russia on the other. There is an empirical study that the US alliance and regime similarity affect the third parties' policies toward China, varying among balancing, hedging, and bandwagoning. That is, the more regimes are democratic and allied with the United States, the more likely to recognize China as a threat and balance against China. As such, the countries or regimes, such as Japan, Taiwan, Australia, Korea, and the Philippines, tend to adopt balancing or proactive hedging against China; while Cambodia, North Korea, Laos, and Myanmar choose to bandwagon with China at present. In this regard, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the democratic and authoritarian camps could be established in the future due to the intensifying strategic competition between the United States and China.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ For the Sino–Russia military relations, see 두진호[Doo Jinho], “2022년 러시아의 안보정세 전망[Russia’s Security Situation Outlook for 2022],” 『동북아안보 정세분석』 [*Northeast Asia Strategic Analysis*] (December 2021); 유영철[Yu, Yeong-cheol] et al., “중·러의 전략적 협력관계가 동북아 정세에 미치는 영향 연구[A Study on the Influence of Strategic Cooperation between China and Russia on the Situation in Northeast Asia],” mimeo (October 2022); Vassily Kashin, “Tacit Alliance: Russia and China Take Military Partnership to New Level,” Moscow Carnegie Center(October 2019), at <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/80136>, last accessed on May 10, 2023; Dmitry Stefanovich, “Can Russia Help China Counter Missile Threats?” RIAC, October 8, 2019, at <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/interview/can-russia-help-china-counter-missile-threats/>, last accessed on May 10, 2023.

¹¹⁴ For discussions on the coalition of two camps, see Snyder, Timothy,

Even if the dichotomy camps were to be established revolving around the United States and China in the future, Russian intervention would be unlikely to act as an independent variable in China's use of force as it did during the Cold War. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia's national power plummeted, falling behind China except for its military power, and its prospects are dim following the Russia–Ukraine war. In addition, security cooperation between China and Russia is at a different level from the period of the Sino–Soviet alliance, when China relied on Soviet aid to promote its military modernization.

Furthermore, the political survival and stability of the leadership are prioritized for authoritarian regimes, so intervention in third–party disputes during the post–Cold War would be decided in accordance with the domestic political aims rather than linkage with global communism. As both China and Russia's urgent issues lie in Taiwan and Ukraine, respectively, it is less likely for China actively intervene by using force in third–party disputes with Russia's indirect intervention during the post–Cold War. However, the possibility has to be further examined that China would join the disputes in the Korean Peninsula with Russia's material, given the future Korean Peninsula contingency. For instance, the Taiwan contingency remains possible to entrap North Korea and South Korea, spreading the fire to the Korean Peninsula, which could result in China's intervention.

“Ukraine Holds the Future: The War Between Democracy and Nihilism,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 101, Issue 5 (Sep/Oct 2022), pp. 124–128, 130–141; Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, “Freedom in the World 2022: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule” (Freedom House, February 2022), at https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/FIW_2022_PDF_Booklet_Digital_Final_Web.pdf, last accessed on May 5, 2023.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

While both the United States and China evaluate that their bilateral relations are being transformed into a new era, structural constraints posited by the two countries are likely to lead them to confrontation and conflict in the future.¹¹⁵ In this context, the following implications and additional research agenda can be derived regarding the probability of armed conflict between the United States and China.

5.1. Thucydides' trap for the U.S. and China

The share of U.S. power in the region has affected China to balance against the United States and its (quasi) allies by displaying force rather than using force during the post-Cold War. In this regard, future U.S.-China armed conflict could occur in little, unexpected events under a series of security dilemmas in which both the United States and China strengthen their power in the region.¹¹⁶ This seems plausible because China has shown assertiveness around the Taiwan Strait, the East China Sea and the South China Sea in terms of the display of force, and a majority of types of action included a show of force. Particularly, the 2001

¹¹⁵ For the recent trajectory of U.S.-China relations, see Jae Ho Chung, *The Crossroads of Survival*, pp. 28-32.

¹¹⁶ See Richard N. Rosecrance, "Contingency as a Cause (Or Little Things means a lot)," in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.-China Conflict*, ed. Rosecrance and Miller (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press 2014).

