

## CHINA'S GRADUAL MASTERY OVER TAIWAN DISCOURSE BEHIND ONE-SIDED CLAIMS IN THE TERRITORY SOUTH CHINA SEA

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### Abstract

The South China Sea (SCS) problem due to China's unilateral claims, by setting the Nine Dashed-Line under its supervision, has disrupted security stability in the region. The claim caused China to dispute with several coastal countries in the SCS region, and also caused a strong reaction from the US and its allies. China not only deployed the Nine Dashed-Line, but also placed an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the north of Taiwan, including the deployment of the Anti-Access Aerial Denial (A2/AD) defense strategy in the face of the island chain defense strategy built by the US and its allies encircle China in Indo-Pacific waters. On the other hand, China's ambition to regain control of Taiwan is an interesting question, will it in the end (due to being hindered by the US and its allies) use violence in an open war, or use soft power diplomacy? The large and dominant trade value between China and Taiwan, as well as the factor that Taiwan dominates semiconductor chip technology (controls the international market) which is very important for the manufacture of advanced weapons and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, is thought to be China's consideration to immediately dominate Taiwan by all means. China tries not to use violence, and chooses a strategy of controlling Taiwan, by claiming the SCS unilateral territory and building a chain of Exclusive Economic Zones, which automatically absorbs Taiwan into its territory.

**JEL Classification:** N4, N45

**Keywords:** Claims, Taiwan and Semiconductor Chip.

### INTRODUCTION

China's unilateral control of most of the South China Sea (SCS) on historical grounds, trade routes and fishing grounds, has not only caused problems for the affected coastal states, but also raised big questions. After the Cold War, China saw that it was time for the bipolarization era (Western versus Eastern powers) to turn into multipolarization, even with predictions that challenges to the dominance of the United States (US) and its allies would continue. Beijing's views realize this, that the domination of US power will still have quite a high influence going forward (Latham & Porter, 2022). Over time, with the diminishing influence of the US in the Indo-Pacific region, China saw this opportunity as a necessity that China could take an important role from the multipolar division, and even could take the role of the US in the region. The geopolitical situation in the region with the strengthening of Taiwanese nationalism is currently an 'entrance' for Beijing in projecting its desire to become an important and decisive force in the Indo-Pacific region, taking over US power. The rise of China's economy and defense technology also contributed to Beijing's aggressiveness forcing Taiwan to accept terms and join under one China.

Taiwan's geographical conditions are less friendly for agriculture and animal husbandry due to limited land (a fairly dense population) and few natural resources, encouraging the Taiwanese government to exploit other sources for the continued welfare of its people. Another source of welfare for the Taiwanese people is by looking for marine products around the island, although they are not the main source of the country's economy. The strength of trade and production of electronic components (especially semiconductor components) which are important for the development of computerization technology, industry and defense, has become one of the main sources of Taiwan's economy. Looking at the early history of Taiwan's existence until now, in many ways politically Taiwan has always been marginalized from other regions, both when this island was under Japanese control from 1895 to 1945, then Greater China control from 1945 to 1949. But one thing is not clear, aware of, or go unnoticed about, the enormous potential of Taiwan's existence. Taiwan's position is in one of the largest sealanes in the world, a maritime trade route that supports the economic growth of surrounding countries, such as Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong and China. History records that the location of the island of Taiwan is about 100 (one hundred) kilometers from mainland China, but history records that Taiwan's complex strategic interests are self-evident (Brown & Hui, 2019; Firdaus et al., 2023).

The existence of Taiwan in the midst of China's unilateral claims widely in the SCS is an important question, regarding China's strategy of gradual control of Taiwan, which is considered part of a Chinese province that is trying to break away and be independent as a country. The placement of thousands of missiles and other weapons along the coast of Fujian leading directly to Taiwan, is basically aimed at psychologically suppressing and cornering the Taiwanese population. This is clear and obvious, as a form of China's massive military power propaganda campaign and sends the main message to the Taiwanese people to remember one important thing, that they were Chinese before they became Taiwanese. This message is Beijing's indirect indoctrination, and reminds the Taiwanese people to remember it in their lives every day. Beijing's main goal is actually trying to grab the attention of the Taiwanese people by demonstrating China's dominance with the powerlessness of Taiwan's military power.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Machiavelli's view, that if a country has a strong sense of nationalism in its people coupled with having a capable defense system, then there will be no worries about potential attacks by enemies from outside or other countries. Because the enemy will be very careful considering launching an attack on the country, because they already know how strong the country's defense system and the militancy of its people are (Rachman et al., 2020). This view is reinforced by Foucault's opinion (Mudhoffir, 2014), which states that the issue of power and state defense has become the basis of a state's existence. Power in Foucault's view is not projected negatively as in the Marxian perspective, but is productive and reproductive, in which it is omnipresent and flows normally in the form of indoctrination with a sense of nationalism to the middle of society for sure. This view of power and defense power is clearly shown by the Chinese government in unilaterally claiming most of the South China Sea (SCS) as its territory.

The South China Sea (SCS) is crucial for maritime trading communication route for many surrounding countries and international shipping, including one of the major maritime for foreign trading routes, especially energy imports for China's needs. For many years the SCS has been a vital area for China's economy, trade and fisheries, so China must ensure the security of aviation and sealanes for the freedom of maritime navigation in the SCS. This security measure has long been pursued by China in collaboration with ASEAN countries, to ensure security and unhindered access to trade traffic in the SCS region, as well as to make important contributions to the surrounding coastal countries.

According to Beijing, freedom of maritime navigation and overflight should be enjoyed by all countries in the SCS region under the protection of international law. China is an important force in maintaining a balance of stability, security and peace in the SCS region. As a major power in the SCS region, China is expected to comply with international regulations, or the principles of the United Nations Charter, and is committed to promoting and upholding the rule of international law. The Chinese government seeks to project mutually beneficial and enjoyable cooperation for every country in the SCS region, and is committed to making the SCS region an area of peace, cooperation and friendship. China urges parties outside the region to recognize all efforts made by countries inside the region to play a constructive role in ensuring the SCS region's peace and stability. While on the other hand, according to Qi, (2019), as a primary goal of its National Interest, China strongly defends its territorial sovereignty claims and marine rights. China also prioritizes dispute resolution through negotiations and consultations and manages differences through rules and mechanisms agreed upon by the disputing parties.

