

TAIWAN CRISIS: A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AMID THE US-CHINA TENSION

YUSA DJUYANDI

Department of Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.
Correspondence email: yusa.djuyandi@unpad.ac.id

ARFIN SUDIRMAN

Department of International Relations, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.
Email: arfin.sudirman@unpad.ac.id

R. WIDYA SETIABUDI SUMADINATA

Department of International Relations, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

Taiwan and the United States have had a good relationship for many years, but this warm relationship has created new tensions with China, posing a new challenge to global peace. Among the debates and questions that arose because of this issue's implications, the United States' position in this political contestation became the tensest. Since the escalation of tensions between China and Taiwan, the US has kept the situation ambiguous by maintaining diplomatic relations with China while also developing non-diplomatic relations with Taiwan. On the one hand, the US strategy has succeeded in maintaining the status quo for the time being, but the rest of the world has begun to question the entire situation. "Until this issue causes a stalemate" However, some experts believe that maintaining the status quo is not a bad alternative for keeping the peace. By analyzing the historical context, explaining each state relationship, and comparing the multiple scenarios, this article aims to demonstrate that maintaining the status quo is the most visible way to protect peace and stability in the East Asia region.

Keywords: China, Taiwan, the United States of America, Geopolitics, Regional Status Quo

1. BACKGROUND

a. Historical Background

In the 16th Century, Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a Dutch Navigator on a Portuguese ship discovered and called the island as "ilha Formosa " or "beautiful island" because of the natural environment of the area. After that, the Dutch created a post in the southwest area of the island where they established a fortress called Tayouwan, which means "terrace bay". Hence the said fortress name was to be the name of the whole island, Taiwan. 1662 a Chinese pirate, Koxinga drives the Dutch off the island and is later defeated by the Manchurian that took control of the western part of Taiwan. Hence, it became part of the Qing Empire until the 19th Century. The reign of the Qing ended in Taiwan when French forces invaded and occupied northern Taiwan in August 1884 but were unsuccessful in controlling the whole island. Taiwan ceded to Imperial Japan in April 1895 under the Shimonoseki Treaty, when the Sino-Japanese War ended in Chinese defeat.

After Japan's defeat in World War II in August 1945, China was ruled by the Nationalist Party or The Kuomintang (KMT) under General Chiang Kai-Shek. But everything went differently in December 1949, the Communist forces led by Mao Zedong successfully defeating the Nationalist Forces on Mainland China in the civil war. Chiang Kai-shek and his one million supporters fled to the island of Taiwan in hope to return to mainland China and restore the party power. At first, the US and the United Nations still recognized the Republic of China or ROC (official name of Taiwan) as the legitimate government and rejected the recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, it was changed when the Korean War happened in June 1950. Dreading a retaliation from the PRC in Mainland China, the US sent the Seventh Fleet of the US Navy consisting of an aircraft carrier, heavy cruisers, and eight destroyers into Taiwan Straits to do a show of force against the Communist forces. This prevented the PRC from attacking the island, but it also hampered the Kuomintang efforts to retake Mainland China. Despite the hampered efforts, the US created a defense command in Taipei and sent a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to Taiwan. This advisory group was entrusted to provide logistics, weaponry, and training to ROC military forces to develop it into a modern military force. In later years, it became the largest US military advisory group ever deployed in the world and transformed the ROC military into one of the most competent forces in Asia.

In August 1954, the PRC launched several military operations against ROC forces along the Taiwan straits and mainland coast of China. PRC military personnel thought that attacking the small offshore islands near Taiwan could drive the US forces away, hence separating the ROC and US forces and setting the final plan to invade Taiwan. This crisis led President Eisenhower to cement a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan on March 3, 1955. The US Congress also approved the Eisenhower Administration to conduct special power for the defense of Taiwan called Formosa Resolution, strengthening the defense of Taiwan and its straits, and enhancing Taiwan as the US deterrence against PRC until today.

b. Geopolitics Background

Located 120 miles from the east Chinese coast, Taiwan holds a strategic position. Economic and security wise, Taiwan is highly critical to maintain the region's peace and economic flow. On the assumption that in the possible future there will be a unification between People's Republic and China and Republic of China, would have discontinued America's once unbroken defense which extended from Alaska to Japan, entering Taiwan, then through the Philippines. Second, numerous goods and oil imports that are going to be shipped to South Korea and Japan regularly landed on Taiwan first then shipped to their country. Unification of Beijing and Taipei would raise the power of China and increase tension in eastern Asia and the Pacific. In political terms, Taipei is a base for the Chinese military to show off their power in the Western Pacific that will irritate a long-standing historical contestation between China and Japan, resulting in a regional arms race between Japan and China. Third, losing Taipei to Beijing would give them strategic benefits of the maritime region and would give Beijing more power to extend its influence on Manila. Also, the decision of the US to not do a renewal of 10-year security agreement with Manilla in 2016 raises the possibility of Manilla leaning more into the rising Asian dominator, China.

