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TRANSCRIPT

The Asia Chessboard Podcast

“Key Square Part II: A Discussion on Taiwan with Jim Moriarty”

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Andrew Schwartz: Welcome to the Asia Chessboard. The podcast that examines geopolitical dynamics in Asia and takes an inside look at the making of grand strategy. I'm Andrew Schwartz at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Hannah Fodale: This week, Mike is joined by ambassador James Moriarty, Chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan, to discuss his perspectives on political and security dynamics in the Taiwan Strait. Ambassador Moriarty considers how US policy towards Taiwan has changed over his professional career and examines Beijing's intentions towards Taiwan. Finally, Mike and Ambassador Moriarty debate what Washington, Taipei, Tokyo, and others need to do to maintain stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Mike Green: Welcome back to the Asia Chessboard after a brief summer hiatus where I had a chance to travel across this great country to Minnesota and I'm happily back now in CSIS in our studio with a good friend and a senior figure in American policy towards the Indo-Pacific Ambassador, Jim Moriarty, Chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan. Thanks Jim and great to see you. Maybe we should start, we're going to talk about US policy towards Taiwan and how Taiwan figures in the geopolitics of the region beyond just US-China relations. But maybe we should start by explaining if you can for us AIT, the American Institute in Taiwan, and what your role is.

Jim Moriarty: The American Institute in Taiwan was set up in 1979 when we switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China. And so at that time Congress in its wisdom say, "Hey, we need a legislative framework in which to continue our relationship with Taiwan." And the answer was to set up the American Institute in Taiwan under a legislative vehicle called the Taiwan Relations Act, which not only established AIT but basically laid out the parameters of US policy on Taiwan pointing out that basically the stability of Taiwan was an important part of stability in the Western Pacific, and threats to that stability would gravely threaten important US interests. So it gave sort of a philosophical overview and then set up this what is a non-governmental organization officially funded by the State Department and other agencies to do the work of close partners. And that's what we are, we're a very close partner with Taiwan. We do more things with that island of 23 million people than just about any other place of 23 million people with the exception of Australia.

Mike Green: So you had a long career in the Foreign Service which we'll get to but you are not a US government official right now?

Jim Moriarty: That's right. I am Chairman of the Board of the American Institute in Taiwan. Very loosely defined, but over time it has come to include not just chairing the board and making sure the finances all flow smoothly, but also having a protocol role of making sure that I am with important Taiwanese if they come to the US. But it's also included because of that much more of a substantive role, including traveling out to Taiwan regularly to meet with the highest officials and also meeting, on a regular basis, with any inter-agency force that wants to do

business with Taiwan. And importantly, trying to make sure that there is a consensus within the US government on important Taiwan-related issues.

Mike Green: And so, the mandate for AIT and for the board is not to necessarily, I gather, make policy, although some in our past have tried, but it is a really indispensable part of the engagement and so policy comes up, but it's not the State Department. Is that the right way to think about it?

Jim Moriarty: That's a good way to look at it, or almost what you and I and some iterations of the National Security Council are trying to do which is trying to make sure the ducks are in a row and that Taiwan is not receiving conflicting information on very important issues. That has only become more important as time has gone by.

Mike Green: So your predecessor was Ray Burkhart who career foreign service officer, China Hand, ambassador in Vietnam, worked in the NSC I guess back in Reagan, and people listening may know Jim and I worked together in the NSC. He had China, I had Japan, Korea, Australia. Then he became my boss briefly, and then I replaced him. So we are, not in any coup d'etat sense, but Jim went on to be ambassador in Nepal to be clear. But let's get back to you. I actually don't know this story. You're from Massachusetts I know, but how'd you end up in the foreign service and doing China?

Jim Moriarty: Well, I took fall term my senior year off when I-

Mike Green: Of college?

Jim Moriarty: Of college. And I was unloading postal trucks in northern-central Vermont, and I had no idea what I wanted to do. I rode my bicycle up to the college Dartmouth, and I saw an advertisement for the foreign service, which made it clear that you would get free housing overseas and they teach you languages and the test was free. So I said, "That makes sense." And then whenever it was given, I guess about two months later, I unloaded trucks all night, rode on my bike up to Dartmouth, which was in the midst of the second oil crisis. So the heat was off in the rooms where we took the exam for four hours, and I can just remember getting colder and colder and wanting to eat and sleep. So it was not a long planned thing-

Mike Green: And you weren't studying Mandarin or Asia or anything at the time?

