

Cross-Strait Relations as a Problem of Chinese Militarism

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This paper will take a new approach to understanding the dynamics of cross-Strait relations by looking at the subject as a problem defined by Chinese militarism. Contemporary Chinese militarism has its origins in the crisis of the Qing Dynasty and early Republic, when the military as an institution and military values were seen as tools for nation-building. This has remained the case in the PRC down to the present, where political power grows out of the barrel of a gun and the population is disciplined and mobilised through the inculcation of militaristic values. These tendencies have been increasing in recent years. In Taiwan, Chinese militarism was brought to the island by the KMT regime which used it to legitimise authoritarian rule and control the population until the end of martial law. One of the most remarkable aspects of Taiwan's democratisation has been the successful demilitarisation of society and the removal of the military from politics. Taiwan thus offers both lessons for de-militarisation that could be adopted in the PRC, but also a challenge to Chinese militarism. This paper will explore how these two social models will interact as the CCP regime turns increasingly towards militaristic legitimation and Taiwan continues to develop a liberal democratic society.