As an independent sovereign state of Taiwan might lead to peace in the region. The island plays a role in eliminating the People's Republic of China's force protection capability in the Pacific, also acting as the intermediary between Japan and China and easing tension with the US to not take sides on either one of these countries. Through Taiwan Relation Act and Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act, Washington tightened their relationship with Taipei by increasing economic collaboration and promotion in terms of building relations with Taiwan. Supplying arms and helping Taiwan to increase their military capability is helpful for Taipei's economic sustainability. One of the reasons is, it ensures potential investors by making sure the local safeness to invest their capital in Taiwan and drives their economic ecosystem.

Despite the complex historical background, in this modern day, Taiwan as a state has managed to become one of the "Asian Tigers" alongside Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong. Globally, Taiwan ranked 21st in largest GDP which is also 7th largest in Asia. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic era, with a proactive act of government, Taiwan was the only Asian Tigers country that managed to have a positive GDP growth of 3.1% making them ranked first place in the Asia-Pacific region. From mid-1950 until mid-1980 Taiwan's economy received a rapid economic growth by being one of the first Asian countries to implement the industrialization and market economy. Taiwan has a trade-based economy, with globally known strengths such as semiconductor manufacturing, consumer goods manufacturing, production of plastic products, petrochemical and metal refining. Sitting on around the top 20 largest economies, in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) Taipei holds around 1.300 billion USD.

Taiwanese government play an important role in maneuvering Taiwan's economy. Despite the pressure, Taipei managed to maintain a stable cross-trait relation with China, attracting international investors to their manufacturing industry, taking an important part in the technology supply chain, and showing its will to have a transition of energy resources. The government has also adopted an economic diversification policy which invites bigger investments through bilateral and regional multilateral, education and research development in South Asia, Australia, and New Zealand, also ASEAN. In the second term of Tsai Ing-Wen presidency, Taiwan introduced a six-core industry, which includes cybersecurity, green and renewable energy, biotech and medical technology, national defense, and information and digital technology

1. US-Taiwan Relations

Since 1979, the relation between the United States and the Republic of China or Taiwan has been unofficial and non-diplomatic. The United States has chosen to swift diplomatic relations by giving recognition toward The People's Republic of China as the only one China under the One China policy. However, in the same year, The United States Administration approved the Taiwan Relations Act which became the framework of Taiwan and The United States' non-official relations until today. The Taiwan Relations Act requires the United States to assist Taiwan's defensive military system by providing arms and trading weapons. In addition, it also specifies that any kind of non-peaceful movement toward Taiwan will be considered as a "threat" to Western Pacific Area means the United States requires Taiwan's future in a peaceful

manner. But with the existence of the One China Policy resulted in the high tension between the People's Republic of China and the United States with Taiwan. The one-China policy allows China to outcast Taiwan from international diplomatic relations with other countries, but surprisingly Taiwan still can compete and maintain economic and cultural relations with other countries including The United States. However, it cannot be ignored that for decades the tension of relation between the United States and Taiwan remained unpredictable and kept changing based on each presidency and policy. For instance, in the Obama era, the relation between Taiwan and The United States has a more interactive agenda which was proven by the increase of international visits and meetings compared to the previous presidency. While in the Trump administration, the economic relation becomes more intense as proven in 2019 Taiwan has become the United States 14th biggest export market with \$85 billion worth. The question now is how about in the Biden presidency? Will the relation between The United States and Taiwan grow even closer or will it be abolished due to China pressure?

1) Trump Administration

Despite several issues occurring during the Trump presidency period, Trump has successfully maintained a great relationship between the United States and Taiwan during his presidency in the economic, social, cultural, and institutional sectors. The Trump administration has raised the United States' support toward Taiwan bigger compared to any previous era of the United States. Taiwan became one of the largest trading partners and one of the best destinations for agricultural export. Not to mention that it is regulated under the Taiwan Relation Act in 1979 that the United States should assist Taiwan with its Military defense system which has been implemented very well in the Trump presidential era. The United States has sold arms and weapons for \$5.1 billion worth to Taiwan in 2020. However, the relation between the United States and Taiwan seems like growing closer in the Trump Era. In 2018, the Trump administration signed the Taiwan Travel Bill which allows the representative of Taiwan to have a sort of formal visit to the United States and vice versa. This phenomenon has raised the anger of the People's Republic of China. "It violates the One China principle, the political foundation of The United States and China political relationship," the Chinese embassy said after Trump signed the legislation bill. Obviously, China opposes the treaty adding that The United States should not establish any kind of further relation and ties with Taiwan. On the other hand, Taiwan welcomed the "friendly" movement by the Trump administration and said that they would like to continue the partnership with The United States on any level.

