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If China attacks Taiwan, &c.

Якщо Китай нападе на Тайвань тощо.

Автор у своїй статті говорить про Китай та Тайвань, відношення США до цієї проблеми. Якщо Тайвань буде атакований, чи прийде США на допомогу нації чи ні? І якщо ми хочемо - що означає «прийти на допомогу нації»? Автор говорить про те, що всі на планеті повинні хотіти миру, де можуть існувати Тайвань та Україна - вільні, демократичні країни в тіні великих, невірних країн, які хочуть їх з'їсти, щоб задовольнити свої потреби. націоналістичні та егоїстичні апетити. Світ, де тайванці та українці не можуть вижити, справді був би дуже темним світом.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/10/if-china-attacks-taiwan/>

Charles Ives wrote a piece called “The Unanswered Question.” For years, the United States has had an unanswered question concerning Taiwan: Will we or won't we? If Taiwan is attacked, will we come to the nation's aid or not? And if we will — what does “coming to the nation's aid” mean?

This question is getting less and less hypothetical. Xi Jinping's China is obviously hungry for Taiwan. A lot of us are good at saying how we ought to *deter* China — but when it comes to what we should actually *do*, if or when China moves on Taiwan, we get a lot quieter. What would the American public accept? What *should* the public accept? What would make the most sense? What would be the least wrong? Early in his presidency, George W. Bush said that we would come to Taiwan's defense, if the nation were attacked. This was an abrupt departure from our longstanding policy of “strategic ambiguity.” I asked a national-security official, “Did the president mean to depart from our policy or did he simply make a mistake?” The official gave me a look and, quoting an old advertising slogan, said, “Only his hairdresser knows for sure.” My understanding is: GWB meant to say, “We will help Taiwan defend itself.” Which sounds good. But: Could Taiwan possibly defend itself against the behemoth bent on swallowing it? Astute China-watchers say the following: Xi Jinping sees the seizure of Taiwan as his “legacy project.” He wants to make China “whole.” He has brought Hong Kong to heel; the next item on the agenda is Taiwan. Nationalism is roaring in China, even more than usual. The seizure of Taiwan would be popular among the Chinese — even more than Putin's seizure of Crimea among the Russians. The question of “strategic ambiguity” makes me think about NATO. That alliance is not supposed to include such ambiguity. Article 5 is clear: An attack on one is an attack on all. This is the point of a collective-security arrangement. A lack of ambiguity is key to deterrence: “If you attack one of us, you have attacked all of us. Are you ready for that?” Article 5 has been invoked only once: when the United States was attacked by al-Qaeda — hosted by the Taliban — on September 11. Our NATO allies went to war with us in Afghanistan. In 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threw Article 5 into ambiguity. Martha MacCullum of Fox News asked him, “If Montenegro is attacked, should young men and women from the United States fight to defend Montenegro?” By the way, journalists always ask about small countries such as Montenegro. They never ask about other members of the alliance: France, say, or Britain, or Italy, or Germany. Just small countries such as Montenegro and Estonia. Pompeo dodged the question. MacCallum asked again. Pompeo said, “I'm not going to

get into hypotheticals.” But NATO is not supposed to *be* hypothetical. Is it? My guess is, the United States and other countries would not lift a finger if China grabbed Taiwan. We would grumble for a few days and then clink glasses with China, someday, somehow. Let me end this section of Impromptus on a general point: We should all want a world where a Taiwan and a Ukraine can exist — free, democratic countries in the shadow of big, unfree countries that want to eat them, in order to satisfy their nationalist and egotistical appetites. A world where Taiwans and Ukraines cannot survive would be a very dark world indeed. • The Nobel Peace Prize is truly noble this year. (People have played with those words since the beginning: “Nobel” and “noble” — and “ignoble.”) The committee gave the prize to two individuals, but also to a concept, or principle: press freedom, which is under attack from various sides. I will quote from the committee’s [press release](#): The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2021 to Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov for their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace. Ms Ressa and Mr Muratov are receiving the Peace Prize for their courageous fight for freedom of expression in the Philippines and Russia. At the same time, they are representatives of all journalists who stand up for this ideal in a world in which democracy and freedom of the press face increasingly adverse conditions.

Very well said, and very well chosen — the 2021 prize.

