



Last Thing Needed

May 18, 2026

“I think the last thing we need right now is a war that’s 9,500 miles away.”

Just place a period after the word “war” in President Trump’s [comments](#) to reporters, after last week’s summit with Chinese ruler Xi Jinping and discussion about China’s democratic neighbor, Taiwan, the Republic of China.

Which raises the question: How best to avoid war over Taiwan?

U.S. military policy requires being capable in this very theater. The Taiwan Strait (7,900 miles from Washington, not 9,500) is closer to the U.S. than is the Philippines, with whom we have a military defense treaty, and not much farther than Japan and South Korea, also treaty-entitled to our defense. One Japanese island sits less than 70 miles from Taiwan.

Communist China, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), claims Taiwan as a province, demanding “reunification” — by force as soon as they can get away with it. Yet, the PRC has never governed one inch of [Taiwan](#).

As Ambassador Alexander Yui, Taiwan’s representative to the U.S., [explained](#) on *Face the Nation* yesterday: “We’re not the ones creating all this trouble.”

The People’s Liberation Navy — now the world’s largest — has sunk Vietnamese boats and regularly harasses Filipino ships. Though Xi had [promised](#) President Obama that China would not militarize islands in the South China Sea, the PRC now [boasts](#) 10,000 Chinese soldiers on 27 illegal military outposts.

In the wake of the summit, where Xi sought to talk Trump out of completing a \$14 billion dollar [arms](#) sale to Taiwan, our president must determine if placating the Chinese will make them behave peacefully.

Or will strength, specifically military strength, better serve the cause of peace?

Taiwan’s *and* ours.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.