As a Result of the Taiwan Travel Bill which was signed in the Trump presidential era, the relationship between Taiwan and The United States grew even closer. Representatives from both countries have visited each other in a great number of meetings. Even in 2018, The President of Taiwan Tsai Ing-Wen made the first visit to the United States which obviously sparked the anger of China. China stated that Taiwan is a Chinese province with no right to have state relations, especially with the United States. However, the visiting agenda continues in the Trump presidency. Alex Azar, the Health, and Human Services Secretary visiting Taipei in August 2020 and five-month later, The Secretary of State Pompeo removed all the restrictions for government interactions between Taiwan and America. The close relation

between Taiwan and America has triggered some of the political issues between China and the United States which later became a question for the Biden administration to answer. How would Biden take this relationship to?

2) Biden Administration

Nothing has changed much regarding the relationship between The United States with Taiwan and China in the Biden Presidential. The central focus of the Biden presidency is to create a balance for the United States relation with Taiwan and China. The Biden administration stated that the United States still has the commitment to assist Taiwan in maintaining military self-defense. "Our commitment to Taiwan is rock solid" stated by the Biden administration. In addition, Biden personally has stated that The United States will defend Taiwan if China decides to attack the island. However, Biden never stated how far the United States will defend the island if China comes to attack. Furthermore, some experts stated that it was only to prevent any further radical movement by the China government because even though China has gathered more power now both economically and militarily, it still takes years to successfully take down Taiwan with United States support. According to what Biden has stated, it seems like the United States will still hold the strategic ambiguity where it still has the diplomatic and formal relation with China while supporting Taiwan non-formally to prevent any crisis from escalating.

2. Taiwan in the Global Stage

Over decades of massive political transformation and exponential economic growth, the Taiwanese government and its people demanded to have an active role in the international scene. This act of Taiwan followed threats and objections from the People's Republic of China (PRC) with an assertion stating, "Taiwan is an integral part of China". Other than its rhetoric claims over Taiwan, People's Republic of China, ever since 1949 haven't extended the jurisdictions over Taiwan. As an independent nation, Taiwan has a fundamentally different political, economic, social, and cultural system to China. Thus, ever since the separation, Taiwan's present and possible future is not a part of China's internal affairs.

As an independent sovereign state, Taiwan has every inquiry to be a sovereign country, including government, citizenship, and territorial jurisdiction. However, in exchange for having a role in the international realm, a sovereign state must have international recognition. Taiwan has been recognized as an independent democratic government by 15 countries under the name of the Republic of China, due to the "One-Country" policy that was proposed by Beijing. However, the United Nations presumed the People's Republic of China as a speaking land of Taiwan. Resulting its citizens, which hold one of the strongest and most accepted passports worldwide able to travel around the world yet banned from entering the UN buildings.

The reason why Taiwan has been persistent over the years to gain the United Nation membership status is to be able to coordinate action to maintain international peace, ability to develop friendly dialogue and negotiation, and to attain international coordination in addressing political, social, economic, and humanitarian problems, also to actively promoting

and implementing human rights. The already mentioned benefits of a United Nation membership would favor Taiwan to have more international recognition and be involved in a wider spectrum of international affairs. Both China and Taiwan apprehend the United Nation membership is crucial for Taiwan's sovereignty status. Within the process of gaining the credential of being a member, as one of the procedures, Taiwan must gain 9 out of 15 affirmative votes from the United Nation Security Council members and not a single member of countries with veto rights -- People's Republic of China, United States, Russia, United Kingdom, and French -- voted against the membership. Thus, regarding China's power over this means, they are able to influence the entire organization and claim Taiwan as China's rebel province. Thus far, China has been bold and successfully planted its stance on the international community.

Not only the United Nation, has one of Taiwan's closest allies, the United States also not admitted the Republic of China as an independent state. Leaving aside the United States' recognition over Taiwan, they still hold a steady relationship with one another due to the already explained interest of the United States over the region. In 1979, the US stopped its diplomatic ties with Taiwan in exchange for building diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Washington has acknowledged, but not promoted Beijing's claim over the possession of Taipei. Bounded with the Taiwan Relation Act, Washington was able to maintain its relationship with both Beijing and Taipei at the same time by defining Washington's means on Taipei as purely substantive and not diplomatic. The United States has also passed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act to tighten their relationship with Taipei, increase Taiwan's participation on the international stage by encouraging international communities and organizations to have an official or unofficial relationship with Taipei.

The European Continent, especially the European Union member countries, also has a strong substantial relationship with Taiwan. This relation has some limitations affected by the Chinese policy, and to avoid troubles with Beijing. Through the European Economic and Trade Office, the EU relation to Taiwan is for economic and commercial means. Identical to the US, the EU also supports the "One Country, Two System" resolution, they also encourage peaceful negotiation and disapprove the use of threat and force. However, as individual states, European countries begin to deepen their relationship with Taipei. For instance, the Netherlands has changed its office (not an official embassy) name in Taiwan. By erasing the words "Trade and Investment" signaling Netherlands interest is significantly more than economic means. This action of course received disapproval and threats from China.