Jim Moriarty: I had actually studied a reasonable amount of south Asia, but no, my focus at that point as a history major was on Western Europe and I did an undergraduate thesis on the French revolution.

Mike Green: So you learned Chinese from the State Department, from the Foreign Service Institute?

Jim Moriarty: Completely. I did the initial course for people who don't have Chinese is two years long when year here in Arlington. And then one year in Thái Bình, when I took the second year, I went off to Beijing at the worst of all possible times, immediately post-Tiananmen. But afterwards I went back for a third year of Chinese and a posting in Thái Bình.

Mike Green: So this is a bit of a detour, but I'm curious when you were at Dartmouth, were you aware of John Ledyard at all? So John Ledyard, Dartmouth student, drops out, joins the Royal Marines, goes to all over the Pacific with Captain Cook's expedition and is the guy who comes back and talks about America's future in the Pacific with Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers. So huge figure, but I'm curious if Dartmouth students actually know who he is. I understand there's a little plaque where he cut down the tree to paddle to Boston or whatever. Were you aware of him at all?

Jim Moriarty: There is a Ledyard boathouse on the Connecticut river and I rowed crew. So I am familiar with the name Ledyard. I had no idea where it came from, and I'm wondering whether it's because somebody sailed all the way down the Connecticut into the Pacific and a crossover over to Asia. Gosh, that's an interesting story, and the name Ledyard is well-known on campus.

Mike Green: When I went to college spring break was a couple hours to another college to drink, but I guess Dartmouth kids do stuff like join the Royal Marines and travel around the Pacific, or in your case joined the Foreign Service. So you were political minister in Beijing. I think that's when we first met, then the NSC and ambassador in Nepal, that was your last diplomatic post, or...?

Jim Moriarty: No, I was also after that ambassador in Bangladesh.

Mike Green: Of course, Bangladesh, like Harry Thomas. And you're still involved in Bangladesh work to some extent, right?

Jim Moriarty: No, for five years I was working on a project to improve factory safety after the big factory collapse, and that was a very successful project, but it came to a close and I haven't been working directly on Bangladesh.

Mike Green: So most of your crew is on China and US-China relations, the bulk of it. The last two ambassadorial posts were in south Asia, and your key role in NSC was on China policy and the debate about Taiwan and China has changed a lot. You've been caught in the crossfire more than once. Where are we on the debate about Taiwan and cross-strait issues and in Washington and the US compared to where we were in earlier points in your career? And do you feel vindicated?

Jim Moriarty: Well actually, like we were earlier talking about my time at the NSC, which was 2001 to 2004 and if you will recall, I'm sure you do recall very clearly at that time, Chen Shui-bian was president in Taiwan and there was legitimate concern here in Washington. And I think I will describe a consensus here that he was

pushing things too hard, that he was being provocative. So I did go out a couple of times, and this is in books by now so I can actually mention it, but I did go out a couple of times with President Bush's handwritten letters just asking Chen Shui-bian to pull back. And unfortunately, I'm not that good a diplomat, apparently because Chen did not appear to hear what I said, and the President had to speak publicly calling for a restraint on both sides, but it was obviously aimed at Taiwan at that point.

Jim Moriarty: In contrast, my real substantive tour in Taiwan had been in the period '95 to '98. And you will recall that that was when the Taiwanese held their first direct presidential election. Free, fair, honest, fully-participated. And meanwhile, the Chinese were very unhappy with that and started launching guided missiles around the ports in the north and the south. And at that point, the US surged aircraft carriers into the region and things damped down. And so you've seen these ups and downs, and unfortunately since the Chen Shui-bian government, initially the Chinese were very happy with President Ma's administration. He was very careful not to antagonize and indeed sought much closer economic ties with the mainland. So they were satisfied with the way things were going at that time. But China meanwhile was changing.

Jim Moriarty: China was changing from Mao Zedong's "We can wait a hundred years for unification to happen with Taiwan" to a country that was becoming much more assertive, much more confident in its powers. And now you have President Xi Jinping who seems unwilling to repeat patience with respect to Taiwan, and instead uses a formulation that he needs to see progress on unification during his term as leader.