While Goh, (2006) based on his research through case studies of Southeast Asian countries, found that basically Southeast Asian countries, especially coastal countries, wish to maintain a security stability order in the SCS region, through 3 (three) main options . The first option, an indirect or soft approach to security stability by encouraging the involvement of US forces to fight China's domination in the region. The second option involves China's power and influence on various layers of the local regional security strategy. While the third option involves all local regional forces to maintain local regional security stability. On the other hand, a strong ally of the West in the Indo-Pacific region, Australia pays special attention to China's dominance in the Asia-Pacific, both politically and militarily. Political policy makers in Canberra doubt that the actions and actions of the Chinese government, which are considered undemocratic, will be controlled by international laws, norms and rules. With massive military power and China's unilateral claims in the SCS, Australia places China as a revisionist and expansionist country, as well as a potential threat to Australia, including regional peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Learning from several conflicts in mainland Europe and the emergence of new threats from abroad, since 1816 the US Congress allowed the use of the budget for the US Army in strengthening coastal defense systems, and projections for the development of US Navy forces to be deployed in arenas outside US territory as a unit. An integrated composition of frontline defense, deployed globally to protect US commercial interests overseas.

China's asserts SCS region as her territory, the paradox with the presence of US military power, the lack of consensus on US direct involvement in the international community in the region, especially in anticipation of the consequences of China's massive economic growth and military modernization in the SCS region. But as if to answer these deficiencies, the US exploited its capabilities and defense policies against China's increasingly aggressive behavior in the SCS, by expanding its military presence in Australia and Singapore. If US foreign policy strategists continue to regard US military presence abroad as important, then Washington must seize the right momentum, against the shared perception of China's increasing threat in the SCS region, by expanding its military presence in key areas (Rakhmat & Purnama, 2022; Yin, 2011).

China's behavior in strategically and consistently expanding, its defense perimeter and sovereignty in the Indo-Pacific region by increasing the power of transforming its defense, economic and cultural systems. China's aspiration to achieve its expansionist objectives was manifested in the writings of the Chinese military expert Sun Tzu, who declared that the key to a successful general was not to triumph in countless battles, but to persuade the adversary to surrender without engaging in combat. According to this hypothesis, Beijing is biding its time and incrementally altering the distribution of influence in the vicinity by means of a substantial military expansion and mastery over the contentious "grey zone" territories of the shoreline nations (Littoral States) in the Indo-Pacific area. China's expansionist behavior is not only implemented in the SCS, but also in other parts of the world, such as in South Asia and East Africa. China has always followed the traditional Chinese strategic game of Wei-Ch'i (known as 'Go' in Japan and the Western world), achieving victory over opponents by strategically positioning forces in the form of fortifications to gain a positional advantage, unlike in a game of chess by physically capturing enemy pieces. If China can sustain its dominance without resorting to overt military action, it will compel neighboring countries to acknowledge the rise of a fresh regional hierarchy, wherein China holds sway over the formulation of regulations. Prominent nations in the area, such as Japan and South Korea, are confronted with the regrettable decision of either augmenting their military prowess extensively in response to China's military prowess or acquiescing to China's dominance.

As explained by (Mulyanto, 2020; Swaine, 2016), that since the Industrial Revolution, the rise of the great powers will behave in an expansive manner and often disrupt the order of world stability. For instance, recently, the outward growth of the United Kingdom and France, Deutschland and Nippon, the Soviet Union and America, happened concurrently with a period of extensive industrialization and economic progress.

At present, China is adhering to Huntington's depiction with exactitude, in relation to its financial and defense progress, alongside its far-reaching conduct, as China aims to bolster its nation's power in the Indo-Pacific area, particularly in the South China Sea. Beijing's objective is to establish a potent and esteemed Chinese military presence in the region. China's interpretation of Huntington's viewpoint is that a country cannot be secure or robust without a formidable military force.

Meanwhile, according to Griffiths et al., (2011), that geostrategically a country with a larger power basically poses a threat to the sovereignty and security of its smaller neighboring

countries. Because the dominantly strong state will take whatever action it deems necessary to protect its national interests, with or without the approval of its smaller neighbours. As a countermeasure, small states should adopt broad national defense policies to reduce the possibility of unsolicited military assistance in or on their territory and in the waters surrounding their respective countries. The defense policy decisions of smaller countries are determined by how and what the larger countries perceive as threats; whether a smaller nation's land, air and maritime territories can play a potential role in confronting and addressing threats; and whether smaller nations have sufficient defense systems to offer resistance and maintain military credibility sufficiently to ensure that larger powers do not become security threats and violate their sovereignty.

### **Facts**

According to a statement issued by the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office and the State Council Information Office, The People's Republic of China on The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era, that empirical and legal evidence regarding the status of the island of Taiwan is part of sovereignty. The People's Republic of China, as follows:

The Declaration of Cairo, published on December 1, 1943 by China, the US, and the UK, affirmed that the objective of the three allied nations was to restore to China any land that Japan had taken from it, including Northeast China, Taiwan, and the Penghu Islands. On July 26, 1945, China, the US, and Britain signed the Potsdam Proclamation, which was later approved by the Soviet Union. This announcement stipulated that the provisions of the Cairo Declaration had to be executed. On the 25th of October, 1945, the Chinese administration announced that it would uphold its authority over Taiwan, and a ritual was held in Taipei (Taipei) to accept Japan's capitulation in the Chinese battleground from the Allied forces.

Subsequently, China has formally and practically restored Taiwan through a sequence of global legal documents. The Central People's Government became the only acknowledged authority of China when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established on October 1, 1949, taking over from the Republic of China (1912-1949). Under a condition where China's position as a participant in worldwide legal matters, its autonomy, and its inborn land remained intact, a fresh leadership succeeded the preceding Kuomintang (KMT) regime. As a result, the PRC government must exercise and enjoy all of China's sovereignty, including that over Taiwan. The political dispute between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait has been ongoing due to the Chinese civil war that erupted during the 1940s and the intervention of external forces. Nonetheless, China's territorial integrity and sovereignty have remained intact and will continue to be so. Taiwan is an integral part of China's territory and this status quo will not be altered under any circumstances (Chan, 2019; Mudhoffir, 2014).

During its 26th session in October 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758, which advocated for the "reinstatement of all the privileges of the People's Republic of China and acknowledging the legitimacy of its Government's representatives as the only lawful representatives of China in the United Nations. The resolution also called for the removal of Chiang Kai-shek's representatives from their unlawfully held positions in the

United Nations and all its affiliated organizations. This decision pertains to the entirety of China, including Taiwan, and resolves all the political, legal, and procedural issues concerning China's presence in the UN. The idea that there are "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" was also clarified, as China only holds one seat at the UN. A few people in certain countries, particularly the United States, have collaborated with groups in Taiwan in the past few years to deceitfully claim that the resolution does not decisively tackle the issue of Taiwan's portrayal. They alleged that the status of Taiwan is yet to be finalized and voiced their backing for "Taiwan's significant engagement in the United Nations organization". However, they disregarded the Cairo Declaration, Potsdam Proclamation, and other legitimate global papers, and referred to the unlawful and illegitimate San Francisco agreement. In actuality, they are endeavoring to change Taiwan's status as a component of China by introducing the concept of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" as a political tactic to utilize Taiwan as a means of monitoring China. These countries have severely breached their political responsibilities by performing this action, which goes against Resolution 2758 and global regulations. They are ignoring the fundamental principles of international law and undermining China's sovereignty and honor. The Chinese administration has censured and firmly objected to this behavior.