Even in Taiwan's closest region, Asian countries often refused to talk about this matter. China's growing influence, leadership, and economy which is striving for more dominance, pressuring the neighboring countries to take sides. Especially for the developing countries, China is a valuable trading partner. For some countries, this trading relationship is their most crucial to maintain their economy. Siding with Taiwan will harm their relationship with China. Ultimately, every country's official policy in regard to Taiwan's situation is controlled by China.

2. THE SUPERPOWER STRATEGY TO TAIWAN

a. Beijing Assertive Strategy

It is self-evident how Beijing will respond to the situation. The People's Republic of China has stated that it has no intention of allowing Taiwan to become an independent state. Taiwan has undoubtedly been a part of the People's Republic of China since ancient times, and there will be a reunification in the future "by force, if necessary," demonstrating China's strong desire to dominate Taiwan. The Chinese government has done everything it can in terms of military, economic, and political measures to "reunify" Taiwan.

After the end of the Chinese Civil War, the Beijing government intended to occupy the island which was later called Taiwan. But the Korean War which happened in 1950 and 1954 resulted in the retardation of the plans. However, the effort for reunification continues which can be seen by how China has tried to improve its relationship with the United States in the early 1970s, and fortunately, they succeed by getting the United States formal recognition, but the battle is still not done yet alongside with the non-formally support from the United State for Taiwan. This situation resulted in the whole deadlock situation.

While China and Taiwan are trapped in the deadlock situation, China has developed its military capabilities by increasing its expenses in the military sector. According to the available data, it is estimated that in 2020 the China government will have spent \$252.3 billion on military expenses. This is higher than last year's expenditure of \$232.53 billion. The rising military expenditure means there is some development that occurred in that sector which might be prepared for some of the conditions including the Taiwan reunification issue. Currently, in October 2021 the China government has sent approximately 150 aircraft to Taiwan's defense zone. Some experts said that these flights could be seen as warnings for Taiwan.

As has been stated before, the movement by China not only in the military sector but also in the economic sector. In March 2021, China banned pineapples imports from Taiwan which resulted in a great impact for Taiwan because originally China was the biggest trade partner for Taiwanese pineapples by buying more than 90 percent of it. This obviously was a political move by China to give another warning for Taiwan and the United States. However, in response to that movement, the president of Taiwan Tsai Ing-wen created a public campaign called "freedom pineapple" that surprisingly went viral and garnered public response and sympathy at that time.

Although the previous economic movement by China government did not clearly bring an expected impact for them, the China government seems still to want to another soft approach that will build sort of dependence of Taiwan toward China economy in the future agenda to reach the main purpose of taking Taiwan under their control. In addition, China is also trying to expand its influence by pushing its economic capabilities to replace the United States' domination.

In political matters, China has done a lot to block all the possible access for Taiwan to gain more power. Using the One-China Policy, the People's Republic of China has succeeded in preventing Taiwan from participating in international bodies. For instance, the World Health Organization and The UN International Civil Aviation Organization. This strategy successfully cut several international accesses for Taiwan and cut several of its diplomatic allies. Overall, the Beijing strategy seems successful in creating more tension in military and international relations with Taiwan, even though there are some obstacles in economics and the risk of being backlashed by international organizations. However, their movement will not stop there if we see the desire that Beijing must take Taiwan. The Beijing future agenda would likely stress out in the military and the international blockade in the future with the tendency to not use any diplomatic manners to bring down the tension.

b. Washington “Ambiguous” Strategy

Taiwan has been one of the core problems in US-China relations since its establishment in the 1950s. Also these past few years have been dramatic in the case of East Asia-Pacific geopolitics where Beijing policies look more assertive than ever in Asia and the decreasing of US supremacy. Militarily, Taiwan lies with inside the United States protection umbrella out of strategic necessity. It is the crucial hyperlink with inside the First Island Chain. If the chain is broken, China could be capable of rolling up U.S. defenses, attacking Japan and the US Allies from their exposed, Pacific-dealing flanks. Moreover, Taiwan is China's maximum probable target, given those geostrategic realities and the risk that Taiwan's democratic, capitalist regime poses to the Chinese Communist Party. The US does have the manner to guard Taiwan, especially if it chooses to combat ahead and interact with China earlier than it could envelop the island. US submarines and island-primarily based missiles.

The said dynamics of these two major powers will always impact the fragile status quo of Taiwan's position in the region and by extent, the small and middle powers of the Asia-Pacific region because they always have an interdependent relationship toward the two powers. But the crucial points remain, Taiwan's security is directly connected with the US and its conditions with China. Any significant change will always have a direct impact on the said region. Especially if we see the Trump Administration. It was then President-Elect Trump spoke on the phone with President Tsai Ing-wen in December 2016, this became a reflection on how hasty Trump foreign policy was and how it went decreasing in the matter of US and China relations during his administration. The Trump administration boosted US support for Taiwan to levels not seen in the United States since 1971. It helped to secure the sale of sixty-six F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan in 2020, reversing the Obama administration stance. The administration shifted the responsibility of the deputy assistant secretaries of defense (DASD) to place Taiwan under the DASD for East Asia, which is responsible for US partners and allies in the Pacific, rather than a DASD for mainland China.