Mike Green: So there's much more pressure... The hardest thing when you're doing diplomacy and I, from the NSC experienced this in the Six-Party Talks, the hardest thing is when the home team is divided and conflicting signals are being sent to your allies and partners and to the people you're negotiating with. And I think, and you'll agree I'm sure, we were not speaking with one voice when you were going to Taipei. You got a letter from the President but there were other parts of the US government saying "Yeah, ignore that, we love Taiwan." And Taiwan is also divided. Not just between the green camp and the blue camp, but within Chen Shui-bian's administration. There were people like Choi Ran Tsai I think at the time, Tsai Ing-wen very pragmatic. There were others who were pushing hard, mostly for domestic political reasons on independence. So when I succeeded you and I did that diplomacy, I had a much harder time because people on both sides realized these divisions were killing us.

Mike Green: And my sense was it took President Bush publicly, basically chastising Chen Shui-bian in December 2003, which was weeks before I took over. So I didn't get blamed for it, but it kind of had to be done. It had to be done. It was painful, but it both sides got a lesson from that. I think both sides today. The Xi administration and the Biden administration know very, very well. I think there's more unity on this dialogue between Taipei and Washington, and both capitals than there has probably ever been.

Jim Moriarty: Yeah. And I would say that well, in contrast, of course I did get blamed for...

Mike Green: Thanks for that, by the way.

Jim Moriarty: And I did get held up in my first ambassadorial assignment because of that but anyhow. That too passed. You're right. I mean, I think that that's one of the major things that we have to do is make sure that we send a consistent message. And like I said, I've been doing a very intense schedule going around to not just security, but economic types in State, USTR and agriculture, just to make sure that we do have enough consensus. So you can look the Taiwanese in the eye and say, "Here's where we're going." And hopefully tell the Chinese that "Look, this is where we're going with respect to the cross-strait relationship."

Mike Green: What year did you join the Foreign Service? Just to date you a little bit.

Jim Moriarty: 1975, right out of college.

Mike Green: So since '75, would you say this is the most consensus we've had on Taiwan in the US? It seems that way to me, but I don't have as long a history.

Jim Moriarty: Wow. That's an interesting question. Probably. Except maybe during the first part of the Mao years.

Mike Green: Because nothing was happening?

Jim Moriarty: Nothing was happening. Taiwan wasn't an issue. Nobody was pushing anything too hard. Mao was assuring us that everything was under control. The Chinese were doing nothing particularly aggressive. And I think there actually was some interest in the intensity of economic outreach between the two sides. In retrospect, I think there's a lot of people who were saying, "Oh, yeah, maybe we should not have been..." I don't want to say enthusiastic sort of saying, "Well, this might not be a bad thing."

Mike Green: Yeah. I think that's going consensus in both capitals. The divisions within Taipei and within Washington are inconvenient for diplomats, but in my view, really dangerous for security because it tempts Beijing to think it can drive wedges, that coercion will work. So I'm on a segue to how dangerous things are. In one sense they're less dangerous because there's more unity in the US and I think in Taiwan, and that helps. That internal unity as a matter of deterrence and dissuasion, it matters. But on the other hand, the pressure from Beijing is unprecedented. And there's a big debate about how dangerous the situation is. How much of a chance of war, how would you assess that yourself?

Jim Moriarty: Well, speaking as somebody who works for an NGO, I would say that one of the biggest dangers people don't talk about too much is it basically has shifted the system in China. I mentioned the fact that they've gotten much more confident in a lot of ways, much more assertive. But really you now have one man making

all the key decisions. I mean, you can look at their charts of government and party working groups and everything that is important comes almost directly under Xi Jinping. And that introduces a level of uncertainty that didn't exist when you had a genuine collective leadership where different voices could get heard. I was in Beijing when Chen Chi-chung was around, he actually understood the outside world very well and had a powerful voice within the leadership. I don't think anybody right now is in a position to say, "Well, we think the policy we're following is mistaken" once the policy has been decided.