The one China policy is still a priority for US officials, who have also said that they oppose Taiwan's independence. They say one thing, but do another. They undermine the one-China principle's integrity and cast doubt on it. They intend to cooperate in military provocations, enhance arms sales, and arrange formal exchanges with Taiwan. They urge other countries to intervene in Taiwan's matters and create laws concerning Taiwan that infringe on China's sovereignty in order to aid Taiwan in expanding its "global presence." They make it difficult to distinguish between what is good and bad or black and white. On the one hand, they encourage separatist groups to agitate cross-Strait ties and bring about instability.

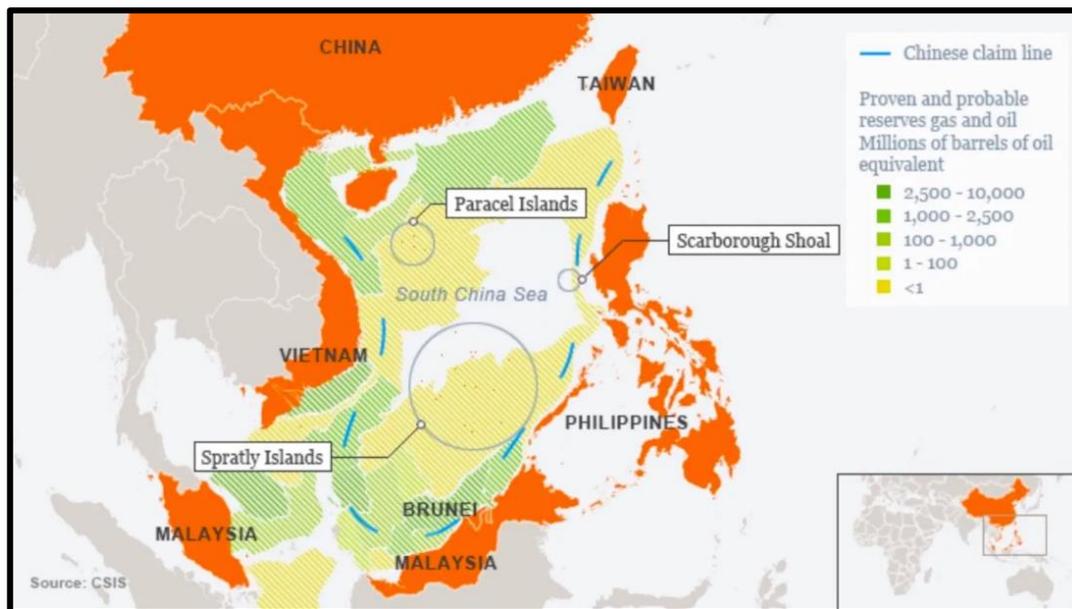
Per the documentation of Lin, Cheng-yi and Denny Roy (2011), Taiwan is recognized as the biggest manufacturer of semiconductor chips globally. Despite tensions with mainland China, its industrial potential is progressing rapidly. These chips are present in numerous electronic gadgets such as mobile phones, computers, cars and even weapon systems that are dependent on AI. Taiwan-based firms will have jurisdiction over more than sixty percent (60%) of the earnings generated from semiconductor contract production worldwide by 2022 (Dobija, 2021).

### **China Projection in the South China Sea (SCS)**

As per Huaigao Qi, Deputy Dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University, China (2019), the implementation of four robust strategies was necessary for China to achieve its objectives as the leading nation in the South China Sea while pursuing the Nine-Dashed Line policy. From those four strategies, Qi emphasizes the top two strategies that are superior, to focus on China's implementation in order to gain superiority and dominance in the SCS. The two main strategies that are superior are as follows (Permal, 2014):

*The first strategy*, China must become a leading maritime power by carrying out its sustainable development by utilizing all the abundant resources available in the waters and oceans. The

former Chinese President Hu Jintao communicated this prospect in November 2012, which was later reiterated by Xi Jinping in October 2017, emphasizing China's determination to establish itself as a dominant maritime force and become a leading and robust maritime nation. The ability to manage maritime economic resources in the SCS region is an important support in realizing China's maritime power projection. To achieve this goal, China must cooperate in the development and maritime industry in the SCS region in a conducive manner.

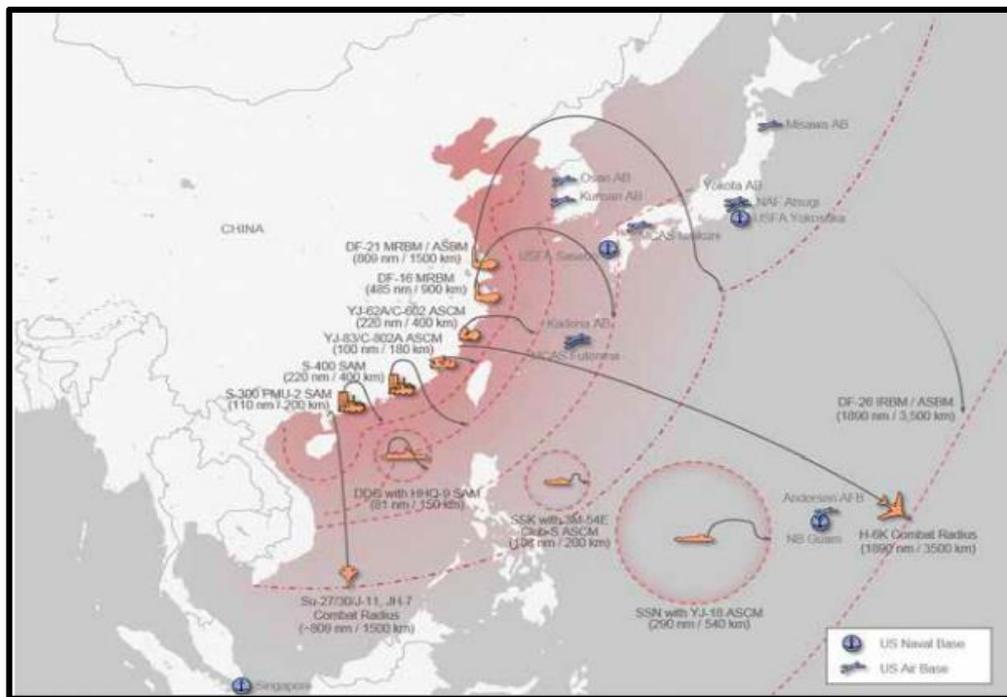


**Picture 1: Potential Reserves Gas and Oil in Millions of Barrels beneath the Soil in South China Sea Source: CSIS, 2020**