Officials from the United States and Taiwan also emerged in significance. In a break from the usual one-day stopover policy, the Trump administration permitted President Tsai to stay for two days each way on her 2019 transit through the United States, and when Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar decided to visit Taiwan in August 2020, he became the highest-

ranking US member of government to visit the area in decades. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo officially lifted all restrictions on US-Taiwan government cooperation. The president furthermore signed the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which aimed the secretary of defense to "carry out a program of senior military officer exchanges," as well as the 2018 Taiwan Travel Act, which mentioned that the US encourage the government "visits between officials from the US and Taiwan at all levels". Trump's policies on this left behind dangerous cases as they always sprayed gasoline in the fire of US-China power dynamics.

As the Chinese constantly swarming toward East Asia dominance, The Biden administration attempted to create a new equilibrium in its Taiwan policy straight away. His Administration issued a statement called "PRC Military Pressure against Taiwan Threatens Regional Peace and Stability". The statement urges China to end its military, diplomatic and economic pressure on Taiwan and instead engage in constructive dialogue with democratically elected representatives of Taiwan. It reaffirmed the historic US attitude toward Taiwan with confidence. "We will deepen our relationship with democratic Taiwan," the Biden administration added. "The commitment to Taiwan is solid and contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the region." This statement is "solid." But the underlying substance of "our commitment" is less clear than it used to be.

The generally accepted definition of American national interest, defined as necessary to protect and improve the survival of Americans in a stable, free, and secure nation, so actions need to be taken in several steps. First, prevent and reduce the threat of lethal terrorist attacks or cyber-attacks using conventional weapons, as well as the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, against the United States, foreign troops or its allies. Second, the US must prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, secure nuclear weapons, and materials, and curb the further proliferation of medium and long-range nuclear weapons systems. Third, they must manage the internal resilience of the United States, the projection and influence of the United States international powers, and thus create a balance of global and local status quos that promotes peace, stability and freedom through US local and international power projections and influences. The US also needs to ensure the vitality and stability of crucial global frameworks such as global economy, public health, energy supply, and cyberspace, environmental and maritime freedoms.

The United States' ambiguous attitude on this matter is likely to continue. That is why, the US strategic goal on Taiwan should be to maintain its political and economic autonomy, its dynamism as a free democratic society, and the deterrence of its US allies without causing a Chinese attack on Taiwan. This will depend on US accurate calculations, and the endurance in facing China moves, strength, and commitment towards its claims in Taiwan. That is also why the strategic policies that are pursued by the US must require more quality and in-depth decision making. The diplomacy in the Biden Administration that processes on the international stage requires tactical modifications and sustaining cautiousness in their making.

c. Taiwan's Security Strategy

Taiwan's domestic security and political practices are highly influenced by the regional political dynamics. With the United States and People's Republic of China as two major power influences, also the emerging power of many other countries in the region can result in a direct impact on Taiwan. Since the first term of Tsai Ing-Wen presidency, in 2016 the administration built up the state's military for the defensive purposes. Raising the assertive force of the PRC's military, making Taiwan have no other option than leaning to the other power, America. In terms of air defense, bought Patriot Advanced Capability-3 and FIM-92 SAMs, 66 F-16C/B Block 70 fighters, as well as funding projects including the Tien-Kung series SAMs and AT-5 advanced trainers/light fighters. This is an investment to improve air defense capability. Having offensive military capabilities is presumably the most ideal and have been proven to have an immediate impact. However, this might lead to numerous labels from the international community. The label of being a "troublemaker" can lead to Taiwan losing trust and support, also risking their ties with the United States.

In addition, Taiwan has progressively modernized their naval equipment. Including a wide spectrum of vessels, such as submarine rescue Ships, submarines, frigates, Tuo Chiang-class stealth corvettes, high-speed minelayers, and mine countermeasure vessels. After these purchases, the international community can identify the purposes behind the upgrading of Taiwanese military. Taipei seems to aim for a balanced sea control and sea denial to counter Chinese possible A2/AD firepower. However, with the Taiwanese short coastline might make it more difficult to survive even with this military equipment. Multiple upgrading for defense proposes also happened on the land military equipment, including AH-64E and AH-1W attack helicopters, onshore Harpoon and Hsiung-Fung series ASCMs, indigenous infantry fighting vehicles, M1A2T main battle tanks (MBT), and UH-60M utility and CH-47D transport helicopters. Helicopter purchases for land military supply is used for transferring soldiers in the most effective way.

