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INSS STRATEGIC FORUM No. 261:
"Getting Beyond Taiwan? Chinese Foreign Policy and PLA Modernization"
Authored by Michael A. Glosny

Washington, D.C. – The Institute for National Strategic Studies of the National Defense University is pleased to announce the release of INSS Strategic Forum No. 261 entitled "[Getting Beyond Taiwan? Chinese Foreign Policy and PLA Modernization](#)" written by Michael A. Glosny.

Since the mid-1990s, China's military modernization has focused on deterring Taiwan independence and preparing for a military response if deterrence fails. Given China's assumption of U.S. intervention in a Taiwan conflict, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been developing military capabilities to deter, delay, and disrupt U.S. military support operations. The 2008 election of Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou, however, has contributed to improved cross-strait economic and political cooperation and dramatically reduced the threat of Taiwan independence and war across the Taiwan Strait.

Decreased cross-strait tension and tentative rapprochement have raised the prospect of fundamental changes in China's security challenges. If the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan sustain this positive cooperation over the next 5 to 10 years and continue to deepen rapprochement, how would this affect regional stability, China's diplomatic grand strategy, and China's military modernization?

Mr. Glosny's study argues that:

- Deeper rapprochement across the Taiwan Strait would remove a longstanding source of regional tension and the most likely source of war between the United States and China.
- Cross-strait rapprochement would also lead to new frictions and new worries among regional countries and the United States that a China no longer focused on Taiwan will use its increased power to challenge their interests elsewhere in Asia.
- Stabilizing the cross-strait political situation will free up resources previously devoted to military preparations for Taiwan contingencies and allow the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to undertake new missions and reassess priorities.
- The direction of PLA modernization can help alleviate or further exacerbate the concerns about a rising China that will become more powerful but also less constrained by Taiwan

Mr. Michael A. Glosny is an instructor in the National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School and an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. The views expressed in this study are his alone and do not reflect the official policy or positions of the State Department, the Defense Department, or any branch of the U.S. government.

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