The second strategy, to preserve security stability in the SCS region, China should take a proactive role. And making the region safe and peaceful by involving the coastal states in the region. The disputes and problems in the SCS have been considered as one of the main factors, in hindering the achievement of China's two main goals (hundred year period). The two main goals, firstly complete the construction of a prosperous Chinese society by 2020, and secondly, from 2020 to the midpoint of this century (2049), China commences a fresh expedition to completely construct a contemporary state. China's two primary objectives, linked to both internal and external concerns, are indivisible from China's national welfare in the SCS. China's national welfare encompasses creating a harmonious and steady area, for the betterment of all shoreline states surrounding the SCS (J. Hung, 2021; Krasner, 2011). These two main strategies are basically aimed at projecting the great rise of the Chinese nation in 2049, to match and even surpass US global influence and power in the Indo-Pacific region. This strategy is also expected to change US domination in the Indo-Pacific region, as a guardian of security stability, by changing the international order in the region, to make it more profitable for the authoritarian system and China's national interests. The aim of this plan, consistently implemented in a lasting way, is to grow China's sway in the Indo-Pacific area, particularly in the vicinity of the South China Sea.

China's power projection plan is executed through the construction and advancement of economic, technological, political, social, and security sectors. This will reinforce and back Beijing's strategy in molding the worldwide and local surroundings, which will welcome and aid Beijing's objectives. Particularly in the field of defense technology, China has developed capabilities in projecting power beyond China's borders and territories, in safeguarding China's national interests, including its foreign policy goals.

Talking about defense systems so far, China has been able to deploy an Anti-Access Aerial Denial (A2/AD) system in the SCS area. China's strongest anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) capability till now remains within the First Island Chain, which encompasses Taiwan. However, China plans to minimize its military capabilities in the Second Island Chain's operational region and instead focus on enhancing its capacity to access areas deeper into the Pacific Ocean, extending worldwide.



**Picture 2: China's set up Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD), in order to challenge first and second Island Chain**

Source: Archipelagic Defense the Japan-U.S. Alliance and Preserving Peace and Stability in the Western Pacific, 2017

For decades to support and defend the A2/AD zone designation, and island chain security system, China has continuously focused on modernizing, developing and expanding its nuclear forces. China is expanding its nuclear arsenal by creating a nuclear-capable Air Launched Ballistic Missile (ALBM), in addition to improving its capabilities for land and sea-based nuclear weapons.

China possesses a significant quantity of modernized Short-Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBM), Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM), and Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) capable of conducting long-range attacks beyond Taiwan's territory. Moreover, China is also strengthening its satellite technology capacity to detect targets at extensive distances by incorporating sky-wave and Over-The-Horizon (OTH) Radar technology. This technology can aid long-range precision strikes, including guiding Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles (ASBM). China deploys its ballistic missiles based on their respective capabilities, and this is their strategy:

***Short-Range Ballistic Missiles/SRBM (Distance: Less than 1,000 km).***

The ballistic missile battery deployment is positioned directly towards Taiwan territory. China is strengthening its conventional SRBM deployment with the deployment of the CSS-11 (DF-16) ballistic missile. In 2016, the US Department of Defense estimated that China's military has about 1,200 SRBMs.

***Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles /MRBM (Distance: 1.000–3.000 km).***

China is enlarging its typical MRBM troop deployment, which involves the CSS-5 Mod 5 (DF-21D) ASBM that has high maneuverability and a range of approximately 1,500 km, by utilizing a warhead with a greater capacity. The missile capability can attack ships and aircraft carriers, including hitting targets in the first island chain as well as longer ranges.

***Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles/IRBM (Distance: 3.000–5.500 km)***

China's armed forces are working on a versatile intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) that can be moved around as required, enabling them to deliver targeted strikes with precision in the second Island Chain area. Furthermore, China is progressively developing its capabilities in the use of Land-Attack Cruise Missiles (LACMs), which are launched from the air and guided with pinpoint accuracy. Other advanced weapons systems in development include tactical surface-to-air missiles, all-weather precision guided munitions, satellite-guided bombs, anti-radiation missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) with a range of up to 200 km that can be deployed on surface vessels and submarines, as well as laser-guided bombs.

According to Washington, China's plan to enhance its military capabilities and technological advancements is not just limited to its own borders. It also has the potential to be used beyond its borders as a means to dominate the global arena and break free from the US and its allies' grip. China's efforts to expand its defense system, as seen in Djibouti, involve constructing additional military infrastructure to support its projected power in the realms of cyber, space, and military. Additionally, China is considering building defense system facilities in several countries, such as Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Angola, and Tajikistan.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The phenomenon of the Chinese government's activities, both diplomacy and 'pressure' by using military force against Taiwan, has started since the beginning of being separated from mainland China. China's desire to return Taiwan to its sovereign territory (as a breakaway

province is known), dates back to the beginning of the conflict between China and Taiwan, which stems from the civil war that lasted from 1927-1950, between the Chinese Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT) led by Chiang Kai-Shek, against the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) based in 1949, led by Mao Zedong. The superiority of the Nationalists at first, but was defeated by the Communists, and established a government in China, while the Nationalists fled and established a government on the island of Taiwan.

Research on China's strategy to control and return Taiwan to its sovereign territory, is processed and analyzed using case studies in the form of an inquiry design. This particular blueprint finds extensive application across diverse domains, particularly in the domain of assessment. Here, the investigator conducts an exhaustive examination of a specific instance, frequently in the guise of a scheme, episode, endeavor, progression, or undertaking for one or more people. Case studies are restricted by time and undertaking, and the investigator gathers comprehensive data by employing diverse approaches to data compilation over a prolonged duration of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2011).

Thorough scrutiny and examination of the Chinese administration's strategy of consistently affirming its status as the lawful government across all of China's sovereign land, encompassing Taiwan, and upholding its stance at the United Nations since 1971, acknowledging China as the lawful government of all mainland China and nearby islands (One China Policy).

Most countries, including the US, have diplomatic relations with China and do not recognize Taiwan as a separate country, but some countries still recognize Taiwan as a sovereign country and have diplomatic relations. China continuously pressures and threatens to attack Taiwan, if Taiwan dares to declare its independence separate from mainland China. The Chinese government has also used economic and diplomatic measures to pressure Taiwan and isolate it internationally, while the US government counters this isolation by continuously providing Taiwan with military and other support.