Mike Green: Do you think the policy, I mean, obviously there is far greater pressure on Taiwan from interference in the election and social media to bomber flights and fighters crossing the line in the Strait, they didn't use to cross and all of that. But do you think the policy has changed in Beijing? There's a bit of debate about that among the experts. The Taiwan White Paper of Jang Ji Min put a sort of implicit deadline after the anti-succession law in 2005, which was bad, but the sort of good part about it was Hu Jintao sort of relaxed the sense of a deadline, but it sure looks like to a lot of people, Xi Jinping's rhetoric is putting a deadline back on. The sort of an urgency to unification and not just opposing independence, but an actual urgency to forcing unification. Where do you come out on that debate?

Jim Moriarty: Well, I would put it in terms of Xi Jinping has made clear the urgency of progress. And right now, I don't think anybody in Beijing believes that genuinely peaceful tactics, like the 32 steps that they tried in terms of attracting Taiwanese investors, students, young entrepreneurs, nobody thinks that's going to work. And now they have shifted to something called peaceful development unification of the motherland. I think that's [inaudible 00:16:50]. And anyhow, if you look at the actions, what that means is basically as we call them gray zone tactics in coercion, it's not about winning hearts and minds. It's about putting enough pressure on the Taiwanese that they will agree to unify because they don't see any other road. And as some of the comments you made earlier made clear, I also believe that there's no hope that that will work. Basically, Hong Kong blew any hope of that out of the water, the people of Taiwan really don't want to become another Hong Kong.

Jim Moriarty: So in the future, when elections are fought, any winning candidate is going to have to be down the middle of saying de-jury independence is too dangerous and unification that's the unthinkable future. So any candidate that gets elected is going to be elected on that platform. And the question is after Tsai, who, by the way, I think the Tai analysts of Taiwan on the mainland and genuinely understand that she's not going to do anything dangerous or crazy with respect to the independence issue. But after her, whoever comes in is going to come in with that baggage of being very careful during the election and the Chinese are going to have to decide, okay, what did we do now? And the peaceful unification hasn't worked, coercion tactics, haven't worked, what's left? And what we, the United States and Taiwan have to do is make it so that when that question comes up, the answer isn't kinetic force against Taiwan.

Jim Moriarty: The answer is, "Hmm. We got to find a way to stop digging ourselves a grave and figure out how to downplay this issue and go back to Mao's wisdom and say we've got to kick this can down the road." That's what US policy has to be all about. And frankly, I think there is a pretty broad consensus on that.

Mike Green: Do you worry that the Hong Kong example, while it killed any attraction for people on Taiwan for a one country, two systems model, that it might have emboldened people in Beijing that coercion works? Obviously Hong Kong-Taiwan are very different. Beijing has purchase and leverage over Hong Kong, it doesn't on Taiwan. But nevertheless, you worry... I worry. I'll tell you a little bit that Beijing concluded, "Hey, that worked out pretty well, actually."

Jim Moriarty: Yeah, but I would say that that's... Well, okay. But they obviously didn't have to use kinetic force because of what Hong Kong was, because does it embolden them? Make it clear that assertiveness does not lead to overwhelming consequences, which people have been arguing. I think that that the question is still open, but yeah, I do believe it increased the tendency towards assertiveness and how that gets spelled out is yeah, pretty sure we'll see gray zone tactics continuing. If the DPP wins the next election, they will only accelerate. If the KMT wins, maybe there'll be a six or eight month honeymoon period. But then, there's a law in Taiwan that says political talks with the mainland can only be started after three quarters of their legislature approves them. And if they lead to results, they have to have the legislature with a three quarters majority agreed to send them to a national referendum. And that's never going to happen. And I worry that smart analysts of Taiwan, on the mainland, totally understand that. And so the question is, does that push them towards pointing this out and arguing for a pull back?

Jim Moriarty: Don't let's go down this crazy road. In a one man system, that's hard to do. The one man has left the question open for now, but it's courageous to say, we've got to be gentler with Taiwan and Tsai is a reasonable human being that we can talk with.

Mike Green: Or if you're in Zhongnanhai, it's courageous to say, let's be gentle with the US or Japan or Europe or Australia or anyone right now.

Jim Moriarty: Exactly. And particularly if policy has been clearly decided and Xi Jinping has tried to leave it open on Taiwan to some degree. No definite deadline, as far as the outside world knows or Taiwan knows, but clearly there has to be progress moving towards unification.