With the support of military modernization won't instantly remove all the weaknesses of Taiwan defenses. Security dynamics in the region is not a mere interaction and response of China and Taiwan, but it more likely will involve the closest neighboring country, including Japan and South Korea, as well as Taiwan's closes allies, the United States

3. TAIWAN POSSIBLE FUTURE

a. Taiwan Invasion and Defense

The Validity of an Invasion

Reunification by force if necessary -China but Taiwan have US support and China would likely get international backlash if they were to invade Taiwan. Numerous verbal threats and military warnings have been thrown by Beijing to Taiwan. Beijing would not hesitate to invade Taiwan if they were to formally declare their independence. Taiwan, especially the Tsai Ing-wen administration strongly believe in the long-wanted independent sovereignty and against the annexation proposed by Beijing.

The tension in this region is more intense today than ever. As per usual, the American alliance with Taiwan angered China. The US is occupying a Taiwanese self-ruled island with military equipment and artillery to counter Chinese aggressive military tendencies. Beijing made a serious warning to Washington to pull back their militaries on the land. However, America has made a clear statement regarding its stance in the possible future if a war happened. Through the solidarity bond of democracy, America would do its favor to Taiwan.

China views Taiwan as a rebel province and like a ticking bomb, China will eventually give a lesson to Taiwan. With the validation of the “one China” policy driving a China reunification is a prerequisite. Possibilities of an invasion is acknowledged by several countries worldwide and both of the cross-strip nations. A former Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott speculated the increasing military harassment would ignite the fire of war in the future. As well as the United States' 46th President, Joe Biden also has an identical view with the ongoing situation. Warned by China, in October 2021 Taiwan's prime minister was informed that China would be on the full military capabilities to invade Taiwan. This is the first move of Beijing in telling a straightforward warning of the upcoming war to the public sphere.

Sino-American War: What are the Odds?

A war, with China and the United States, would be regional and conventional. The RAND Corporation researched that it would mostly be fought by ships on and underneath the sea, along with aircraft and missiles of various types, as well as in space and cyberspace. The fighting would begin and continue in East Asia, where there are several potential flashpoints, especially Taiwan and its straits, between China and the United States and where practically all Chinese forces are stationed. The necessity to plan for war with China has become even more critical as military capabilities have improved. Sensors, missile guidance, digital networking, and other information technology used to target opposing forces have progressed to the point where both US and Chinese military forces pose a real threat to one another. This provides both the capability and the incentive to strike combatants before they strike one's own. As a result, from the start of a war, there is a tendency toward rapid, reciprocal strikes, despite neither side being able to seize control and both having abundant resources to keep fighting, even as military losses and economic costs increase.

Large-scale land combat is improbable in a Sino-US conflict. Furthermore, the unparalleled ability of US and Chinese troops to target and destroy each other's conventional counterforce in a matter of months could severely deplete military capabilities. Following that, the sides may replenish and upgrade their forces in an industrial technological mobilization contest, the outcome of which is too complex to forecast, except to state that prices would continue to rise. Nuclear weapons would be nearly impossible to use. Even in a ferociously fought conventional conflict, neither side would regard its losses as so severe, its prospects so grim, or the stakes so high that it would risk a catastrophic nuclear strike by using nuclear arms first.

The necessity to plan for war with China has become even more critical as military capabilities have improved. Sensors, missile guidance, digital networking, and other telecommunications used to target opposing sides have progressed to the point that both US and Chinese military

forces now pose a major threat to one another. This provides both the ability and the opportunity to attack opposing forces before they attack oneself. Consequently, from the start of a war, there is a tendency toward rapid, reciprocal strikes, despite neither side being able to seize control and both having abundant resources to keep fighting, even as military losses, and economic burden rise.

Conflict Scenarios

According to The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the belief among respected experts is that China would attempt to push Taiwan into a more accommodating position, but that this pressure would most likely not be violent. China has a range of instruments at its command to harass Taiwan, including actions that might aggravate the misery for all parts of Taiwanese society and signal that the only way to reduce the costs is for Taiwan to adopt a more subservient, less separatist position. China might send a message to Japan, South Korea, and others that if they join others in attacking China, they would no longer be able to depend on trade, security, or peace. It doesn't mean to imply how all of us are aware that China is about to launch a war. We must note that the People's Republic of China is acting in a way that a country would if it were entering a prewar state. It is preparing and conditioning its population for the potential of military war from a political standpoint. Militarily, China currently “engaged” in a swarm of exercises and military drills aimed at sharpening and broadening the readiness of its armed forces for a variety of situations on the sea, air, land, cyber, and space. But if there would be a confrontation, there would be scenarios that were made in that case.

First, China is already harassing Taiwanese territory from the outskirts. Gray zone conflict is a term that describes these activities. For example, Chinese planes fly into Taiwan's air defense identification zone, forcing Taiwan to dispatch fighter planes, and then the invaders fly back into Chinese airspace. Alternatively, Chinese ships may attack Taiwan's navy or coast guard, compelling the latter to reply. The question is, however, what China is attempting to achieve. It permits Chinese forces to train at the expense of Taiwanese forces. It could put a strain on Taiwan's air crew and sailors. It has the potential to push Taiwan to pay more on fuels and maintenance. It has the potential to irritate Taiwanese citizens and instill in them the belief that China is dissatisfied and hostile. None of this reflects Chinese authority or makes a peaceful reunification of China and Taiwan more viable.

