

CHINA'S ZHU-DOO DIPLOMACY

By Don Feder

Late last week, Maj. Gen Zhu Chenghu of the People's Liberation Army forecast a nuclear first-strike against the U.S., if America interferes with China's plans to take Taiwan.

Dismissing this as Marxist bravado would be a tragic mistake. China is preparing for a war with us and will not hesitate to use any and all means at its disposal to achieve its strategic objectives.

Zhu, a professor at China's National Defense University, calmly told a group of foreign journalists what would happen if America intervened to save Taiwan, "We will be determined to respond. We Chinese will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all cities east of Xian (*in central China*). Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds...of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese."

Zhu isn't the first PLA diplomat to threaten nuclear war over Taiwan. In 1995, Gen. Xiong Guangkai, now deputy chief of the general staff, told a former Pentagon official that he was sure the U.S. would think twice about supporting Taiwan in a military confrontation, because Americans "cared more about losing Los Angeles" than saving Taipei.

Given that China now has fewer than 60 nuclear-armed ICBMs, is Zhu's threat credible?

As late as 1999, Pentagon analysts dismissed the idea that China would be capable of an amphibious invasion of Taiwan any time soon, because it had few modern troop-transport ships. (The very idea was contemptuously referred to as a "million-man swim" across the Taiwan Straits.)

According to current Pentagon projections, China will have that capability in two years.

The People's Republic is modernizing its armed forces at a dizzying pace. As Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld noted in June, China now has the world's third largest military budget – financed by a turbo-charged economy that's grown at 10% a year for better than a decade, allowing it to amass \$660 billion in foreign currency reserves.

The Pentagon is about to release its latest assessment of the Chinese military buildup, which includes advanced fighter aircraft, new tanks, missiles and satellite tracking systems. The question isn't if, but when China will be in a position to put muscle behind its threats of nuclear annihilation.

This is a regime that's fully prepared to sacrifice millions of its own people to achieve its geo-political objectives – which extend far beyond Taiwan. The same murderous fanaticism that fueled the Cultural Revolution and sent tanks rolling over demonstrators in Tiananmen Square is alive and well in the Chinese Politburo and inner-circles of the People's Liberation Army.

In light of the foregoing, what should America's response be?

- 1) **Face reality.** In response to Zhu's threat, State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack engaged in the usual wishful thinking: "We certainly hope that these are not the views of the Chinese government." (The last Chinese general to express views contrary to the Chinese government is now military attaché to Beijing's embassy in Outer Mongolia.) China's ambassador to the United

States should have been called in for an official dressing down.

- 2) **Don't facilitate Chinese Expansion.** Washington should stop the state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corp. from buying Unocal – the 9th largest oil and natural gas company in the US. Besides its energy reserves (estimated at the equivalent of 1.75 billion barrels of oil), Unocal is the only domestic source of the “rare earth minerals” needed for Cruise missiles and smart bombs. It would be suicidal to allow China to acquire the energy resources which will fuel its military in a conflict that seems inevitable.
- 3) **Support democratic Taiwan.** The island is a line drawn in the ocean. Once China crosses it, it will become virtually unstoppable. Whatever its absurd claims to sovereignty over Taiwan (Beijing has ruled it for two years in the past century), we must not allow 23 million free people to be absorbed by a totalitarian regime – for our sake as much as theirs. For China, Taiwan is a stepping stone to future conquests. With Taiwan, it will control the sea lane through which much of the world's shipping passes. Taiwan's economy will be like a stream of high-octane fuel fed into the Chinese economic engine.
- 4) **Strengthen our growing alliance with democratic India.** Sometime in this century, India's population and economy will surpass China's. In a recent Pew Research Global Attitudes Survey, pro-American sentiments were stronger in India than in other country surveyed. China occupies a broad swath of Indian territory (taken in the 1960s), and is the principal patron of India's arch-enemy Pakistan. It's hard to imagine a more logical ally in a future conflict with the People's Republic.

The 1930s should have taught us the reverse logic of appeasement. Cower before a tyrant to prevent a war – and get the war you're trying to avoid.