Mike Green: So what does Taipei have to do to bend the trajectory towards what you describe as a better future, where Beijing is backing off and is trying to use attraction rather than coercion, what does Taipei have to do? It seems to me, Tsai has done one very important thing, which is move away from the unpredictability and the flirtation with independence of Chen Shui-bian. She was there as the MAC, head of Mainland Affairs. She saw it. You and I spent many, many hours with her explaining why that was not a good approach. I

think she gets it. She's very steady. That's one big step forward. But what else do you think Taipei has to do for its part to dissuade Beijing and bend this history?

Jim Moriarty: Well, I think, unfortunately, I fear that we're at a stage where deterrence is probably the most important thing that Taiwan can do. Anybody who knows the cross-strait issue always says, "Talk, if you can." Unfortunately, the mainland keeps on putting in preconditions in typical Chinese fashion where the precondition becomes the goal. It's actually the goal of the talks. They get the outcome as a precondition and then whatever you get during the talks themselves are just gravy.

Mike Green: And specifically, you're talking about the so-called 1992 consensus?

Jim Moriarty: Yes.

Mike Green: They were demanding that Tsai accept Beijing's interpretation of what the two sides discussed in Singapore in 1992, right?

Jim Moriarty: Exactly.

Mike Green: Which she'll never do?

Jim Moriarty: Which she'll never do. And I can't imagine how you get to talks under the current law with that as a precondition. Again, it's a nation of laws. I got a law saying if you want political talks with Beijing, come to the legislature first. And I can't picture three quarters of these legislators, fearing for their political lives, being part of a process that starts talks on unification with mainland China. That's instant death, politically.

Mike Green: So it's mostly about deterrence for the foreseeable future?

Jim Moriarty: Mostly about deterrence. And we do have vigorous discussions with the Taiwanese. We think that the most important capabilities for the Taiwanese to develop are asymmetric capabilities. I think it was a deputy assistant secretary Helve who put it in terms of large numbers of small, survivable, and relatively inexpensive things. What does this mean? Well, one thing that's not totally cheap, but actually wouldn't make a big difference and they are moving down this road is what they call coastal defense cruise missiles. Mobile missiles, loaded on a truck that can strike with a high degree of accuracy anything crossing the Taiwan Strait. They're moving on that. There was a question about sea mines, for example, unmanned underwater vehicles, basically a whole bunch of things. We notice that the legislature killed plans for micro attack missile boats that would be guided by AI. That's unfortunate because that's pretty close to this sort of definition.

Jim Moriarty: You look at the second pillar that has to be developed according to, and here, there seems to be consensus every place I go, is what is called defense in depth. Basically, showing to a potential invader that it's not going to be easy. Even if you get boots on the ground, even if you get a beachhead, that's just the beginning. That using the unity of the populous, irregular warfare skills, you can bog down an enemy and make it as difficult as heck to even get off that beachhead or advance from that airfield. And I tell you if the decision-maker is told, no matter what country we're talking about, that the invasion of Taiwan would lead to something that would look much worse than what the Americans encountered in Iraq or Afghanistan. I think any reasonable would-be invader would say, "Yeah, okay. When do I get control over this place?" "Well, sir, maybe three months, maybe six months." And that long pause, I hope will convince whoever is planning this to say this isn't worth it.

Mike Green: So the Mao's forces beat the KMT last time-

Jim Moriarty: Using those tactics.

Mike Green: By dividing them, picking off and bribing commanders, breaking their will to fight. So this is critical. In some ways the cause that's in core of this whole conflict will be will the people on Taiwan have the will to resist and fight? My sense is more than before, but what do you think?

Jim Moriarty: To be honest, this is something we talked to the Taiwanese about in the sense that to build that people have to think they have a stake. And that's another argument for defense in depth, which isn't just kinetic. It's not just your regular warfare. It's making sure that people are trained in, frankly, field medicine. But they can play the role in also keeping the community together, understanding what's going to happen. That's how you get buy-in is you develop the sense of urgency, but you also develop that sense of community. My father was in the Massachusetts national guard for, gosh, I guess about 40 years after World War II. My brother was in the national guard for 12 years after his term as a serving officer.

Jim Moriarty: And you develop a sense of camaraderie by getting at the local level and getting the local level bought into the friendship, the fence of the nation, but also the defense of their own locality. Looking at what the Baltic's do or the Swedes are doing now, it's important to get everybody bought in. I think part of it is, to be honest, there hasn't been enough of a sense of urgency on this issue among the civilian populace in Taiwan.

