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Senior psychology major and MSC Bookstore employee **Bonnie Glass** (left) helps graduating senior elementary education major **Dana Heathcott** (right) find the appropriate sizes for her cap and gown on Wednesday.

## China threatens Taiwan it could face 'use of force'

BEIJING (AP) — China ratcheted up its tough talk Wednesday, warning Taiwan that increasing "radical pro-independence moves" are shoving the mainland toward preparations for a military solution to the half-century rivalry. But Beijing also said it remained committed to peace.

The Chinese government used its official media — English-language newspapers in particular — to disseminate words of caution to the island that it considers part of its territory. Comments by Taiwan's president, and especially any Taiwanese referendum on independence, risk military consequences.

There is a growing possibility that "peace will have to be safeguarded and won through the use of force," said an article in the government-run press, quoting a "senior military source." However, it said any military preparations would be "a backup."

The carefully worded article, which raised the stakes of the usual rhetoric by openly invoking the military, ran Wednesday in two top state-controlled outlets — the *China Daily* newspaper and the Web site of *People's Daily*, the official Communist Party newspaper. Both are key conduits for policy statements by the Beijing leadership.

"We must not delude ourselves that the separatists will abandon their pro-independence pursuit overnight," the official was quoted as saying. "If we want to strive for peace, we have to be fully prepared for military action."

The article came days after Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian angered Beijing by saying Taiwan is a separate nation and might "walk down its own Taiwanese road." The communist Chinese government considers unification with Taiwan — which broke away in 1949 amid civil war — to be its most sensitive issue.

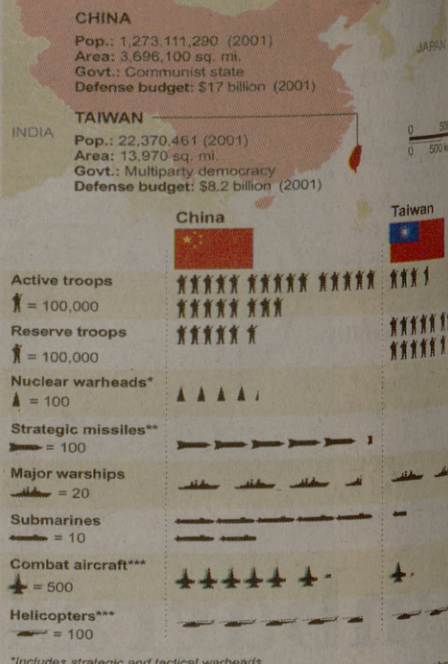
The United States severed ties with Taipei in 1979 to establish relations with Beijing, but Washington has remained a defender of Taiwan's interests and its main weapons supplier, and would be very unhappy at any mainland military action aimed at the island.

The article published Wednesday emphasized that China preferred peaceful solutions but was open to other options if necessary. "Taiwan choosing independence is tantamount to choosing war," the article said, explaining Beijing's policy. It also said China had been "exerting maximum military restraint."

The mainland newspapers quoted the military official as saying that Chen's comments "underscore the need for the mainland to proceed with military preparations as a backup to

### China: Taiwan could face 'use of force'

The Chinese government warned Taiwan Wednesday that "radical pro-independence moves" would force it to prepare for a military solution. Democratic Taiwan fears it will be mistaken for a part of the communist mainland.



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