This study also analyzes the statements of Lin and Roy (2011), regarding the unique relationship between Taiwan, China and the US. Several nations, such as the United States, refuse to acknowledge Taiwan as an independent entity apart from mainland China. Taiwan has a free society and an open economy, where its status and survival as an independent country has been guaranteed by the US (Dalton, 2018; Latham & Porter, 2022). Taiwan's uncertain diplomatic status, on the other hand, is unique in that its people have trade and economic relations with Chinese people. Factors domestic activity of each country is strongly influenced by this fact. Taiwan's domestic factors have a more direct impact on relations between Taiwan and the US, than those of China and the US. The relationship between the US and Taiwan is an issue that the Beijing government is contentious about, while many things, resources or capabilities emanating from Taiwan can influence this relationship. Significant cultural-economic relations and political differences and tensions between China and Taiwan, in recent years have become increasingly complex. The desire for reunification with Taiwan has been repeatedly expressed by the Chinese authorities, however, the Taiwanese government and majority of its citizens refuse this proposition, preferring to uphold their independence and

autonomy. The COVID-19 outbreak has also affected the relationship between China and Taiwan, with the Taiwanese government accusing China of intentionally spreading false information about the virus to incite pressure on Taiwan at the international level.

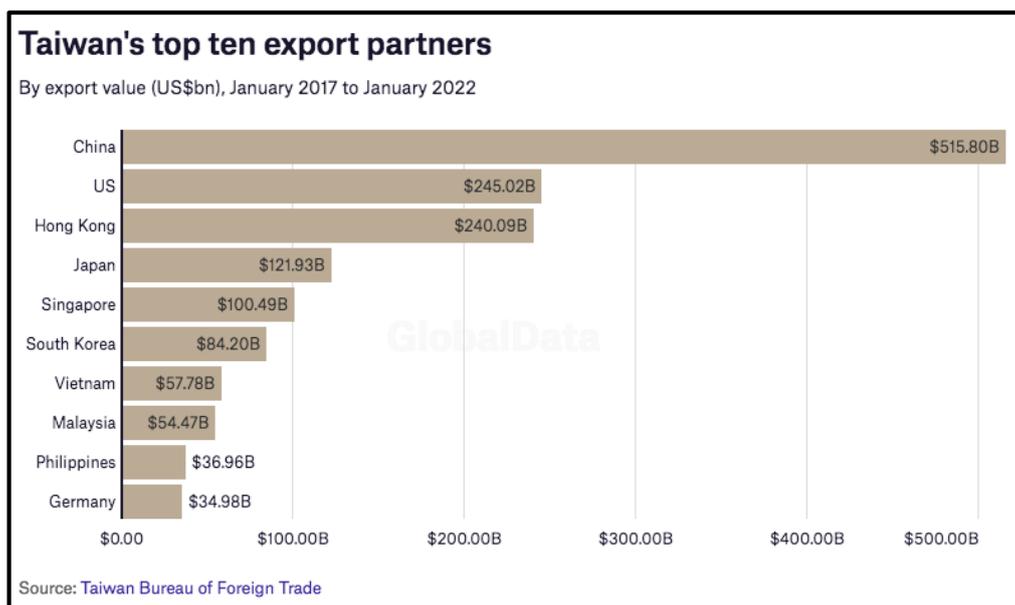
## DISCUSSION

China's strategy to restrict the influence and military involvement of the US and its allies in the Indo-Pacific region, specifically in the South China Sea, involves creating a single-handed military control zone known as the Anti-Access Area-Denial (A2/AD). The designation of A2/AD is also a Chinese military strategy, in an effort to implement its defense policies, including increasing and measuring its offensive capabilities against coastal states around the SCS.

Beijing's strategy is an important choice, as a choice in projecting the achievement of its ambitions, so that it can provide space for the Chinese military to act if there is no other option, through quick (short time) aggression to achieve the specified goals or targets. The region of SCS has garnered significant attention from the global community, with a particular focus on the military rivalry between China and the US and the potential for conflict. Despite this, Taiwan remains the primary point of interest, and the competition between the two dominant military powers in the area poses a significant threat of actual conflict (H. T. B. Hung, 2022).

Some time ago, Taiwan was technologically and geographically superior to an island defense system, in the context of dealing with cross-strait conflicts. However, due to China's advancements in technology and military modernization initiatives during the recent decades, China has surpassed Taiwan in numerous aspects. Although Taiwan has taken important steps to overcome this backwardness by using all kinds of reserves and warfare capabilities, developing its defense industrial bases, enhancing its joint operation system with crisis response capabilities and strengthening the combat capabilities of its soldiers, these steps have not been up to par. the magnitude of the problem facing Taiwan (Lindsay, 2023; Qi, 2019). Taiwan's 2017 National Defense System Report, describes adjustments to Taiwan's island defense strategy, with greater emphasis on protecting coastal areas and surrounding shores. The adjustment of the defense strategy emphasizes increasing asymmetric warfare capabilities, relying on the strength of the Air Force and Navy. (Source: Office Of The Secretary Of Defense, Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, China Military Power, 2019, May 2019, p. 90-91).

Meanwhile, on the other hand, Taiwan does not expect conflict with mainland China. This is because Taiwan considers the status of China, which is still the largest trading market share, including Taiwan's main economic partner (see figure 3). It is a dilemma for Taiwan (with all its infrastructure, human resources and defense systems) to realize de jure independence, with the threat of invasion by China still in effect. On the other hand, Taiwan still depends on trade and economic business with China. Vice versa, China still feels that it still needs Taiwan's imported products, especially electronic products, especially for its combat equipment.



**Picture 3: Export destination countries, with 10 (ten) main destination countries for goods produced by Taiwan**

Source: Taiwan Bureau of Foreign Trade

China as Taiwan's largest bilateral economic partner, and as an importer of Taiwanese products, is an indicator that apart from being an export destination for Taiwanese products, China also depends on its domestic needs from Taiwanese products. This indicator shows an estimate that China will continue to consider the use of open war in acquiring Taiwan (Fivestad & Lai, 2017). Besides that, Taiwan also exports its products to several major countries in the world, especially from the electronics sector, which is the biggest contributor to foreign investors. Taiwan's most prominent electronic products globally and are very important for Intelligent Artificial (IA) technology, including weapons technology, are semiconductor chips. The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), valued at \$600 billion, is the largest contract chip manufacturer in Asia, and plays a crucial role in the global semiconductor chip supply chain. As per Maizland's report in 2023, TSMC, the world's leading contract semiconductor chip maker, supplies a significant portion of products to US firms, including Apple. TSMC and Samsung, based in South Korea, are the only two companies that possess the expertise to manufacture the smallest and most advanced chip technologies, with TSMC producing over 90% of the world's products. Acknowledging the significant reliance of the US on TSMC's semiconductor chip offerings, the US administration is actively promoting and advancing the domestic semiconductor chip industry.