U.S.–China military aircraft crash was a case where China’s display of force (show of force) had escalated into the use of force.

This is consistent with the description of how the U.S.–China armed conflicts would evolve under the “Thucydides’ trap.”¹¹⁷ However, considering the diplomatic process of resolving the 2001 U.S.–China military aircraft collision, his theory is, to a certain degree, war–prone. There is a need to further explain in a tailored manner under which conditions the United States and China would step into the “Thucydides’ trap.” Based on the analysis in the previous chapters, this research contends that the theory of the “Thucydides’ trap” operates if China is trapped in the threat perception of alliance encirclement or if the United States is mired in the deterrence bias. Such a mechanism is found in this research as the paradox of deterrence, and I term it as dual traps: a trap of encirclement by China and a trap of deterrence by the United States.

5.2. Supplement for Thucydides’ trap

5.2.1. Encirclement trap

As a pillar of the deterrence paradox, the trap of encirclement refers to China’s threat perception that neutralizes the deterrence effect of U.S. intervention. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that the U.S. intervention deters China from using force, the U.S. intervention will rather increase the probability of China’s use of force once the intervention triggers such threat perception.

¹¹⁷ Allison, *Destined for War*, x ix.

According to the model of this research, China might fall into the trap of encirclement with the following sequences.

While allying with the United States was a variable that worked during the Cold War but did not bring about China's use of force in the post-Cold War period. Meanwhile, China's use of force during the post-Cold War period was mainly against countries in territorial disputes (the Philippines, Vietnam, and India). They were neither allies of the United States nor guaranteed military intervention in case of contingency. On the contrary, Japan and Taiwan were ensured for U.S. deterrence to some extent. As U.S. military intervention still had a deterrent effect, with a more strong and assertive China, both the above countries, as well as Japan and Taiwan, would seek either to strengthen their alliances/security alignment or require the United States to clarify its commitment. This, in return, might result in a paradox of deterrence, as it was in the 1962 India case. In other words, the US intervention might rather cause China to use force by evoking its perception of alliance encirclement during the Mao period.

Some may argue that China nowadays, unlike during the Cold War, is able to respond to the U.S. encirclement with a strategy of so-called "Westward March (*xijin*, 西進)" through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), or other non-military methods.¹¹⁸ However, considering the zero-sum nature of territorial disputes, the trap of encirclement became salient when it comes to China's core

¹¹⁸ For discourse on the BRI, see Jae Ho Chung, *The Crossroads of Survival*, pp. 146-148.

interests, as China expressed its unwillingness to compromise and to rule out the use of force on its core interests, especially concerning territorial and sovereignty issues, including Taiwan.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, China has extended the scope of core interests to the East China Sea and the South China Sea. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced at a briefing on April 2013, "China said in 2011 that its core interests include national sovereignty, national safety, and complete territory, and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands issue touches on its territorial sovereignty."¹²⁰ On July 2016, the commander of the Chinese Navy stressed that sovereign interests in the South China Sea are China's core interest.¹²¹ Hence, China might neutralize the deterrence effect of U.S. intervention in the Taiwan Strait, the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and border disputes with India.

5.2.2. Deterrence trap

On the other hand, as another pillar of the deterrence paradox, the trap of deterrence further provides explanations concerning the

¹¹⁹ See Swaine, "China's Assertive Behavior-Part One," last accessed on April 30, 2023.

¹²⁰ For the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs regular briefing on April 26, 2013, http://me.china-embassy.gov.cn/fyrth/201304/t20130426_2549326.htm, last accessed on May 1, 2023. Regarding the Taiwan issue, it was mentioned that Taiwan issue concerned China's territorial integrity and core interests on several occasions, including President Hu Jintao's visit to the United States in 2011, 陸楊 [Lu Yang], "胡錦濤訪美重申核心利益 [Hujintao reaffirmed China's core interests during his visit to the United States]," *Voice of America*, January 21, 2011, <https://www.voachinese.com/a/article-20110121-hu-visiting-usa-114354189/776623.html>, last accessed on May 1, 2023.