Mike Green: What does the US have to do to step up our deterrence?

Jim Moriarty: Well, I will-

Mike Green: Is deterrence also the core of what the US has to do for the foreseeable future?

Jim Moriarty: Absolutely.

Mike Green: So what will that have to involve?

Jim Moriarty: That's a multi-track effort and you're seeing it going on already. So when you get Admiral Aquilino to come in here, I'm sure he will talk to you about, how do we shrink the Pacific? That's going to be real hard, but how do we make it so that our forces are not going to spend too much time crossing the Pacific, that the things have gotten out of hand. And they're talking about a whole bunch of things using preposition stocks, whatever, but basically it's important that we can get out here. And it's important that we genuinely devote the resources needed to that question going forward. There is a shift, I would say from my perspective that by far the biggest threat to the United States of America, long term is the PRC going down its current path. So how do we address that? How do we try to bend it? One part is, militarily, we've got to show that we're there, we're ready and we will do what we decide to do. But we will have the capability to respond effectively.

Jim Moriarty: And you've got to take that into account. Another thing, talking about capabilities, that's hugely important is the allies and partners and friends. You know a lot about a place that I'm trying to become fairly familiar with. But I think I'm seeing a shift in places like Japan, like Europe that are beginning to wreck on Korea. Talking about peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait three years ago, that would have been unthinkable.

Mike Green: If you're in Beijing tracking this, there are a lot of indicators that US allies and partners are taking this more seriously. Moon Jae-in mentioned Taiwan first time in a generation at least that a Korean president did that. The Japan debate's moving quickly, 74% of Japanese say Japan should play a role in polls. And Deputy Prime Minister also said, of course we would help defend Taiwan, help the Americans defend Taiwan. It's vital I think he said for Japan. Then he had to walk it back and he walked it back by saying, of course diplomacy is better. That's not much of a walk back. And even Europe, you're seeing a bit more attention to it. And that's got to be noticed in Beijing. Don't you think?

Jim Moriarty: Yes I do. But what I worry about is that the instinct is not to recalibrate policy in Beijing. It seems to be to double down on policy.

Mike Green: So that leads to the big question that people are debating since Richard Haas proposed it, which is, do we need to get rid of so-called strategic ambiguity? Do we need to extend an ironclad security commitment to Taiwan like we have with Japan, Korea, or Australia in our formal security treaties? I think I know what you're going to say, but what's your take?

Jim Moriarty: That gets into what I call the threading the needle question. How do you build as effectively deterrent as possible without forcing people in Beijing to say that, "Oh, we've got to move quicker. We've got to move now. Things are actually

going to get harder for us in the future than they are right now." And I worry that dumping strategic ambiguity would do that in the sense that even if we declare that, maybe you'll get the Chinese, trying to convince themselves that, "Well, it's not serious. The US doesn't keep all its commitments." But more likely you could build a pressure for something preemptive. And I will mention, you talked about earlier, the anti-succession law of 2005, in the beginning, there was clearly an attempt to say, "Well, that includes anything involving," and they will still say this, "Anything involving the basin of foreign troops, anything that looks like a foreign alliance."

Mike Green: Is a cause for attack by the PRC under their law. Yeah.

Jim Moriarty: Yeah. Under their law. And the ultimate leader would be facing that pressure. Frankly, I don't think he's facing pressure that much on Taiwan. People are trying to guess what he's thinking. And so now I'm going beyond my...

Mike Green: No, but I mean, the other aspect of this strategic ambiguity debate is we are making unprecedented progress with Japan and no ally is more important in complicating Chinese planning or allowing us to execute our plans. None. And we're making huge progress. I don't see Tokyo signing on to a strategic clarity policy. If we were to have a strategic clarity declaratory policy on Taiwan, we would stop the momentum we're making with Japan and in different ways, non-kinetic ways, if you will, non-military ways with Europe and others. So it would cost us. And it seems to me there are ways to show it. We used to call it, when I was in the Pentagon strategic ambiguity and tactical clarity that we have the ability, but I think there are ways to have a kind of what I would call defacto strategic clarity and showing will without saying it. And if you say it, you complicate, you risk as you point out preemption from China, but you also make it harder for us to work with allies, which was your second pillar for how we strengthen deterrence.

