

By Robert S. Dudney, Executive Editor

“Flare-up” in Taiwan Strait?

“Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui ... declared last July that his island’s relations with the mainland should be conducted under the rubric of ‘state-to-state’ rather than ‘one China.’ Lee’s statement has China deeply worried that Taiwan’s return to Beijing rule is less likely than before. Chinese leaders act as if they believe that, at a minimum, a show of force is required if they are to preserve any hope of reunification. Because of this, we see high potential for another military flare-up across the Taiwan Strait this year.”—*CIA Director George J. Tenet, in Feb. 2 threat assessment given to the Senate Intelligence Committee.*

Into the Valley of Death ...

“There is no point in having robust military power if those who wield it are too risk-averse to use it unless swift victory is guaranteed in advance. The Weinberger–Powell Doctrine is an abstract construct for war-avoidance at almost any cost and would have done Neville Chamberlain proud at Munich in 1938.”—*Jeffrey Record, in Jan. 10 Defense Week. Record, a former Senate Armed Services Committee staff member, authored the 1990 article “Into the Wild Blue Yonder: Should We Abolish the Air Force?”*

... And on to the Dover Test

“Needless to say, any operation that we do is not going to be without risk to our troops, and insertion of armed forces always carries with it the potential for casualties. ... We have to ask the question, ‘Is the American public prepared for the sight of our most precious resources coming home in flag-draped caskets into Dover Air Force Base?’ ... Sometimes providing assistance and help is exactly what this nation should do, ... but it is also always prudent, I think, to consider the unintended consequences which may accompany well-intentioned impulses to use our strength for the good of

the international community. We may find out that sorting out the good guys from the bad is not as easy as it seems. We may find that getting in is much easier than getting out.”—*Gen. Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Jan. 19 speech at Harvard University. Dover AFB, Del., is an entry point for bodies of US military forces killed in action overseas.*

Spearhead of St. Louis

“They [Pentagon and Air Force officials] don’t want F-15s, and we do. We will make our demands vigorously.”—*Sue Harvey, aide to Rep. Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.), in Feb. 2 statement on DoD’s refusal to fund more St. Louis-built F-15s.*

No Love Lost ...

“[Americans] ... know instinctively that the UN lives and breathes on the hard-earned money of the American taxpayers, and yet they have heard comments here in New York, constantly calling the United States a ‘deadbeat.’

“They have heard UN officials declaring absurdly that countries like Fiji and Bangladesh are carrying America’s burden in peace-keeping. They see the majority of the UN members routinely voting against America in the General Assembly.

“They have read the reports of the raucous cheering of the UN delegates in Rome, when US efforts to amend the International Criminal Court treaty to protect American soldiers were defeated.

“They read in the newspapers that, despite all the human rights abuses taking place in dictatorships across the globe, a UN ‘Special Rapporteur’ decided his most pressing task was to investigate human rights violations in the US—and found our human rights record wanting.

“The American people hear all this; they resent it, and they have grown increasingly frustrated with what they feel is a lack of gratitude.”—*Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), chairman,*

Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in Jan. 20 address to the UN Security Council in New York.

... Or Point Conceded

“Let me be clear: Only the President and the Executive Branch can speak for the United States. Today, on behalf of the President, let me say that the Administration—and I believe most Americans—see our role in the world, and our relationship to this organization, quite differently than does Senator Helms.

“We believe in leading *with* other nations, whenever that is possible. We strongly support the United Nations Charter and the organization’s purpose; we respect its rules, which we helped write; we want to strengthen it through continued reform; and we recognize its many contributions to our own interest in a more secure, democratic, and humane world.

“The UN also provides a vital forum for the consideration of matters affecting security and peace.”—*Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, in Jan. 24 remarks to UN Security Council session.*

The Whole Speech Went On for 9,000 Words and 90 Minutes

“I ask you to pass a national security budget that keeps our military the best-trained and best-equipped in the world, with heightened readiness and 21st century weapons, which raises salaries for our servicemen and -women.”—*The section of President Clinton’s Jan. 27 State of the Union address devoted specifically to the military budget.*

Curious, but True

“It is curious indeed when a President can review the state of our nation for nearly 90 minutes, propose dozens of new ways for the government to spend billions of dollars, yet fail to utter a single word about the need for an increase in defense spending.”—*William Kristol, editor of The Weekly Standard, in Feb. 7 editorial on the State of the Union address.*