Some experts contend that the US' reliance on Taiwanese semiconductor chip enterprises has spurred its determination to safeguard Taiwan from potential Chinese aggression. Additionally, the US government has implemented stringent regulations, such as export controls, to restrict China's access to these sophisticated chips, including those produced by TSMC. These

measures and limitations imposed by the US have stymied China's technology sector, which had previously sourced approximately 70 percent of its semiconductor chips from TSMC before the implementation of the export controls. To counter US restrictions, Chinese companies led by Huawei (Chinese telecommunications giant) are working hard to boost their own industrial capabilities for semiconductor chips, which Washington says Beijing could use for espionage activities.

**Table 1: Taiwan Top 12 products those very important Goods to US import, in US Dollar thousand**

Product label	Taipei, Chinese's exports to United States of America		
	Value in 2020	Value in 2021	Value in 2022
Automatic data-processing machines and units thereof; magnetic or optical readers, machines . . .	7,015,041	7,304,028	9,734,485
Parts and accessories (other than covers, carrying cases and the like) suitable for use solely . . .	3,220,917	5,776,429	7,502,207
Taps, cocks, valves and similar appliances for pipes, boiler shells, tanks, vats or the like, . . .	569,930	760,752	879,844
Machines and apparatus of a kind used solely or principally for the manufacture of semiconductor . . .	481,640	585,194	650,207
Air or vacuum pumps (excluding gas compound elevators and pneumatic elevators and conveyors); . . .	330,512	482,229	496,717
Tools for working in the hand, pneumatic, hydraulic or with self-contained electric or non-electric . . .	417,210	528,408	448,598
Machine tools, incl. machines for nailing, stapling, gluing or otherwise assembling, for working . . .	448,115	577,506	419,515
Centrifuges, incl. centrifugal dryers (excluding those for isotope separation); filtering or . . .	224,484	290,386	321,766
Transmission shafts, incl. camshafts and crankshafts, and cranks; bearing housings and plain . . .	183,183	255,688	293,416
Turbojets, turbopropellers and other gas turbines	137,888	179,227	263,298
Machines for assembling electric or electronic lamps, tubes or valves or flashbulbs, in glass . . .	162,036	148,011	220,654
Pumps for liquids, whether or not fitted with a measuring device (excluding ceramic pumps and . . .	129,356	179,948	209,771

Source: Trademap 2023

Besides the ability to produce advanced semiconductor chip technology, there are several important points that have contributed to motivating China to slowly but surely regain control of Taiwan. The speedy economic triumph of Taiwan is built on the fundamentals of its autonomous open market system, its distinct governance and presidential administration, its exclusive monetary unit, and its individual armed forces.

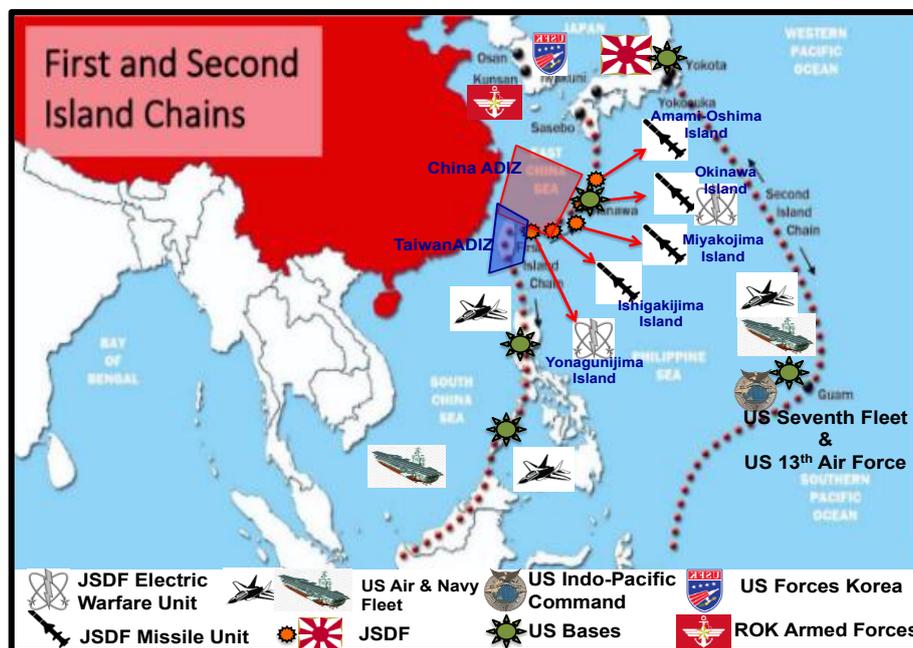
Due to its advantageous geographic position and comparatively unambiguous and democratic milieu, foreign enterprises can experience liberalized market policies and a business environment akin to that of a vast economy such as the United States. Despite Taiwan's aspiration for independence in unimpeded global trade connections, as per Alfred Tsai (the Director of Government and Public Affairs at the US Chamber of Commerce in Taipei), its political inclination has been obstructed by Beijing's coercion. Conversely, the advancement of two-way trade ties between Taiwan and the United States, albeit not markedly, is steadily advancing. Nevertheless, due to the prevailing trade disputes between the US and China, several Taiwanese and foreign enterprises that were previously situated in mainland China have relocated to Taiwan. This predicament has, in fact, positioned Taiwan as one of the primary factors contributing to the escalation of tensions in the US-China relationship, alongside the matter of the root cause of the Covid-19 outbreak. As per Brown and Hui (2019), Taiwan, being a security ally of the US in the SCS, holds a crucial position in a compact marine trading network that traverses through disputed and contentious areas in the East and South China Seas. Taiwan has significant economic strength, ranking around the top 15 (fifteen) in the world in 2018, and a global important part of the supply chain through its technological advantage in the production of semiconductors and other high-tech products.

### **Taiwan Acquisition Strategy Slowly and Steadily**

CIA Director William Burns at a hearing at the Intelligence Committee of the US House of Representatives, Washington, DC, on April 15, 2021 warned of China's potential threat to world security stability. Burns declared that it would be unwise to underestimate the aspirations of Chinese President Xi Jinping towards Taiwan, presumably influenced by the Russian military incursion in Ukraine. As important intelligence information, President Xi is expected to start carrying out his military strategy slowly and surely, carrying out an invasion of Taiwan in 2027. This assertion does not imply that Xi has made a firm decision to launch a military incursion in 2027 or any other year. Rather, it serves as a reminder of the gravity of his intentions and aspirations. Some of China's strategies in acquiring Taiwan slowly and surely, with indicators (Griffiths et al., 2011):

- a) Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) zoning strategy, also known as Anti-Access/Area Denial, is being implemented in the vicinity of Taiwan and across a significant portion of the South China Sea.