Second scenario is the quarantine operation. The Chinese government would effectively take control of Taiwan's air and sea borders in a quarantine scenario. It would assert control over Taiwan's airspace, therefore making Taipei's Taoyuan International Airport and Kaohsiung's International Port no longer Taiwan's own international gateways and ports. To screen incoming ships and planes, the Chinese government would undertake a clearing operation offshore or in the air. The screeners might then proceed to wave along what they considered to be harmless traffic. They could even propose that suspect ships or planes divert to a nearby mainland airport or port, such as Fuzhou or Guangzhou, or Xiamen or Shantou, for complete Chinese clearing customs. China has superior “domain awareness,” with many vessels from its navy, coast guard, and maritime militia at its command.

The last scenario would be an invasion. In one of two scenarios, Chinese planners could consider invading Taiwan. The first is a traditional siege and amphibious assault, aided by an armada of ships and landings at one of a dozen or so beach sites on Taiwan's northern and western flanks, all of which are facing the Taiwan Strait and all of which have ready fortifications. A second strategy, which may be used in combination with the first, would rely heavily on aerial or heliborne assaults and special operations.

The Cost of War

Declaring a war with Taiwan means declaring a war with its strongest allies, the United States. Both countries are highly capable of handling a war situation. There are two possibilities on how disruptive the war would be. First, a mild war, in this scenario both sides would minimize destruction and rapid increase of arm fire, also sparing most of the anime's soldiers. Hostilities often occur because of an accident or miscalculation. This situation involved an ongoing negotiation between leaders, and if the middle ground is still undecided, the war would be more likely to be continued. Also, mild war won't harm each country's economic sustainability since each side is not willing to have a costly war.

Second possibility is the severe intensity of the war. In this scenario, both sides would gain advantages by destroying the other side's base. Not only an open fire war, eventually will the war also widen to the cyber war realm. Political and economic, also infrastructure instability will occur. Political leaders play a critical role in deciding whether to end the war or not. The United States has significantly more military capacity than China, also supported by already implemented army bases in the region, namely South Korea, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, and many others in the Pacific.

b. Taiwan Recognition as a Sovereign State

Although Taiwan has a very small island with an international blockade by China, Taiwan undoubtedly became one of the most successful governments in the world. Taiwan has the most progressive democracy in the world proven by how they keep the election fair and free, how they guarantee the political and human rights for its citizens, how they protect the diversity of the people, and how they keep and increase the competitiveness of the media there. Therefore, Taiwan is proving once again its capability to the world. When the coronavirus outbreak occurs in 2020, Taiwan demonstrates a swift and effective reaction to a pandemic. With a population of more than 20 million people, there are only about 400 fatalities, whereas other nations have much more. Taiwan gains international fame and recognition because of this. Taiwan set a record for exports in the same year. Taiwan's export rate will reach its all-time high in 2020, and this trend is expected to continue as Taiwan's chip manufacturing and other technological sectors dominate the global market.

With a great political foundation and economic condition, Taiwan has more than enough rights to dream about a sovereign state. Although the president of Taiwan has stated that it doesn't have any intention to change the status quo but based on the regularities and the movement that Taiwan has done, it definitely has the ambition to be formally independent. Moreover, China projects have outcasted Taiwan from international exposure which brings anger to Taiwan.

Now, if China continues to put pressure on Taiwan, there is no guarantee that Taiwan will not take another step toward realizing its aim of being a sovereign nation. Taiwan has the confidence to face China because they have been supported by the US for years, and it appears that they will continue to have a strong relationship in the future; according to some polls, 53.2 % expect the US to support and fight with Taiwan if the island takes another step forward into independence.

Along with Taiwan's strong political and economic foundations, popular opinion appears to be in favor of Taiwan's independence. Only one percent of Taiwanese citizens support the campaign for Taiwan-China reunification under "one country, two systems," with more than 60% firmly opposing the idea. To summarize, Taiwan has no intention or tendency to accept China's proposal for reunification, and prior facts have demonstrated that Taiwan has its own stability, values, and desire to be a sovereign nation. The possibility is indeed there. Moreover, the international support and the U.S intervention have resulted in China's hesitation and dilemma facing Taiwan. While China has an internal battle whether it should invade or have other options, Taiwan can use the time to gather even more power to support its hidden ambition to be independent.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese command has never been more confident in the ability of its more capable military to forcefully capture Taiwan. The PRC ability to project power over the Taiwan Strait has been significantly enhanced by decades of increasing defense budgets and investing in military modernization. The devastating global effects of a war between the US and China, most likely over Taiwan, should preoccupy the Biden administration, starting with the president. Although a nuclear fight between the US and China is unlikely, and Beijing has reiterated its no-first-use policy, there is little question that China intends to expand its arsenal of a few hundred missiles and construct a more advanced force capable of hypersonic flight. A worldwide recession, if not a depression, would almost definitely follow the beginning of a great power war. It would disrupt Asian and international trade, break vital supply chains, and threaten financial systems around the world.