Jim Moriarty: Very good point. I do think we have to be careful threading that needle, but we have to do it in such a way that our intent is possible. I mean, I love the Taiwan Relations Act. It gives me a job. But basically it also makes it clear that under US law, this is hugely important. And I think China has, for years, tried to convince itself that, "Well, the Americans would never shed blood over Taiwan. Taiwan is much more important to us than to them." That argument is getting tougher and tougher to make, frankly. The more we do that doesn't recognize Taiwan as a diplomatic relation. But the more we can do that builds that relationship, the more skin we have in the game in various ways that don't force Zhongnanhai to say, we've got to attack now because things are going to get tougher. And frankly, that's a fairly high bar. There's a lot of things we can do.

Jim Moriarty: Talking about the Japanese, you're right. I mean, they would love, I think, to begin planning on what we and they should be thinking about doing, if Beijing does something horrible. And under the current framework, the Chinese are going to begin thinking, "Yeah, that's happening." And that's fine. But if they begin to think, "Well, the Japanese are going to be stationing frigates in Jiwong

because it's right next to Okinawa, then we might have a real problem. That's avoidable. And on something that doesn't really add much to either the capability or the deterrence from the capability.

Mike Green: In your role, you may have a better visibility than anyone on where the zeitgeist is on this by which, I mean, whether all this is worth it. The risk of the United States. We did a survey at CSIS of elites on how much risk we should take. It's on our website, but Australia was... People are willing to take a lot of risk to defend Australia, a lot for Japan and Korea, but not far behind was Taiwan. So there are a lot of indicators, including congressional legislation, which is very bipartisan abroad that people get it. But in your engagement with Congress, with civil society groups and academics and business and stuff, are there pockets? You sometimes hear the endless war crowd saying, "Why do we want to defend Taiwan?" The Quincy Institute, but it's a sort of a small minority giving that view. But do you encounter pockets of that still?

Jim Moriarty: Not too much, not in the people I speak with regularly. I mean, occasionally I have dinner with somebody who kind of raises that question and it's clear that it's out there. There is a question of why would we be willing to shed blood, risk World War III over an island that's 8,000 miles away? And China seems to think it's theirs and we've never said it's not theirs. And so why under those conditions... Except for the most, the truest believers that any use of US force is unacceptable, post-Afghanistan, post-Iraq, post-Vietnam, post-World War II, post-World War I. Except for those genuine believers I find most of them, if they're willing to listen, will begin to hear. And I think a lot of people, when I hear things like that, they don't know much about China. They don't know much about the way China has evolved. They don't know much about the threat that China is presenting to things just like technology. I know now a lot of people have heard about cyber attacks who probably two weeks ago had never even thought about it to any degree.

Jim Moriarty: And following on the nasty cyber attacks, people are sticking up and say, "The government of China does that?" So I, I think part of it is just people not having realized that things have changed quite a bit and that there has to be as effective a response as possible or the US and its democratic friends and partners are going to be in a very rough place within a decade.

Mike Green: So Jim, thanks for your service. And thanks for joining us in a really illuminating picture of where we are in cross-strait issues and US strategy towards the Taiwan and China. I think a lot of people will find this interesting and learn a lot from it. So, thank you.

Jim Moriarty: Well, thank you, Mike. And I'm going to have to admit that I had my views on American interests in far east Asia, definitely shaped by your book. I mean, I inherently... For those uninformed, it's Not By Providence Alone. I'm sure Mike will give you a free copy if you use my name and send him an email, but the necessity for US-Asia policy, to make sure that you could get through places like Taiwan, that that first island chain was a gate in to the Asian continent that we

could actually move through there when we needed to, where we needed to, and sort of putting that together and sort of realizing that if there was ever a Taiwan under the control of the people's liberation army, the US position in the Western Pacific will be totally at risk. I like explaining that to people and the ones who are strategic thinkers began to scratch their head and say, "Oh."

Mike Green: Geography still matters.

Jim Moriarty: Geography still matters. Thanks for having me on the show and I really enjoyed doing it.

Mike Green: Excellent. Thanks, Jim.

Andrew Schwartz: Thanks for listening. For more on strategy and the Asia programs work, visit the CSIS website at csis.org and click on the Asia program page.