¹²¹ 郭媛丹 [Guo Yuandan], "中國海軍司令員 '南海核心利益'的弦外之音 [A Voice Beyond the Core Interests of China's Navy Commander in the South China Sea]," 『環球時報』 [*Global Times*], July 21, 2016, <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKmJWDFu>, last accessed on May 1, 2023.

Taiwan issue. The trap of deterrence refers to the inevitable choice of the United States to tune its strategic ambiguity toward strategic clarity in terms of Taiwan, while China advances to the Western Pacific. The U.S. intervention might deter China from seeking armed unification. However, given the denial deterrence under the policy of strategic clarity, if China regards the enhancement of security alignment or activities as “the major incidents entailing Taiwan independence,” China would rather use force to deter Taiwan independence and confirm the U.S. commitment to Taiwan.

5.3. Further Research Agenda

Considering the scope of this study’s model is limited to 1949–2012, it is worth noting how the alliance variables have changed with the development of recent U.S.–China strategic competition. The Correlates of War Project provides various versions of Militarized Interstate Dispute Dataset. The narrow–down version of data (1993–2014) will allow us a more nuanced look at the use of force during the post–Cold War period.¹²² As data would be continuously updated, follow–up research could be conducted by applying new data in the future.

¹²² For basic analyses of these data, see Stuart A. Bremer et al., “The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* Vol. 21, No.2 (2004), pp. 133–54, Glenn Palmer et al., “The MID4 dataset, 2002–2010: Procedures, coding rules and description,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* Vol. 32, No.2 (2015), pp. 222–42; Glenn Palmer et al., “The MID5 dataset, 2011–2014: Procedures, coding rules and description,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* Vol. 39, No.4 (2022), pp. 470–482.

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국문 초록

1949년 이후 중국의 무력 사용에 관한 실증 연구 : 패턴과 변수를 중심으로

이겨레

2022년 러시아가 우크라이나를 침공하면서, “우크라이나의 오늘이 동아시아의 내일이 될 수 있다”¹²³는 문제의식 하에 중국의 대만 무력통일 등 무력사용에 관한 다양한 논의가 이루어지고 있다. 특히 중국의 무력사용은 2001년 9·11 테러와 2008년 글로벌 금융위기 이후 “미국의 상대적 쇠퇴와 중국의 상대적 부상”이라는 추이 속에서 미국과 중국 간 세력전이의 맥락에서 주목을 받아왔다.

중국의 무력사용에 관한 기존 연구들은 중국의 위기관리 패턴, 중국의 전략문화, 무력사용 관련 국제규범에 대한 중국의 입장과 같은 사례연구와 규범연구 위주로 이루어졌지만, 체계적인 양적연구는 수적으로도 부족하고 연구의 범위가 냉전 시기에 머물러 있다. 그러나 이러한 양적연구는 베일에 쌓여 있는 중국의 행위패턴을 사실에 입각하여 시현할 수 있을 뿐만 아니라, 미중 간 세력전이를 둘러싼 구조적 차원의 논의에도 기여할 수 있다는 이점이 있다. 따라서 본 연구는 2020년 美 미시간 대학교 The Correlates of War Project에서 새롭게 발표한 세계의 군사적 갈등 데이터(Militarized Interstate Dispute Data)를 바탕으로 중국의 무력사용에 관한 양적연구를 수행하고자 한다.

본 연구의 질문은 “1949년 이후 중국은 어떠한 조건에서 무력을 사용하였는가?”이다. 이에 대한 답을 도출하기 위해 본 논문은 중국의 무력사용에 관한 구조적 관점과 행위자 관점을 근거로 가설을 제시하였다. 가설을 검증하기 위해 上記 MID 데이터에서 1949년부터 2012년까지 발생한 197건 중국의 군사 갈등 사례를 추출하였다. 구체적인 검증 방법으로 군사

¹²³ “Japan PM: East Asia Could Be Next Ukraine.”