That is why The US, and its allies should continue to strengthen its own defense capabilities in Taiwan by investing in the types of defense platforms and utilizing the operational concepts required to defeat the rapidly emerging and growing capabilities of the People's Liberation Army. Washington should also look for ways to persuade regional allies and partners to help discourage conflict over Taiwan without resorting to military involvement, such as committing to increase the economic and diplomatic penalties China would bear if it chose to attack Taiwan.

The United Nation, international, and regional powers hold an important role in maintaining and safeguarding democracy and freedom in Taiwan. Protecting and potentially admitting Taiwan as a sovereign state in the future means protecting peace and sustaining world economic flow. But now, the international actors and power must maintain the status quo and

peace in Taiwan and East Asia. In short, any future developments of viewpoints on the status quo, and thus any common starting point for cross-strait discourse between all the sides, are already becoming increasingly volatile. This is an often-overlooked, yet crucial, feature of cross-strait relations.

REFERENCE

- Alysa, M. (2020). The implications of US-Taiwan relations on US-China relations under the Obama Administration. *Verity: Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional (International Relations Journal)*, 11(21), 56. <https://doi.org/10.19166/verity.v1i21.2452>
- BLACKWILL, ROBERTS (2021). United States, China, and Taiwan: A strategy to prevent war. COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS.
- Chen, L.-chu. (2016). Taiwan-China relations. *The U.S.-Taiwan-China Relationship in International Law and Policy*, 189–210. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190601126.003.0008>
- Easton, I., Felner, J., & Roughead, G. (2021). U.S. Defense of taiwan. *Strategika: Conflicts of the Past as Lessons for the Present*, (73).
- Gompert, D. C., Cevallos, A. S., & Garafola, C. L. (2016). *War with china: Thinking through the unthinkable*. RAND Corporation.
- Hashmi, S. (2021). Taiwan's Security in the Emerging Indo-Pacific Order. *JOURNAL OF INDO-PACIFIC AFFAIRS*. <https://doi.org/https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/31/2002611829/-1/-1/1/3%20-%20HASHMI%20FOR%20PDF.PDF>
- Hickson, C. E. (2003). Taiwan in International Organizations. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/44789/2003_05_Taiwan_in_International_Organizations.pdf
- Kan, S. A., & Morrison, W. M. [Report], CRS Report (2014). Retrieved November 3, 2021, from <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R41952.pdf>.
- Mitchell, M. (2017). Taiwan and China: A geostrategic reassessment of U.S. policy. *Comparative Strategy*, 36(5), 383–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2017.1379829>
- Redacted, R. [Report], CRS Report (111AD). Retrieved November 3, 2021, from <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R41952.pdf>.
- Shang-su, W. (2021). Taiwan's Security an Intertwined Knot. *JOURNAL OF INDO-PACIFIC AFFAIRS*. <https://doi.org/https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/31/2002611831/-1/-1/1/5%20-%20WU%20FOR%20PDF.PDF>
- Hille, K., & Sevastopulo, D. (2021, October 6). Taipei warns that China will be able to invade Taiwan by 2025. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/212f44b9-a271-425b-a7cf-608d43d46288>
- McDonell, S. (2021, October 6). China-Taiwan military tensions 'worst in 40 years'. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58812100>
- United Nation. (n.d.). About UN Membership. United Nations. Retrieved November 2, 2021, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/about-un-membership>
- US Department Of States. (2001, April 3). Why the U.S. Joined the UN. The US Department of states. Retrieved November 2, 2021, from <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/2001/2016.htm>
- Yip, H. (2020, May 8). It's Time to Stop Pandering to Beijing over Taiwan. An independent nation deserves a place on the global stage. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/08/us-taiwan-china-relations-stop-pandering-coronavirus/>

BBC News. (2021). Record number of China planes enter Taiwan air defence zone. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58794094>

Brunstrom, D. (2018). Trump signs U.S.-Taiwan travel bill, angering China. U.S. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-taiwan-china-idUSKCN1GS2SN>

Glaser, B., & Mark, J. (2021). Why Beijing Is Reluctant to Use Economic Leverage on Taiwan. Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/14/taiwan-china-economic-codependence/>

Gorman, L. (2021). Pineapple War Shows Taiwan Won't Be Bullied by China. Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/16/taiwan-china-pineapple-war-economic-bullying-democracies-boycott/>

Staff, R. (2020). Timeline: U.S. arms sales to Taiwan in 2020 total \$5 billion amid China tensions. U.S. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-security-usa-timeline-idUSKBN28I0BF>

Statista. (2021). Military expenditure in China from 1990 to 2020. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/267035/china-military-spending/>