This A2/AD strategy is a military strategy with a unilateral determination to control entry and exit access in areas designated as zones of military operations. Refers to military enforcement capabilities in accordance with a country's capability to control anti-access zones, generally located away from a country's designated A2/AD, designed to prevent adversary forces from entering an operational zone. China's military combat power, which is equipped with 3 (three) aircraft carriers that form carrier strike groups (Carrier Strike Groups), with full operational capabilities can strengthen the ability to project maritime defense forces (blue-water power projection). Beijing's maritime defense power is fully projected in order to directly attack and acquire Taiwan, and is also used to prevent other countries' military forces from coming to Taiwan's aid.



**Picture 4: Establishment of First and Second Island Chains by the US and its Allies in the Indo-Pacific region in response to China's deployment of A2/AD areas in SCS**

Source: Created by the Researcher

- b) Development of air and maritime defense installations and systems on coral islands in the Spratly and Paracel islands as China's front-line defense and advanced defense base, in the face of the Island Chains Defense system formed by the US and its allies (South Korea, Japan and the Philippines), including anticipation of facing the armed forces of coastal countries in the SCS region that oppose China's unilateral decision to establish the Nine-Dash Line. As per the findings of the CSIS Report (2017), it was determined that on the 23rd of November in the year 2013, the Ministry of National Defense of China established an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) that encompasses an area of about 200 nautical miles beyond the country's territorial waters. This declaration of authority also encroaches upon the ADIZ of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. China's Ministry of National Defense also established unilateral identification rules for any foreign aircraft entering or passing through the ADIZ area in the East China Sea to activate aircraft transponders, maintain radio communications and report flight plans to Chinese authorities. Beijing authorities also warned that the Chinese Armed Forces would take action as a defensive emergency measure for any uncooperative foreign aircraft. In an authorized declaration concerning the establishment of ADIZ, Chinese officials clarified that the purpose of identifying, supervising, regulating, and removing non-compliant foreign planes is a precautionary measure to safeguard China's crew from potential airborne dangers. The Chinese authorities also reasoned that the size of the ADIZ was sufficient to provide space and time for early warning for foreign aircraft to ensure their return, and to escort and ensure foreign fighter aircraft to exit China's ADIZ claims, before they reach the mainland. The US government

criticized Beijing's declaration as a form of unilateral, escalation and destabilization efforts and changing the status quo in the region. In particular, Washington rejected China's assertion of implementing procedures in China's ADIZ area for foreign aircraft that do not intend to enter China's national airspace, but only fly over the zone.

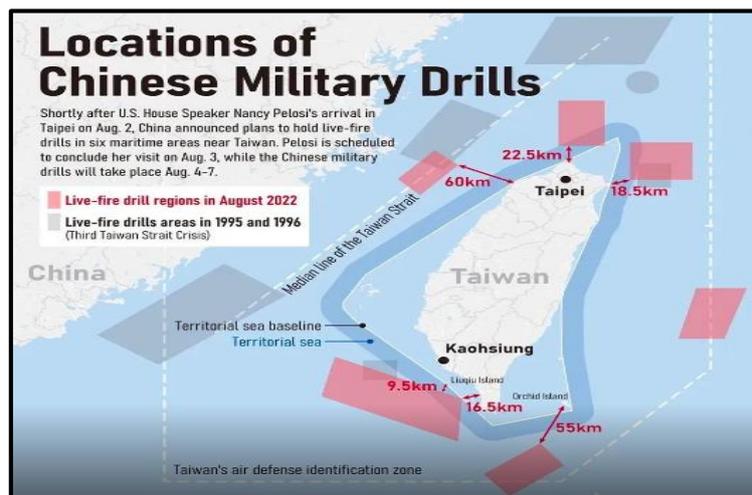
- c) Beijing is highly attentive and interested in the execution of the A2/AD safeguard mechanism and the establishment of the autonomy of its defense boundary. China's strategy of establishing Nine Dashed-Line claims in the SCS, as an attempt to push US domination out of the region, and treat it as a potential aggressor. In recent decades, the situation in the Pacific Ocean region has shown signs of a change in security stability, which was previously dominated by the US fleet, slowly shifting to the Chinese fleet. This reality is possible, because China has not only developed its technology and defense systems strongly, but has also become a massive world economic power. Massive economic capabilities allow China to create new military technology and equipment and expand its defense perimeter. China is achieving its intended goal of dominating the vast ocean, including the waters surrounding Taiwan, which Beijing considers a rebellious province, and regions in the South China Sea (SCS), where China has maritime territorial conflicts with neighboring countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, thanks to its robust defense system capabilities (Dobija, 2021).
- d) China's present control in the Indo-Pacific region stems not solely from its unparalleled military might, but from the establishment of tactical offensive capabilities through the A2/AD defense mechanism. The said mechanism enables the detachment and preservation of various potential hostile Naval defenses (specifically the US Troops) at considerable distances from territorial borders (Permal, 2014). Keeping potential aggressors away from China's defense area is possible, especially with the dislocation of the A2/AD system on artificial reefs and islands in the SCS area. The defense systems of these artificial reefs and islands that are in the A2/AD defense system, such as fighter aircraft, missiles (land-based, coastal submarines) and observation sensors based in the air and/or even space (Fivelstad, 2018). The A2/AD defense concept is in line with Dobija's statement (2021), that the A2/AD defense concept is based on the use of special military facilities, including reconnaissance satellites, Radar, anti-ship and ballistic missiles, anti-aircraft systems and combat aircraft. Concentration of these weapons scattered on reefs (rebuilt) and artificial islands, located far from the coast of mainland China, would be difficult for the US Air and Naval Fleet, especially the US Navy's integrated carrier strike group and its affiliates.

The Chinese government's strategy of building artificial reefs and islands in the Spratly and Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, which are then equipped with sophisticated military defense facilities and infrastructure, is not without reason. In order to legalize and maintain security stability in the SCS region which is claimed unilaterally to realize China's dream, to become dominant in the SCS and the Indo-Pacific region in general, and finally 'push' Taiwan gradually into China's territory without armed conflict, Beijing builds artificial islands in the Spratly and Paracel archipelago, in order to meet the terms of international rules. According to the UNCLOS Article 121, concerning "Archipelagic Regimes", says that ownership of islands

and the waters around them stated as follow (J. Hung, 2021):

1. An island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water that is above the water at high tide.
2. Except as provided in paragraph 3, the territorial sea, contiguous zone, Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf of an island are defined in accordance with the provisions of this Convention which apply to other land areas.
3. Rocks that cannot support human habitation or economic life alone must not have an Exclusive Economic Zone or Continental Shelf.