Maria Ressa, I have written about several times. I don’t believe I have written about Dmitry Muratov, specifically — but I have certainly written about his group: the journalists around *Novaya Gazeta*, of which he is editor-in-chief. Six of the paper’s journalists have been murdered. The most prominent of them is Anna Politkovskaya, murdered on Putin’s birthday. Let me quote from a [piece](#) I wrote last year, about Oyub Titiev, the Chechen human-rights defender: It has long been very, very dangerous to investigate human-rights abuses in Chechnya, and to defend innocents there. Anna Politkovskaya, the journalist, did so. She was murdered in 2006. Stanislav Markelov, a lawyer, did so. He was murdered in 2009. Zarema Sadulayeva was murdered later that same year. She had founded a children’s-rights organization. She was murdered along with her husband, Alek Dzhabrailov. Natalia Estemirova, a journalist, worked for Memorial. In 2007, she won a prize named after Politkovskaya. Two years later, she herself was murdered — abducted from her home, shot up, and left in the woods. Yes, that is par for the course. A word about Maria Ressa? I will quote from an [article](#) of mine, written in June 2020: She is a journalist in the Philippines, and an exceptionally brave woman. You have to be brave to practice journalism — real journalism — there. Ressa co-founded a news site called “Rappler.” She, and it, have been a thorn in the side of the Filipino strongman, Duterte. Duterte accuses her of “fake news.” Strongmen and dictators all over the world have adopted this phrase, to hurl at journalists: “fake news.” Putin, for example, wields it. Of course, he is one of the world’s leading practitioners of “fake news.”

Ressa, I said,

was arrested in February 2019 on the charge of “cyber-libel,” and has now been convicted. A sentence has yet to be handed down. The more noise made in Ressa’s behalf, the better. Yes — and the Nobel Peace Prize is a helluva lot of noise. Have a little more: In 2017, President Trump sat next to Duterte, and reporters tried to ask Duterte about human rights. Duterte shut them down, calling them “spies.” Trump laughed. Earlier in the year, Trump had

sat next to Putin. When reporters tried to ask questions, Putin pointed at them and said to Trump, “Are these the ones who insulted you?” The two then laughed together.

About these matters, I [wrote](#) the following, in November 2017:

Obviously, democratic leaders have to engage in diplomacy, holding their noses, doing the necessary. If Mao asks you to play ping-pong with him, maybe you do. But democratic leaders, especially the American president, stand for something abroad. Putin is not just anti-press freedom. He is a killer of journalists. Duterte is not just anti-press freedom. He is a killer of journalists. Recall his famous sentence: “Just because you’re a journalist, you are not exempted from assassination, if you’re a son of a bitch.” To dictators, a “son of a bitch” is anyone who might inconvenience them. I think we who spend so much of our day media-bashing have an obligation to remember: Press freedom is a key part of overall freedom. It is key to democracy. It is what we on the right, among others, take advantage of every day. When the president of the United States is sitting next to the killers of journalists, he should not laugh along with them when it comes to the press. If he cannot defend a free press — the right of people to question and report on their leaders — he should at least refrain from laughing. I do think that, yes. I formed my views during the Reagan years, and nothing can shake them, for better or worse. (If you’re interested in my history of the Nobel Peace Prize — *Peace, They Say* — get it [here](#).) • Over and over, I have said, “I would not last a week on a college campus. I may not last three days. I would use the wrong pronoun or something, and that would be it — Cancel City.” Let me tell you a story. I was at a conference, moderating a panel. Afterward, a young woman approached me and advised, “You said a slur.” Really? She then said two syllables that reminded me of French: “Est-ce que . . .” She implied that something followed those syllables. I was perplexed. She said it again: “Est-ce que . . .” Still perplexed. Finally, she said, “Eskimos.” She said it with great reluctance — like she was saying something radioactive and verboten. (That’s why she had begun with merely the opening syllables.) During the panel, I had recalled an old joke: “If the Eskimos went socialist, they’d have to import ice.” I related it to something that happened in Cuba — no joke: In the 1970s, they had to import sugar

The young woman told me that “Inuits” was correct. “I just wanted to educate you,” she said.

She was quite nice about it — lovely young woman. But, again, I’m telling you: I would not last three days on a college campus, or in many another setting. My speech and my thinking were formed too long ago, I’m afraid. It’s too late for reeducation. So I face the ire or the disapproval of many. Yet there are other dinosaurs, like me. *Vivent les dinosaures*. I once used the word “his,” as in, “Everyone has to do it his own way.” Some young people cracked down on me. I told them I would rather slit my wrists than use “their” in that sentence. I was not an illiterate. Didn’t go over very well . . .

• Throw a little music at you? For a review of Opening Night at Carnegie Hall, go [here](#). For a note on the late Carlisle Floyd — and his hit aria — go [here](#). For my “chronicle” in the latest *New Criterion*, go [here](#). Thank you for joining me, my friends, and I’ll see you soon.