갈등 사례에서 중국의 무력사용 여부를 종속변수로 하고, 가설에서 제시한 독립변수와 이항 로지스틱 회귀 분석(Binary Logistic Regression)을 실시하였다. 아울러, 회귀분석에 앞서 197건의 사례에 대한 기술적 통계(Descriptive statistics) 분석을 통해 중국의 시기별, 대상별 무력사용의 추이를 살펴보았다. 마지막으로 통계 분석에서 도출한 추이와 변수를 바탕으로 시기별 사례를 분석하고, 중국의 무력사용 패턴을 설명하고자 한다.

본 연구의 결과에 따르면, 중국은 鄧小平 시기를 제외하고 동아시아에서 차지하는 미국의 국력에 균형을 맞추었다. 특히 毛澤東 시기 중국은 동맹으로부터 포위되었다는 인식에 따라 세력 또는 위협 균형 차원에서 미국의 동맹과 準동맹에게 무력을 사용하는 경향을 보였다. 이와 더불어, 미국의 군사개입에 따른 억지효과가 나타났다. 그러나 이러한 군사적 개입이 오히려 중국이 포위되었다는 인식을 강화 시킬 경우 세력 또는 위협 균형 차원에서 무력을 사용하는 ‘억지의 역설(Paradox of deterrence)’이 나타나기도 하였다. 한편, 1969년 중국과 소련의 국경분쟁과 미중 間 데탕트 이후 중소 間 공산진영 內 갈등과 경쟁이 격화되자 鄧小平 시기에는 소련, 소련의 동맹과 준동맹에 대한 무력사용이 주를 이루었다.

탈냉전 시기 중국의 무력사용 비중은 냉전 시기에 비해 급격히 감소하였으나, 동아시아 국가 중에서는 가장 많은 군사적 갈등 빈도를 보이고 있는 가운데, 무력사용(use of force) 대신 무력 시현(display of force)의 형태로 군사적 갈등을 빚고 있다. 이는 중국의 핵전력 발전에 따라 미중 間 최소 핵 억지(nuclear deterrence)가 작동하면서 적대의 정도(degree of hostility)가 감소한 것으로 해석할 수 있다. 그러나 이러한 무력 시현이 주로 미국과 (準)동맹을 대상으로 한 것을 감안할 때, 여전히 미국과 미국의 (準)동맹에 대하여 세력균형 차원에서 공세성(assertiveness)을 보이고 있다고 할 수 있다. 따라서 향후 미중 間 군사적 충돌은 생각 보다 우발적이고 작은 일에서부터 발생할 수 있다. 탈냉전 시기 미국에 유일하게 무력을 사용한 2001년 미-중 間 군용기 충돌 사건은 양측이 역내에서 무력을 시위하는 과정에서 무력 충돌로 이어진 것을 보여준다.

아울러, 탈냉전 시기 중국의 무력사용은 미국과의 군용기 충돌을 제외하면 영토 분쟁이 있는 국가들을 대상(베트남, 필리핀, 인도 등)으로 했다. 이들은 미국의 동맹이 아니거나 동맹이지만 유사시 군사적 개입을 보장받지 못한 국가들이다. 탈냉전 시기에도 미국의 군사적 개입에 따른 억지효과가 작동한다는 것을 감안할 때, 중국과 영토분쟁에 있는 국가들이 이러한 억지효과를 누리기 위해 미국과의 동맹 또는 안보제휴를 강화할 수 있을 것이다. 이에 따라 중국이 미국의 동맹과 주변국으로부터 포위되었다는 毛澤東 시기의 ‘동맹의 포위’ 인식이 부활될 수 있으며, 1962년 중인 국경분쟁과 같이 ‘억지의 역설’이 나타날 수도 있다. 특히, 중국이 ‘완전한 영토’를 한 축으로 ‘핵심이익(核心利益)’의 외연을 지속 확대하는 가운데, ‘핵심이익’에 대해 무력사용의 가능성을 不 배제한 바, 향후 중국과의 영토분쟁에 있어서 미국 개입의 억지효과는 무력화될 수 있을 것이다.

주제어: 중국의 무력사용, 동아시아에서의 국력 차지 비중, 동맹의 포위, 美 군사개입의 억지효과, 영토분쟁의 심각성

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