Pursuant to the paragraphs of Article 121, China builds artificial islands with livable facilities and supports human life, so that these artificial island networks later can be formed sovereign territories and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), that intersecting or connecting with mainland China as a whole. In other words, China controls almost the entire SCS area, including Taiwan in it. China is unlikely to want to acquire Taiwan by force or military conflict, including coming into open conflict with countries in the SCS region with which it disputes territory. This Chinese policy is also called a war in the gray zone, by international security experts. Beijing has also made use of diplomacy and foreign policy channels in realizing its wishes. On another occasion, to 'suppress' and provide a psychological effect of war on Taiwan, China has several times conducted direct fire drills at several locations around Taiwan's sovereign waters. This was done by Chinese to demonstrate its ability to encircle and blockade the Taiwan Strait which has geostrategic implications, where this Strait is one of the busiest trade routes in the world (see picture 5). These shootings could have an impact on disrupting trade transportation and delaying Taiwan's exports of superior commodities to world markets. It could also have an impact on Taiwan's flagship product, advanced semiconductor chips that are a very important part of the production of cars to advanced weaponry.



**Picture 5: China Military drills in and around the Taiwan Strait**

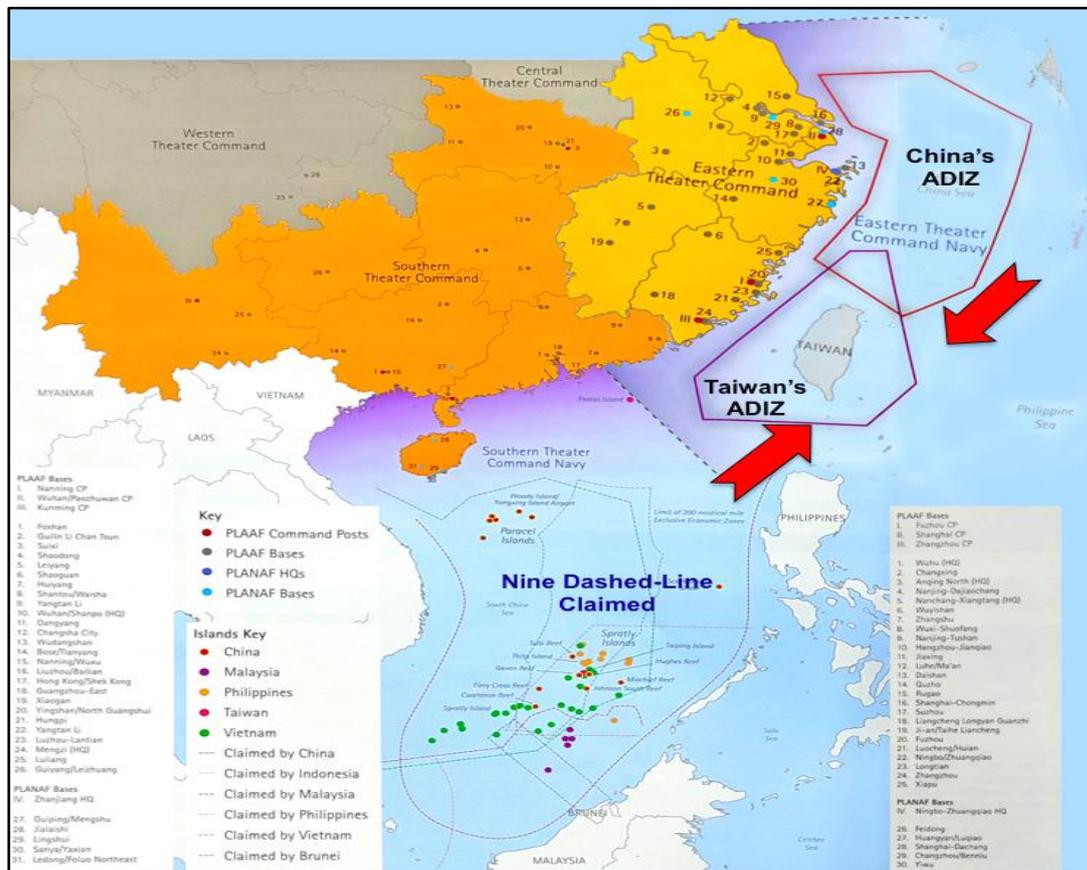
Source: News Intervention. August 2022

Comprehensively reviewed the area of the fall of several Chinese missiles fired in Chinese military exercises, the location surrounds Taiwan's sovereign waters. This can be an indicator of a serious Chinese threat, if Taiwan ignores China's ultimatum that was stated long ago. Strategically, apart from threats to create fear, China also directly conveys the message that Taiwan is 'de facto' an inseparable part of China, and China can do anything to the region, if needed (Krasner, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

In his State of the Union address in 2019, Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's longstanding proposal for Taiwan, that Taiwan be part of the mainland, with a one country with two systems formula, much like China's imposition of Hong Kong, which guarantees a high degree of autonomy in political and economic systems. But the proposal is widely disliked by the Taiwanese public, not to mention seeing Beijing's lies, by recently carrying out a crackdown on demands for Hong Kong's autonomous freedoms. The authorities in Taiwan have dismissed the formula of one country, two systems. Beijing has so far sought to avoid open conflict with Taiwan and the coastal states in the SCS with which it disputes territory.

However, US 'interference' in assisting Taiwan's military technology and defense systems, and strongly opposing China's unilateral control of the Nine-Dashed-Line in the SCS, has the potential to provoke China to change its policy into open war. The creation of the Island Defense Chain to counter China, similar to the containment policy employed by the US and its allies against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, has prompted China to adopt a comparable approach through the establishment of the ADIZ and A2/AD region in the Indo-Pacific region. This strategy automatically expands China's defense perimeter, and comes face to face with the US-made Island Defense Chain. Behind these Chinese strategies, it cannot be denied that Taiwan is the target of China's ambition to reacquire it into its sovereignty. China is also aware of the impact of using force or open conflict in seizing Taiwan, so China seeks to use the strategy of 'inclusion' Taiwan indirectly with the Nine Dashed-Line claims and the construction of artificial islands in the SCS region. The implementation of this strategy is to expand the sovereign territory and connect the Exclusive Economic Zone with mainland China, which automatically 'urges' Taiwan to enter its sovereign territory (from South flank, and with ADIZ setting from North flank).



**Picture 6: China's strategy is to control Taiwan slowly, by building artificial islands in the Nine-Dashed-Line claim area (to build an Exclusive Economic Zone later) from the south of Taiwan and establishing the ADIZ from the north of Taiwan, thus forcing and 'drowning' Taiwan into Mainland China's territory later slowly and surely**

Source: Created by Researcher

Mastery of Taiwan's semiconductor chip technology, which is very important for weapons technology, also seems to be China's main consideration in its dream of taking Taiwan back into its lap. Concern over the majority of semiconductor chip imports from Taiwan to the US, and the US's desire to bring and build this technology to be produced domestically, became one of the reasons for China's consideration of acquiring Taiwan immediately.

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